



Tuesday, December 11, 2001

## Visits to OU Web sites skyrocket

By *Jennifer Charney*, OU Staff Writer

More and more, consumers expect to obtain services and information on the Web. OU community members, including prospective and current students, are no exception. Oakland is responding to these expectations — and creating impressive results.

The number of Internet inquiries about OU from prospective undergraduate students jumped from 165 in 1998 to 2,073 in 2001. Applications submitted online went from 80 in 1998 to nearly 800 in 2001. The number of admissions completed online shot from 25 in 1998 to 462 in 2001, and online enrollments climbed from 16 in 1998 to 116 in 2000. Data for 2001 online enrollments isn't available yet.

Providing almost every OU service that students can get in person on the Web is an important goal for the university, said Vice Provost Robert Johnson. Students now can conduct much of their OU business online, including registering for classes, adding and dropping courses, taking online courses, and paying tuition. Students' increasing use of the Web to conduct such business shows that OU is on the right track.

Peter Nacy, director of admissions for Admissions and Enrollment Management, said the increases in Web use for admissions matters show that young people, who've grown up using computers, prefer to use the Internet instead of the phone or mail. At the same time Web usage is increasing, inquiries about OU by mail dropped from 1,997 in 1998 to 756 in 2001. Phone inquiries also fell from 1,190 in 1998 to 964 in 2001.

The response to Oakland's news and information site, **The News @ OU**, is impressive too. Before its launch in mid-July 2001, the former news and information site logged 300 to 500 visits per week — not hits, but actual visitors.

Since the July launch, visits to the new site have increased, with average number of weekly visits climbing each week or so from 900 the week of the relaunch to more than 1,700 in the last few weeks.

"The week of the terrorist attacks in September reinforced how people rely on the Web for information," said Claudette Zolkowski, director of Web and Marketing Services for the University Communications and Marketing Department. "That week, we updated the site almost hourly and recorded more than 5,000 visits.

"The amount of time people are spending at the site is increasing a bit at a time, which means people are finding more interesting, relevant information on the site than they were before."

Communications and Marketing recently added photos to stories at **The News @ OU** and the new **Faculty and Staff News** site. A **university-wide calendar** is another new feature of OU's Web presence.

Since the fall 2001 semester began, **The News @ OU** has been among the top 10 most popular OU marketing Web sites. Other top sites include those for current students, academics, information technology and prospective students.

"Increasingly I'm using the Web site for Oakland's news stories of the day," said Mary Beth Snyder, vice president for Student Affairs. "It's a good way for me to keep informed about campus events."

Kelly Carter, Manager of Receivables and Cashiering Services, said she's been visiting OU's home page regularly, especially since Sept. 11, to read the daily news stories. She also checks University Human Resources' **job site** periodically to read about changes in personnel. Carter keeps up with changes on the sites for the **Student and Administrative Information Link (SAIL)** and the offices of the **Registrar** and **Financial Aid**.

Karthekeyan Dharmaraj, a graduate student studying computer science, said he likes to check the headlines on OU's home page more often to keep up with campus news.

Peter Binkert, professor and chair of the Department of Linguistics, refers to OU Web pages regularly, including those for the **OU Senate**, **academic departments** and **academic calendar**.

In addition to these Web offerings, Oakland provides a wealth of other online resources, including Intranet services and online courses. OU's Web Council coordinates these three components of OU's online areas — Intranet, online learning and Web — and oversees policies for those areas.

#### **OU Web Council:**

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- Mark Ludorf, associate provost, Strategic Initiatives
- Geoff Upward, associate vice president, University Marketing and Communications

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- Steve Roberts, associate vice president, Finance and Administration
- Terrie Rowe, director, Information Systems
- Maura Selahowski, assistant director, marketing and business, Campus Recreation
- Claudette Zolkowski, director, Web and Marketing Services, University Communications and Marketing

#### **SUMMARY**

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