



Cultivating digital marketers of the future.

East Tennessee State University teaches students to work with Adobe Experience Cloud for real-world marketing success.



EAST TENNESSEE STATE
UNIVERSITY

“Using Adobe Experience Cloud allows us to create a program that attracts both students and companies that are looking to ETSU for marketers and media professionals of the future.”

Stephen Marshall, Ph.D., Department Chair, Media and Communication Department, East Tennessee State University

SOLUTION

Adobe Experience Cloud, including the Adobe Analytics solution within Adobe Analytics Cloud and the Adobe Experience Manager and Adobe Target solutions within Adobe Marketing Cloud

RESULTS



Experiential learning approach **INCREASED GROWTH** and student engagement in graduate program



Helped students gain **REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE** on professional industry software



Supplemented university marketing resources with trained **STUDENT WORKERS**



Gained support and interest from **INDUSTRY**, creating an employment pipeline for students



East Tennessee State University

Established in 1911

Students: 14,500

Johnson City, Tennessee

www.etsu.edu

R2integrated

www.r2integrated.com

CHALLENGES

- Increase recruitment to ETSU without shifting budget, staffing, and resources toward marketing and away from education
- Enhance marketing and student experience resources through an entrepreneurial budgeting approach
- Add more value to degree by providing students greater opportunities and real-life experiences
- Prepare students for digital transformation in any industry by bringing cutting-edge tools into the classroom

USE CASES

- Digital Foundation
- Customer Intelligence
- Personalized Experiences

Master of Arts in Brand and Media Strategy

In the relatively new field of digital marketing, many companies struggle to find experienced employees who are trained to deliver the advanced personalization expected by many consumers. According to the Digital Marketing Institute, only 8% of digital marketers have achieved entry level skill sets.*

East Tennessee State University (ETSU) saw this market need as an opportunity to help students find successful careers. ETSU is a regional university with 14,500 undergraduate and graduate students. Faced with competition from larger universities, ETSU attracts students by creating unique programs and providing opportunities for valuable real-world experience.

To meet the demand for skilled digital marketers, the Media and Communication Department developed an interdisciplinary Master of Arts program in Brand and Media Strategy. “We created the Brand and Media Strategy program to fill what we saw as an industry-wide knowledge gap,” says Stephen Marshall, Ph.D., Chair of the Media and Communication Department at ETSU. “We help students understand the foundations of digital marketing and creating personalized experiences so that they can immediately contribute to their future employers’ success.”

Adobe is a key partner for the Brand and Media Strategy program. Professors use Adobe Experience Cloud solutions in classes to help students gain critical skills on industry software.

“Not only is Adobe Experience Cloud used by thousands of companies worldwide, but the platform includes solutions that cover every aspect of digital transformation—content management, analytics, testing, and more,” says Dr. Marshall. “Using Adobe Experience Cloud allows us to create a program that attracts both students and companies that are looking to ETSU for marketers and media professionals of the future.”

Bringing Adobe into every class

When learning about audience research and analytics, students use the Adobe Analytics solution within Adobe Analytics Cloud to discover real-time data. Students learn to turn that data into insights about performance that can drive digital marketing strategies.

Rather than creating press releases in a word processing program, students learn to work with Adobe Experience Manager, part of Adobe Marketing Cloud, to create web-ready press releases. Students learn to pull in logos, images, and color palettes stored in Experience Manager Assets to create visually engaging experiences in Experience Manager Sites.



“Companies recognize the value of hiring an ETSU graduate who already has experience working with Adobe Experience Cloud and is ready to help them connect with customers using sophisticated digital strategies.”

*Stephen Marshall, Ph.D., Department Chair,
Media and Communication Department,
East Tennessee State University*

Adobe Target and the user generated content (UGC) capabilities within Experience Manager round out the students' education. Target helps students learn how to test different strategies and target audiences based on location, demographics, or other information in order to personalize digital experiences. The UGC platform within Experience Manager teaches students to bring social components and UGC to digital properties.

Students can supplement their master's degrees by also earning professional Creative Cloud certifications from Adobe. The program's interdisciplinary focus encourages students to focus on creative, computer science, or business areas outside of the core classes.

More than 70 professional advisors from local, regional, and national companies engage with ETSU students during their studies. While the advisors are excited to work with the next-generation of digital marketing and media professionals, they also view the Brand and Media Strategy program as a crucial recruitment pipeline for their companies.

“Employers aren't just looking for degrees; they want to recruit people with applicable skills and experience,” says Dr. Marshall. “Companies recognize the value of hiring an ETSU graduate who already has experience working with Adobe Experience Cloud and is ready to help them connect with customers using sophisticated digital strategies.”

Real-world marketing experience

Graduate students in the Brand and Media Strategy program are invited to test out their skills by working on marketing programs for ETSU. Students in the graduate level BucDigital capstone project are placed in agency-style groups that balance each student's particular strengths and interests. One team member might be a strong copywriter, while another specializes in deep-dive analytics. Students work together to develop a marketing strategy, build and test their program, measure KPIs, and achieve the goals set out by their clients and stakeholders at ETSU.

Some students may work on increasing student recruitment for different ETSU programs, including the Pre-Med program, the Brand and Media Strategy program, and the unique Bluegrass, Old Time, and Country Music Studies program. Other students work on increasing interest and participation in ETSU's Creative Arts scholarship.

The Department of Media and Communication was the first to undergo a digital transformation with the migration to Adobe Experience Manager. Other departments quickly requested to follow that lead. Students from the graduate Brand and Media Strategy program worked with Adobe partner R2Integrated on the various steps to develop the new higher education experience, including business goals discovery, user research, development of personas and user pathways, content strategy and gap analysis, design, site build, and launch.

SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

Adobe Experience Cloud, including:

Adobe Analytics Cloud

- Adobe Analytics
 - Marketing Reports and Analytics

Adobe Marketing Cloud

- Adobe Experience Manager
 - Sites
 - Assets
 - LiveFyre
- Adobe Target
 - AB Testing

Students love the opportunity to work on ETSU marketing projects. Seeing how their campaigns affect real audiences—through increased applications, campus visits, or recruitment numbers—inspires students to continue expanding their skills. It also gives students measurable results that they can show to potential employers.

“Students are attracted to our experiential learning approach, demonstrated by the growth in the graduate program over the past two years,” says Melanie B. Richards, Ph.D., Assistant Professor and BucDigital Faculty Leader at ETSU. “At both undergraduate and graduate levels, we incorporate the same digital marketing experiences students will have post-graduation through our experiential learning process, the Applied Media and Marketing Education Norm. This gives students the opportunity to learn how to approach and overcome potential challenges they may encounter in the real world on projects while still in the learning environment of the university. The approach benefits ETSU, as the university can supplement its marketing resources for a much lower cost compared to hiring an outside marketing agency.”

“So many companies are working with Adobe Experience Cloud, but few programs bring our level of experiential education,” says Dr. Marshall. “We’re creating fantastic opportunities that attract hiring companies and new students alike because the work is real.”

ETSU’s approach is funded in a unique, entrepreneurial way as well. Software funding is based on student recruitment for the Department of Media and Communication. In other words, marketing software typically budgeted from a university unit is being funded by student tuition dollars from a single academic program.

ETSU started with 24 students in its Brand and Media Strategy graduate program. Just one year later, that number has risen to more than 75 students and undergraduate numbers are climbing as well. “I think all our programs are seeing strong growth for two main reasons,” says Dr. Marshall. “The first is how we emphasize professional, real-world experiences and connections. The other is the strength of the Adobe brand. Students want to get a leg up in the digital marketing industry and Adobe is a leader. With active learning and our Adobe partnership, our approach creates student, organizational, and industry ROI like no other program in the world.”

For more information

www.adobe.com/data-analytics-cloud.html

www.adobe.com/marketing-cloud.html

www.linkedin.com/pulse/amen-applied-marketing-education-norm-bridging-stephen-marshall-phd/



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* <https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/en-us/the-insider/missing-the-mark-the-digital-marketing-skills-gap-in-the-usa-uk-ireland>

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