

Higher Education Buyer's Guide

Discover solutions
that secure institution
networks, expand
faculty capabilities,
and enhance student
engagement.



FEATURING: ***Solution Areas • Success Stories
Education Policies • Contract Vehicles • Upcoming Events***

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The Trusted Education IT
Solutions Provider®



Mental
Health

Workforce
Readiness

Higher
Education AI

Connected
Classrooms

Cybersecurity

Content
Management/
Data

Research

Carahsoft offers a broad array of innovative technology solutions to help schools, faculty and students bridge the digital divide and meet the demands of modern education. Our best of breed portfolio of EdTech providers features purpose-built solutions for both Higher Education institutions and K-12 schools.

Email EDUMarketing@Carahsoft.com to learn more.

carahsoft.

Welcome to the Higher Education Buyer's Guide!

The swift transition from in-person education to online and hybrid learning during the pandemic has set a new standard for efficiency, agility, collaboration and safety within the education sector. Looking ahead, this year will continue the trend of unprecedented developments for educational institutions and Government agencies, including education policy, fiscal change and technology innovation. Higher education will be powerfully impacted by these transformations as it addresses challenges, strives to uphold a top-tier quality of learning and effectively prepares students with the skills they need to enter an evolving, technology-driven workforce.

Some of the most pressing tech advancements to expect involve the impacts of AI and cyber and physical security. AI has become a complex, game-changing tool in classrooms. Educators are exploring AI use cases to enhance all types of learning styles while also considering its ethical applications within education. Enhancing cyber and physical security is also a critical objective for administrators as they aim to support student mental health and well-being, data privacy and campus safety.

Carahsoft and our partners are here to aid colleges and universities in finding the right technology solutions for their higher education missions. From protecting student privacy and safety to helping educators deliver personalized learning experiences, we understand the need for these institutions to obtain and implement purpose-built technology so students and staff can thrive in any learning environment.

Throughout this guide, you will explore Carahsoft's numerous contracts to help streamline procurement, relevant case studies and topical Government and industry events to attend this year so you can be informed and prepared for the future of higher education.



Tim Boltz
*Program Executive for
Higher Education Solutions*
Carahsoft

Table of Contents:

4

Solution Areas

8

Success Stories

29

**Policies and
Executive Orders**

30

Contract Vehicles

36

**Upcoming
Events**



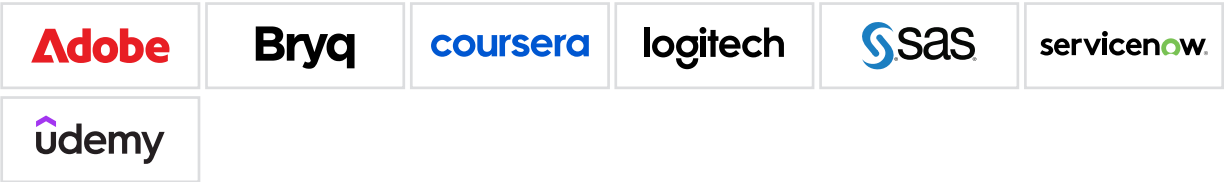
Higher Education Solution Areas

Academic institutions serve the public by providing secure access to education, quality learning experiences and resources that educators and students need to be successful. In recent years, higher education organizations have relied on telecommunication, data analysis and secure network services to ensure digital equity in education, improve collaboration, personalize learning and increase productivity.

Carahsoft, The Trusted Education IT Solutions Provider™, supports public and private schools, colleges and universities through hundreds of innovative technologies. With over a decade of expertise in higher education, our team of technology professionals modernizes education by enabling digital transformation for academic institutes.

Higher Ed Workforce Readiness

Workforce readiness technology solutions are a critical asset for colleges and universities to ensure students are properly prepared for life after graduation. Learn more about how IT tools from our partners support student workforce readiness.



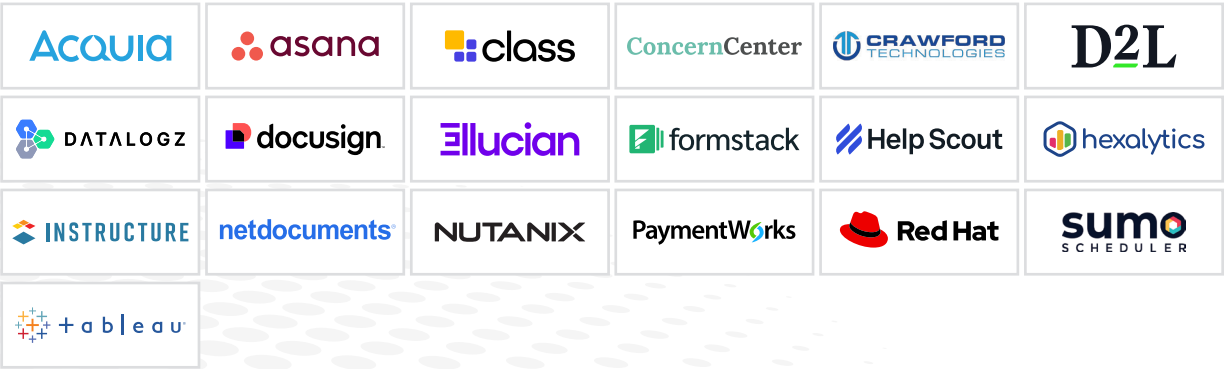
Higher Ed AI

AI tools have become increasingly popular in Higher Ed institutions, providing support for students in their academic pursuits and helping administrators optimize the accessibility of resources. Explore our AI EdTech solutions below to learn more.



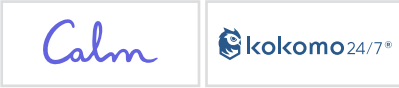
Higher Ed Content Management/Data

Content and data management solutions are critical for effective organization, storage and distribution of information within institutions. View products and services that optimize Higher Ed operations and safeguard critical data.



Higher Ed Mental Health

To ensure students have easy access to the care they need, mental health IT solutions must be adopted by Higher Ed institutions to expand wellness resources. Discover solutions through digital platforms and applications for campus health from our partners.



Higher Ed Research

EdTech solutions for research allow students and faculty to expand access to the resources they need to accomplish their learning objectives. Access research tools that bolster studying capabilities and support educational pursuits in any environment.

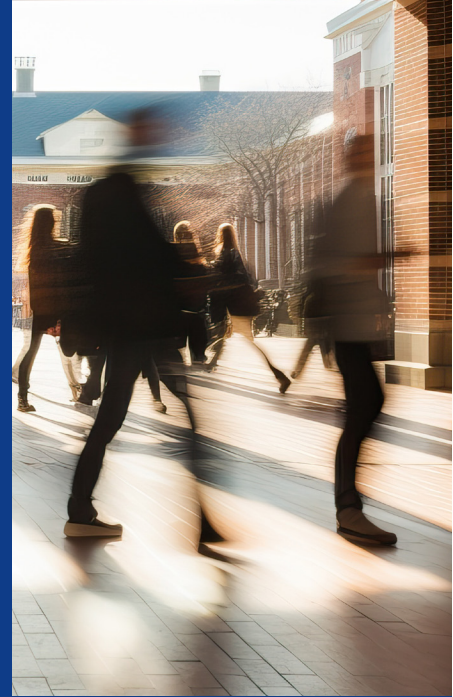




Higher Ed Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity EdTech solutions allow colleges and universities to protect sensitive student and staff information from potential threats. Ensure your institution is properly equipped with the tools for cyber risk management, access control and more.

 BLACK DUCK	 BLACK FOG	 BROADCOM	 CHECK POINT	 CYBERARK THE IDENTITY SECURITY COMPANY	 DATADOG
	 halcyon	 HUMAN	 iboss	 Identity Automation	 infoblox
 mimecast	 okta	 paloalto NETWORKS	 secpod	 SILVERFORT	 SOLARWINDS
 splunk a CISCO company	 TANIMUM	 twilio	 VERSA		



Success Stories

Many higher education institutions have found success in adopting innovative IT solutions to meet the demands of modern learning. Explore the stories of how other education institutions have achieved their goals with the help of Carahsoft's vendors.



San Mateo County Community College District Gains Vital Resiliency and Security with Infoblox

The San Mateo County Community College District (SMCCD), established in 1922, comprises three colleges: Cañada College, College of San Mateo, and Skyline College. Located between San Francisco and Silicon Valley, the colleges serve nearly 40,000 students annually, providing the first two years of college-level education through a wide variety of transfer and career-technical programs.

The Challenge:

Over the past few decades, the district's networking infrastructure relied on Microsoft DNS for internal DNS and Linux for external DNS, along with Microsoft for DHCP. That implementation co-existed with multi-cloud deployments, including Microsoft Azure and Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI). For security, SMCCD relied on firewalls, web gateway filters, and various extended detection and response (XDR) measures. Over time, the limitations of the district's Microsoft- and Linux-based DNS network management solution grew more apparent.

Students and faculty were facing connectivity issues and slow performance due to DNS record errors or network misconfigurations. Tracking down the root cause of a problem was an arduous, manual effort requiring the use of specialized management consoles. The lack of visibility and centralized control worsened as device numbers soared. Maintaining fast connectivity across devices and multi-cloud workloads became increasingly hard to achieve. The Microsoft implementation lacked the agility to meet the demands of an increasingly cloud-driven learning environment.

A larger concern involved the Linux DNS solution, which was not distributed. The district needed a way to move DNS services between sites, a risky undertaking should one of the Linux servers go down while a backup was underway. "It's not designed in such a way that you can make changes if one of the nodes goes down," says Adam West, SMCCD's information security officer. A node failure could potentially take the district offline completely.

The Solution:

SMCCD needed a solution that would deliver rock-solid availability while simplifying complex management tasks. The Infoblox DDI solution consists of the Infoblox Grid, which by virtue of its distributed database technology, eliminates the single point of failure issue that SMCCD had with Linux. To further enhance reliability, the district takes advantage of a multi-grid primary option. The solution also includes two physical servers running as a high availability (HA) pair and two virtual servers at each of the three campus locations. "I wanted everybody to be independently redundant," says West. Rounding out the solution is a reporting server and a discovery server.

For security, the district protects all users across its three campuses with Infoblox Threat Defense. The solution helps detect and block ransomware and other malware attacks, 92 percent of which rely on DNS. In addition, it complements the security products from Palo Alto Networks that the district relies on. It does so by catching threats at the DNS control plane before they are visible to firewalls, endpoints, or other solutions, thereby reducing security alerts from those other tools.

Key Takeaways:

The new Infoblox solutions were implemented by the summer of 2019, just months before the global pandemic hit. As COVID-19 unfolded and teaching moved from in-person to virtual, service availability became a paramount concern. "The Infoblox piece came into play because we thought if our primary data center went down, can we still provide basic services? Can we still get Internet access for classroom technologies, and can we still serve our students? And the answer was, 'Yes.'" recalls Daman Grewal, the district's CIO. Beyond network service availability, additional benefits seen by SMCCD include:

- Network redundancy and resiliency without any of the prior concerns around outages and configuration issues
- DDI automation across on-premises, hybrid, and multi-cloud infrastructure improves network performance
- Stronger overall security posture fortifies protection for multi-cloud workloads and data
- Layered security without compromising confidentiality or privacy

DNS CAN BLOCK 92% OF MALWARE ATTACKS

Understand how to defend against DNS exploitation. Request a Security Workshop:



infoblox.com/Carahsoft-Workshop

infoblox®



Increasing Educational Opportunities by Unifying Identity Management for 150,000 Students

The Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) successfully implemented Okta's Identity and access management (IAM) solution to streamline user access, enhance security, and scale its eCampus initiative across 22 colleges and 88 campuses. This transformation enabled TCSG to provide a seamless, secure experience for students, faculty, and staff, while improving operational efficiency and data protection.



The Challenge:

The Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) faced significant challenges with siloed Identity and access management (IAM) systems across its 22 colleges and 88 campuses. With approximately 150,000 students, managing identities for faculty, staff, and students was complicated by separate IAM systems at each college, leading to limited visibility and inefficiencies. Cross-campus resource sharing was difficult, and individuals had to manage multiple logins to access resources at different colleges. The complexity of managing both on-prem and cloud solutions added to the burden, requiring repetitive manual labor for account provisioning and deprovisioning.

In addition to the operational challenges, securing sensitive student, faculty, and staff data was a priority. TCSG needed a solution that could create a shared, universal Identity model across the system, ensuring data protection while simplifying access. The goal was to provide a more scalable, efficient way to manage identities and streamline access across the entire system, especially as the institution looked to scale its eCampus initiative for broader educational opportunities.



The Solution:

To address the challenges, TCSG implemented Okta as its Identity and access management (IAM) solution to unify and streamline its system. Okta was chosen for its ability to scale quickly and integrate seamlessly with TCSG's hybrid-cloud environment. The team worked closely with Okta's Customer Success and Professional Services teams to ensure a smooth and rapid deployment. In less than three months, TCSG launched the first phase of the eCampus platform, which included Okta Single Sign-On (SSO) and Adaptive Multi-Factor Authentication (AMFA) for 22 campuses. This implementation secured access to critical applications, such as Microsoft Office 365, the student information portal, and the learning management system, providing a secure and unified login experience across the entire system.

Okta's solution helped eliminate the inefficiencies caused by siloed IAM systems. With Okta's SSO, students, faculty, and staff could now securely log in once to access all necessary applications, reducing the friction of managing multiple logins. Additionally, Okta's adaptive security features ensured that access was protected without creating unnecessary barriers for users. The system was designed to be scalable, and the rollout to all campuses was completed on time, with 100% adoption from users immediately following the launch.

The success of the initial deployment led TCSG to begin planning for Phase Two, which includes implementing Okta's Lifecycle Management features to automate user provisioning and deprovisioning based on their status in the student information system, Ellucian Banner. This automation is expected to further reduce manual labor, improve security, and enable IT staff to focus on more meaningful tasks. The system is also poised to expand, integrating more applications and resources as TCSG continues to scale and modernize its educational offerings.

Key Takeaways:

- **Scalability and Security:** Okta's IAM solution enabled seamless integration across campuses, improving security with SSO and AMFA while allowing for efficient scaling of resources.
- **Operational Efficiency:** The automation of Identity management, such as provisioning and deprovisioning, saved time and reduced manual errors. Phase Two will bring lifecycle management automation for even greater efficiency.
- **Enhanced User Experience:** Students, faculty, and staff gained secure, easy access to resources, improving their experience across TCSG systems.
- **Future Plans:** TCSG plans to expand the use of Okta's features, including advanced server access and lifecycle management, and aims to further scale educational opportunities through micro-credentialing and global resource sharing.



Okta for Education

Identities in education are complex —
managing them doesn't have to be

Solve the Identity and Access Management (IAM) equation
in education with cloud-based security that powers a better
user experience for staff and students.



[Learn More](#)





Moving to the Head of the Class With the Palo Alto Networks Security Platform

Facing security and infrastructure challenges during the pandemic, Los Rios Community College District partnered with Palo Alto Networks to modernize its network—enabling secure, reliable access to education for 65,000 students.



The Challenge:

With a small IT team and fragmented security tools, the district struggled to support a growing remote user base while securing on-premises and multi-cloud environments. Legacy infrastructure and siloed systems limited visibility, increased risks and overwhelmed the team with manual threat management.

The Solution:

To secure its multi-cloud environment and support remote users, the District unified its security with Palo Alto Networks—deploying Next-Generation Firewalls, Zero Trust access and Cortex XDR for smarter threat detection. With centralized management via Panorama, the small IT team protects over 50,000 users across campuses and the cloud with enhanced visibility and control.

Key Takeaways:

- Los Rios Community College District (65,000 students) faced major pandemic challenges due to outdated infrastructure and siloed security tools.
- A small IT team struggled with threats across the multi-cloud (AWS, Oracle, Azure) using manual and fragmented systems.
- Partnered with Palo Alto Networks to modernize networks and enable secure, scalable remote access.
- Adopted a multi-cloud security strategy with NGFWs, Zero Trust and Panorama for centralized management.
- Deployed Cortex XDR for smarter threat detection, MFA, and secure access for 50,000+ users.
- Gained visibility, simplified operations and stronger protection for users and data.



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Princeton University Secures Email Integrity with Proofpoint Secure Email Relay

Princeton University, a top-tier Ivy League institution, needed a secure and scalable solution to protect its email infrastructure during a transition to the cloud. Partnering with Proofpoint, the university enhanced its outbound email security while laying the groundwork for long-term digital transformation.

The Challenge:

With a commitment to academic openness and operational continuity, Princeton University relies heavily on its communication systems. The university's central IT office manages a hybrid environment, with Google handling student accounts and Microsoft Exchange Online serving faculty and staff. However, their legacy on-prem SMTP servers and Listserv system posed a challenge during infrastructure modernization.

The university needed a cloud-based, reliable outbound mail relay that could manage occasional high email volumes, provide advanced spam and malware protection, and ensure email authentication—especially for third-party vendors sending emails on behalf of the university. Their goal was to avoid reputational damage and maintain secure communications, without introducing new on-prem infrastructure.

The Solution:

After evaluating several options, Princeton chose Proofpoint Secure Email Relay for its reliability, security, and strong existing relationship with the vendor. The solution offered the outbound email control they needed, with built-in protection against spam, compromised systems, and domain abuse.

Proofpoint's solution also addressed a persistent issue with third-party vendors sending unauthenticated emails on Princeton's behalf. By routing these communications through Secure Email Relay, Princeton could ensure proper authentication and preserve domain integrity.

With centralized management and visibility, Ratliff's team gained the confidence to begin retiring on-prem infrastructure. They now plan to migrate more routing and email functions to the Proofpoint platform, advancing their cloud-first strategy.

Key Takeaways:

- **Cloud-first strategy support:**
Eliminated reliance on legacy on-prem infrastructure
- **Improved security:**
Outbound email scanning for spam, malware, and compromised systems
- **Reputation protection:**
Ensured domain integrity through proper authentication of third-party senders
- **Operational flexibility:**
Scalable platform that adapts to evolving campus needs
- **Stronger vendor partnership:**
Built on longstanding trust and proven service delivery





proofpoint.

Secure Email Relay for Education



[Learn More](#)



Penn State Modernizes Financial Operations and Research Administration with SAP S/4HANA-Powered SIMBA Platform

Penn State University, a leading public research institution, undertook a major transformation to modernize its financial systems by replacing its 30-year-old mainframe system, IBIS, with SIMBA (System for Integrated Management Budgeting and Accounting), powered by SAP S/4HANA. This initiative aligned with the university's mission to support innovation, improve research administration, and modernize operations.

The transformation was guided by two key goals:

- **Achieve real-time financial visibility** to enable faster, data-driven decisions and proactively manage funding shifts, sponsored research compliance, and cost optimization.
- **Unify financial systems and analytics** within a single platform, providing a single source of truth and eliminating the need to switch between disconnected systems.

The Challenge:

As part of the SIMBA project's broader transformation goals, Penn State identified several focus areas to ensure the new platform effectively supported its complex financial and research operations:

- **Modernizing Research Administration:** Redesigning workflows for setting up grants, budget allocations, and billing of sponsors to align with an integrated platform.
- **Improving Operational Workflows:** Streamline data access and reduce reliance on spreadsheets and separate systems.

The Solution:

Penn State addressed these challenges through a strategic approach focused on integration, user experience, and continuous improvement:

- **Enhanced Reporting with Embedded Analytics:** Delivered real-time, side-by-side reporting of accrual and cash data through SAP S/4HANA Embedded Analytics, improving clarity and decision-making for grant closeouts.
- **SAP Concur Integration:** Linked SIMBA with SAP Concur to provide seamless access to travel and expense data, enhancing transparency in research expenditure tracking and compliance.
- **User-Centric Design Enhancements:** Enabled SAP Fiori tiles and drill-to features for a streamlined, intuitive user experience with quick access to financial and grant data.

Key Takeaways:

- SAP supported research expenditures with broad, wide-ranging impact.
- SAP S/4HANA report executions that automate, connect, and simplify departmental expenses.
- Faster and more meaningful analytics that allow for the efficient delivery of research requirements.



Driving Operational Excellence

How Penn State Unified Finance and Research Management

Learn
More →



The University of Illinois Advances Student Success by Turning Data into Doing with Splunk

Since 1867, the University of Illinois has been fulfilling its mission to foster discovery through innovative research, tackling global problems and expanding the human experience. The university needed a way to turn disparate data into a better student and staff experience.

With 200-plus buildings scattered across a three-square-mile campus, the University of Illinois resembles a small city. To ensure this sprawling campus feels like a home to its more than 50,000 students, the university uses data as a tool to connect the community.

Data is central to the new Student Success Initiative, which helps staff better understand what makes students successful. The team is investigating ways to use Splunk to combine data from management system logs, online courses, wireless access, databases and other sources, then build models that identify which students may be facing challenges. These insights will help the team collaborate with advisors to provide personalized care and academic help to at-risk students.

The Challenge:

Data was siloed and inaccessible to most staff, which delayed issue resolution and prevented staff members from identifying student challenges and measuring success.

Key Takeaways:

- Optimized athletes' health and performance by tracking fatigue levels and other key health data.
- Allowed students to focus on learning, not security breaches, by doubling the number of identified account compromises.
- Reduced costs by migrating data to Splunk Cloud.



The background of the entire page is a photograph of a modern, multi-story office building with large glass windows and brick accents. The sky is blue with some clouds. A decorative pattern of small, light blue dots is overlaid on the right side of the image. The Carahsoft logo is positioned at the top center in white text.

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Carahsoft proudly teams with our manufacturer and reseller partners to offer hundreds of IT solutions that are available on Carahsoft's GSA MAS, ITES-SW2, NASA SEWP V, NASPO ValuePoint, NCPA, OMNIA Partners, and numerous state and local contracts.

Learn more

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Empowering Higher Education through Carahsoft and Udemy

As the demand for workforce-ready graduates and upskilled faculty grows, colleges and universities are turning to Udemy Business to bridge the digital skills gap. Through its partnership with Carahsoft, Udemy is bringing scalable, just-in-time learning to higher education institutions nationwide.



The Challenge:

Higher education institutions are under immense pressure to prepare students for an evolving workforce while also investing in the continuous development of faculty and staff. Many universities face budget constraints, fragmented training tools, and limited internal resources to keep up with fast-moving technologies like AI, cybersecurity, and cloud computing. Additionally, faculty and administrators often lack access to flexible, personalized learning paths that accommodate the pace and priorities of academic life.

Traditional professional development models—limited to in-person training or static online resources—have proven insufficient in meeting the diverse needs of higher ed professionals, IT departments, and student support staff. Institutions needed a partner who could offer both depth and agility: a platform that supported technical upskilling, soft skill development, and lifelong learning, all in one place.

The Solution:

Through Carahsoft, institutions can now procure Udemy Business with ease and confidence, leveraging pre-negotiated contract vehicles and streamlined procurement processes tailored for public sector education. Udemy's enterprise learning platform offers on-demand access to more than 25,000 curated courses, taught by real-world experts in high-demand areas such as data science, project management, teaching strategies, and cloud technologies.

Universities using Udemy Business have launched institution-wide learning initiatives for faculty development, IT modernization, and student career readiness. The self-paced and mobile-friendly design of Udemy courses supports asynchronous learning, which fits naturally into the demanding schedules of higher ed professionals.

Institutions are also leveraging Udemy Business to drive broadscale workforce development—providing critical training to not only students, but also to staff across campus in areas like food safety, accounting, and event services.

Learning & Development (L&D) teams are modernizing technical pathways through Udemy's deep content library, including hands-on resources for cloud development, generative AI, and machine learning—with the ability to go cradle-to-grave on a skill set, from foundational theory to model building.

Faculty are also using Udemy for curriculum supplementation, assigning foundational courses to students to reinforce classroom instruction. This approach allows professors to avoid spending time reteaching basic concepts and instead focus on deeper, discussion-based learning in class.

Moreover, institutions can create and deploy custom courses tailored to their unique needs—whether for food service staff, administrative onboarding, or academic enrichment. These courses can be published in their private Udemy Business instance and made available across departments to streamline and scale internal training.



Key Takeaways:

- **Flexible Procurement:**
Carahsoft simplifies access to Udemy Business through cooperative contracts tailored for higher ed.
- **Targeted Content:**
Courses aligned with faculty development, digital transformation, and institutional strategic goals.
- **Scalable Learning:**
Supports both small-scale pilots and institution-wide rollouts with user analytics and admin tools.
- **On-Demand Access:**
Anytime, anywhere learning that fits the pace of university professionals and students alike.
- **Workforce Development:**
Upskilling across faculty, students, and staff—including IT, food safety, accounting, and more.
- **Curriculum Supplementation:**
Professors assign Udemy content to build foundational knowledge outside class.
- **Custom Course Creation:**
Institutions can build and deploy internal training content across departments.



Transform lives through flexible, effective skill development

Udemy's mission is to transform lives through learning by providing flexible, effective skill development to empower organizations and individuals. The Udemy marketplace platform, with thousands of courses in dozens of languages, provides the tools learners, instructors, and organizations need to achieve their goals and reach their full potential.



Register Now



UC Riverside Streamlines Call Management and Enhances Hybrid Teaching, Learning, and Working With Zoom Solutions

Serving more than 26K students, The University of California, Riverside (UCR) leveraged Zoom's integrated communication and collaboration solutions to modernize its infrastructure to enable effective hybrid teaching, learning, and working.

The Challenge:

UCR faced significant infrastructure challenges with its outdated landline telephone system and limited contact center capabilities, which impacted call management efficiency. Additionally, the rapid adoption of hybrid teaching and remote work models required upgraded and flexible classroom and meeting space technology to support in-person and virtual participants seamlessly.

The Solution:

Already leveraging Zoom Meetings for teaching, learning, and internal communication, UCR implemented Zoom Phone, Zoom Contact Center, and Zoom Rooms in 2022. UCR replaced more than 5,000 legacy landlines with Zoom Phone's modern VoIP solution, significantly reducing maintenance overhead and providing greater flexibility. Deploying Zoom Contact Center helped them streamlined operations for key departments such as Financial Aid and UCR Health. It offered advanced call routing, monitoring, and robust reporting capabilities to improve operational efficiency and caller experience.

Zoom Rooms standardized classroom and meeting space technology, enabling intuitive use of hybrid teaching tools and minimizing technical support needs. The technology allowed easy integration with affordable hardware solutions, accommodating various department-specific needs.

As UCR's CIO Matthew Gunkel explained, leveraging a single platform to implement multiple solutions for different University services has provided vertical integration advantages in simplifying both the management and user experience. Linda Roney, Director of Performance Excellence at UCR Health, added that UCR Health's contact center now boasts more robust and user-friendly features, such as call-back and internal transfer functions, which have enhanced the patient experience.



Key Takeaways:

- Transitioned 5,000+ phones and multiple contact centers to Zoom, enhancing operational efficiency.
- Improved user experience and minimized support calls with over 100 standardized Zoom Rooms.
- Gained advanced call management, reporting, and operational data capabilities with Zoom Contact Center.
- Achieved seamless integration and maintained compliance with health information regulations (HIPAA) through Zoom.



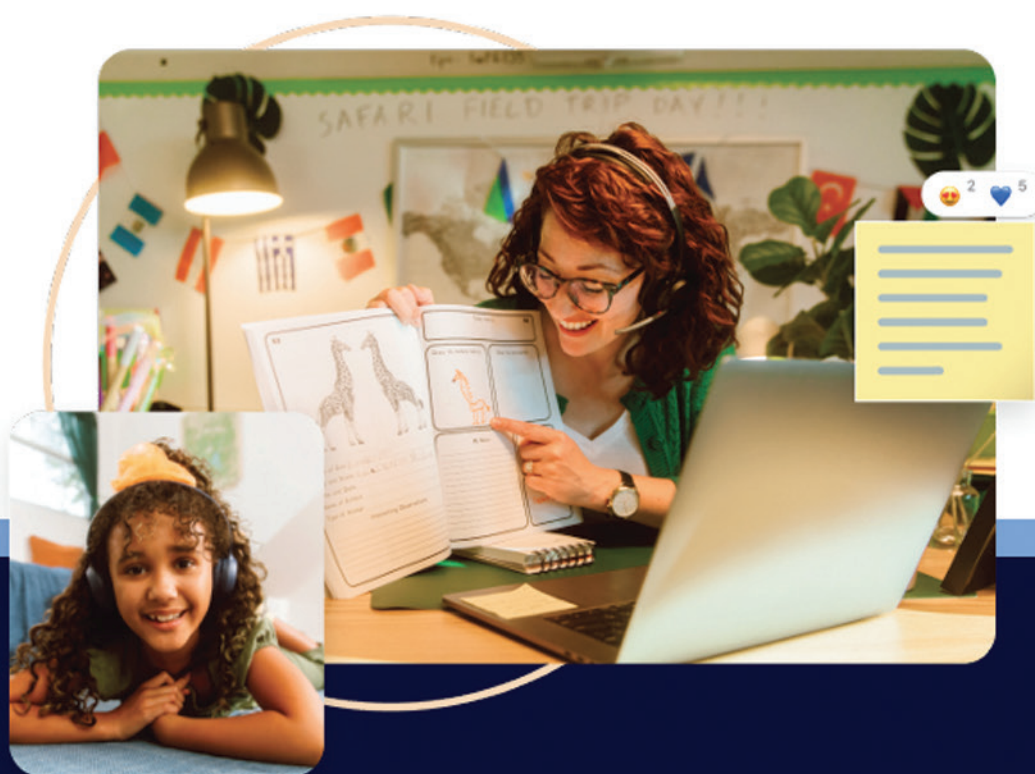
UC Riverside streamlines call management and enhances hybrid teaching, learning, and working with Zoom Solutions

Discover more about **Zoom for Education**

www.carahsoft.com/zoom/industries/zoom-for-education

Reach out to our **Carahsoft team**

Zoom@carahsoft.com



Google Public Sector Helps Enhance Learning at the University of Michigan with Pioneering New Agentic AI Virtual Teaching Assistant

Google Public Sector and the Stephen M. Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan (Michigan Ross) announced the launch of an advanced Virtual Teaching Assistant (TA) pilot program. This program features an AI agent built with Google AI technologies designed to transform higher education learning and provide valuable insights for educators.

The Challenge:

Higher education institutions face the ongoing challenge of providing personalized, accessible support to students around the clock. Students often need help understanding complex course concepts or practicing problem-solving outside of scheduled class or office hours, requiring flexible, self-directed learning tools.

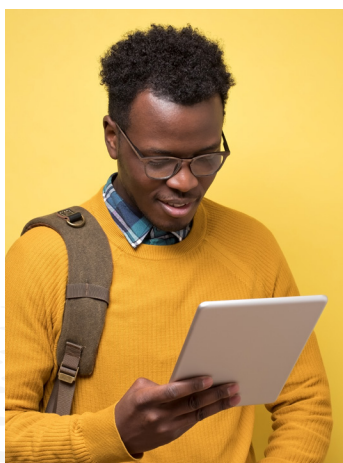
Furthermore, educators seek better ways to understand student engagement patterns and identify areas where students commonly struggle in real-time. Addressing these needs requires innovative solutions to enhance the learning experience, improve educational delivery, and support instructors effectively.

The Solution:

Google Public Sector partnered with Michigan Ross to develop and pilot an advanced, agentic AI Virtual Teaching Assistant powered by Google's Gemini models. This Virtual TA provides students with 24/7 access to support, facilitating self-paced learning and offering on-demand explanations of complex course concepts. It acts as a practice partner, guiding students through problem-solving without giving away answers, thereby fostering critical thinking.

Educators can customize the Virtual TA to align with specific course curricula. The system also provides valuable real-time analytics back to instructors, including insights into student engagement, summaries of frequently asked questions, and feedback on the AI's effectiveness.

The Virtual TA has been piloted in various courses at Michigan Ross and other institutions. Insights from this pilot will inform a larger research study involving approximately 9,000 students across 26 schools and 72 courses, aiming to establish guidelines for optimally deploying such AI tools in diverse educational settings.



Key Takeaways:

- **Enhanced Student Support:** The Gemini-powered Virtual TA offers students 24/7, self-paced learning assistance and practice opportunities.
- **Improved Educator Insights:** The tool provides instructors with real-time analytics on student engagement, common questions, and AI effectiveness, enabling better understanding and potential intervention.
- **Fosters Critical Thinking:** The AI agent is designed to guide students toward solutions rather than providing direct answers.
- **Scalable AI Application:** Early pilot results show increased student engagement, leading to a large-scale research study to understand the broader adoption of AI agents in higher education.
- **Customizable Learning:** Educators can tailor the Virtual TA to fit the specific nuances of their course curricula.



The Agentic Era for Learning and Research

A full-stack AI ecosystem and platform for a new era of academic innovation.

Google Cloud drives education forward with our full-stack approach to AI across every layer; from infrastructure and research, to models and products. Build future-ready institutions with agentic AI, enterprise-grade security, and supercomputing systems to personalize learning, accelerate research, and optimize resources.

Explore
Google Cloud for
Education solutions



Policies and Executive Orders



Americans with Disabilities Act

The ADA contains provisions that require educational institutions to make their websites accessible to those with disabilities. As more services end up online, it is important that EDU websites are accessible and provide the same level of service to those of all abilities. Some examples of website accessibility barriers are poor color contrast, lack of text alternatives "alt text" on images, lack of captions on videos, inaccessible forms, labels, clear instructions, and error indicators, mouse-only navigation.



Contract Vehicles

Carahsoft offers a number of contract options for purchasing customer experience solutions. Our contracts offer purchasing options for higher ed customers. Customers can purchase solutions off of these major contract vehicles:

E&I Cooperative Services

E&I Cooperative Services (E&I) is the largest and most experienced member-owned, non-profit purchasing cooperative serving the needs of education.

E&I assists their members in creating supply-chain efficiencies, lowering costs and reducing risks by collaborating with their members, suppliers and strategic partners. E&I delivers exceptional value to higher education, K-12, and related communities by making it easy for them to access high-quality contracts, strategic sourcing expertise, insights, and unrivaled customer service.

The competitively solicited E&I Carahsoft contract provides E&I members with a direct distribution partner for cloud and managed service solutions, and related IT products and services.

The agreement includes access to leading technology providers through Carahsoft at guaranteed discounts off MSRP, including Acquia, Amazon Web Services, DocuSign, Qualtrics, Red Hat, SolarWinds, Tableau, and more. E&I members now have the ability to quickly and seamlessly integrate cutting-edge technologies, and select and implement the best possible solutions that deliver the greatest value.



IPHEC

Through the OMNIA Partners, Public Sector (subsidiary National IPA) cooperative we have established a new subordinate contract, the Illinois Public Higher Education Cooperative ("IPHEC"). IPHEC is a cooperative organization comprised of all thirteen public institutions of higher education. This cooperative further taps consortia's E&I Cooperative Services, Midwestern Higher Education Compact ("MHEC"), and Big Ten Academic Alliance ("BTAA" formerly CICPC) to help provide a wider range of solutions for its member entities. The IPHEC initiative is among the premier procurement vehicles in the state of Illinois and its partnership with Carahsoft will continue its excellent program of assisting the State's learning institutions in acquiring the necessary resources for its students and staff.

OMNIA Partners, Public Sector (subsidiary National IPA) contracts are available for use and benefit all entities that must comply with state purchasing laws (state, cities, counties, non-profits, public and private schools, colleges and universities and all governmental entities).



MHEC

The MHEC contract is available for use and benefits all organizations that encompasses all the Commonwealth's public institutions of higher education.

MHEC is a state purchasing consortium comprised of Massachusetts public institutions of higher education as well as a few private colleges known as the Five Colleges, Inc buying group, including Amherst College, Smith College, Mount Holyoke College, Hampshire College, and the University of Massachusetts Amherst. The organization goal is to provide and manage contracts for goods and services using group buying practices for its member institutions.

MHEC strives to be the consortium of choice for our members by providing multi-vendor contracts that are the best in the industry in terms of cost avoidance, product and service depth, vendor quality, choice and terms, and by being an active catalyst for local and regional small business participation, including women and minority-owned companies.

NJEDGE

NJEdge aims to deliver and sustain a healthy, vibrant, and thriving technology ecosystem that is purpose-built for the communities we serve. Through active collaboration, adaptive technology, transformative engagement and defined solutions, we have designed a national model of excellence in research and education networking in New Jersey and beyond.

Virtualization Benefits

Virtualization allows IT departments to create a virtual environment at the workstation, server, or data center level. With this virtualization technology, you can reduce the number of physical servers or computers, while still maintaining performance levels. Benefits include:

- Reduced costs for physical IT hardware (servers, desktops, etc.)
- Lower operational and maintenance costs when upgrading your IT environment
- "Green" IT savings through lower power, cooling, and space costs



OARnet

OARnet delivers technology-based solutions that reduce costs, increase productivity, and improve customer service. As a division of the Ohio Department of Higher Education's Ohio Technology Consortium, OARnet serves Ohio's education communities, public broadcasting, and state and local government entities.

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OMNIA Partners, Education Software Solutions and Services

OMNIA Partners, Public Sector is a national governmental purchasing cooperative able to leverage one of the largest pools of purchasing potential. The organization competitively bids and awards contracts to national vendors in accordance with purchasing procedures mandated by state procurement laws and regulations. This means equal pricing for the smallest entities and the largest buyers.

OMNIA Partners, Public Sector was established under state law to help governmental entities operate efficiently and economically. Utilizing an OMNIA Partners, Public Sector (subsidiary National IPA) contract means the buyer deals directly with the vendor, as normally, using the National IPA contract as their own.

Texas DIR

The Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR) delivers technology solutions to state & local government entities. DIR offers purchasing support and policy insights so organizations across all levels of Texas government can find and securely implement modern technology.

Carahsoft's competitively solicited DIR contracts offers a wide variety of products and services from many different brands depending on the scope of the contract. DIR customers will receive discounted pricing with negotiated terms and conditions in compliance with state procurement rules.

The Quilt

The Quilt is the non-profit national coalition of 38 of our country's most advanced regional research and education. Participants in The Quilt provide advanced network services and applications to over 400 universities and thousands of other educational institutions, state and local government agencies, healthcare, non-profits, and libraries.

Based on The Quilt participants' combined experiences in operations and development of leading-edge technologies, The Quilt aims to influence the national agenda on information technology infrastructure, with particular emphasis on networking for research and education. Through this coalition, The Quilt promotes delivery of networking services at lower cost, higher performance and greater reliability and security.

VASCUPP

Any public body (to include government/state agencies, political subdivisions, etc.), cooperative purchasing organizations, public or private health or educational institution, or any University related foundation may access the Agreement if authorized by Carahsoft.





Internet2 Program

Internet2 is a non-profit community providing a secure high-speed network, cloud solutions, research support, and services tailored for education and research. Internet2's community includes higher education, research institutions, government entities and nonprofit organizations.

Carahsoft and our reseller partners work with Internet2 to support their member community through the NET+ program, which provides a portfolio of reliable cloud and trust solutions to help higher education and research institutions solve shared technology challenges. The NET+ program offers these solutions at exclusive pricing and with terms and conditions tailored to meet the needs of education institutions. Carahsoft is a distributor under Internet2 NET+ and has partnered with leading manufacturers.

Explore the benefits of how you can count on Carahsoft and our Reseller Partners

- 24x7 availability call us at 888-662-2724
- Dedicated support specializing in serving enterprise ready solutions
- Ecosystem of value-added reseller partners
- Contract Expertise: We understand your procurement needs and the outcomes you're seeking
- Quick turnaround quote: Get the IT solutions you need with the fast, accurate service you deserve
- Substantial cost savings on EdTech solutions and service portfolio from certified technology brand partners.

Upcoming Higher Education Events



Carahsoft's EdTech Talks Summit

October 1-3 | Virtual Event

The 5th annual EdTech Talks Summit is Carahsoft's premier event for K-12 and higher education professionals of all grade levels to hear from the industry's leading EdTech vendors. Over the span of multiple days, attendees will join classroom panels, keynote assemblies and "Before the Bell" breakout sessions with interactive, audience participation in Q&As. During this event, we explore the most pressing topics within the education community such as AI, cybersecurity, data and student mental health.

Take a look at last year's various hard-hitting programs to get a sense of what to expect from EdTech Talks 2025:

- Security in Education
Today: Protecting Privacy,
Providing Safety, Promoting
Innovation
- Enhance Network Security
Posture with Nutanix
through the E-Rate Program
- Professional Development
and Workforce Readiness
for a Lifetime of Learning
- Preparing the Workforce for
Challenges in IoT Security
- Funding Digital and
Physical Security
- How AI and Observability
Solve Key IT Challenges in
K-12 Education
- The Intersections of AI
and Cybersecurity



NACUBO

July 26-29
Washington, DC
In-Person Event

NACUBO Annual Meeting is the premier event hosted by the National Association of College and University Business Officers, bringing together thousands of higher education finance and administrative leaders from across the country.

Participants gather to explore topics such as budgeting, compliance, endowment management, facilities planning, technology integration, and strategic leadership.

Whether attending in person or virtually, NACUBO's Annual Meeting provides a platform for knowledge sharing, professional development, and fostering partnerships that help colleges and universities thrive in a rapidly evolving landscape.







EDUCAUSE Annual Conference

**October 27-30
Nashville, TN
Hybrid Event**

The EDUCAUSE Annual Conference brings together top minds in higher education technology.

This premier event is where professionals and technology providers worldwide convene to network, exchange ideas, enhance their careers, and find solutions to current challenges. It's the largest assembly of your peers—individuals you can connect with, learn from, and maintain contact with all year round.



Internet2 Technology Exchange

**December 8-12
Denver, CO
In-Person Event**

Interested in speaking with technical visionaries? Excited to learn from global technology leaders? Looking for new EdTech tools backed by the education community? I2 TechEx is the event to attend for all these opportunities and more! Meet chief technologists, scientists, engineers, architects, operators and students for community-centric debates, discussions and critical dialogue surrounding topics such as generative AI, cybersecurity posture, Zero Trust, cloud solutions, policy updates, automation and more.



EDUCAUSE Demo Days

Various Dates | Virtual

EDUCAUSE Demo Days are year-round, focused showcases designed to help higher-ed IT professionals stay current with tools that support operations, teaching, student success, and campus services.

Join several 45-minute, rapid-fire sessions from cutting-edge solution providers to learn about new features in well-known tools and get introduced to completely new solutions.



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