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Seminar reveals demand for IT skills

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At e-Business Day 2007, local technology business leaders will discuss the opportunities created by the rise of user-generated content on the Internet.

The event is slated for Tuesday, Nov. 13 from 8 a.m. to noon in room 103 of the Morken Center. It is hosted by [ePLU](#), a nonprofit organization within the School of Business.

The seminar begins with a keynote presentation by technology guru Chris Pirillo, founder of lockergnome.com. It also features two panel discussions.

The first will look at the rise of user-generated content, such as blogs, wikis and social-networking sites. The second will discuss the unique opportunities these technologies present to businesses in creating and delivering value for customers.

“Students will be able to learn how business applies the latest technology to create a business model,” said Chung-Shing Lee (pictured), associate business professor and director of ePLU.

Since 2002, the number of students pursuing information technology degrees has declined nationally, and the same is true at PLU, Lee explained.

“Nowadays, not many students are interested in studying information systems. They believe most of the IT jobs are outsourced to China, India,” he said.

However, that perception is misinformed. After talking with other professors and people in the industry, Lee's learned that IT jobs – like web security, development and monitoring – aren't being outsourced. In fact, companies are desperate to find young professionals with the necessary skill set, he said.

Businesses realize that information technology plays a significant role in creating and delivering business services to customers, Lee said. Now banks offer online banking, grocery stores offer online shopping and business such as IBM, Dell and General Motors are more focused on personalized customer service.

The e-Business Day 2007 presentations aim to demonstrate the demand in business for IT professionals. It also gives students the opportunity to network with the visiting business leaders.

“(Students) will get to know people in the industry,” Lee said. “Before they graduate, they’ll learn what’s going on in information technology, in the information management industry and establish personal relationships.”

Lee created ePLU in the summer of 2000. It seeks to establish a bridge between students and the Internet economy, and provides resources and consulting services for local companies.

As the director of ePLU, Lee is constantly looking for projects in the community that his students can work on and gain real life experience. For example, the e-commerce manager at Goodwill Industries has asked for student help on three projects related to marketing, sales and operations online.

In addition to teaching and running ePLU, Lee was recently elected to the editorial board of the “Competitive Review,” an international business journal concerned with global competitiveness issues. Coverage includes trends and future developments in global competition. In the past, Lee's work has appeared in the journal.

“I'm very excited to be doing this,” Lee said. “In the academic community, it's considered a valuable service, and an honor and a recognition of my work.”

As a member of the editorial board, Lee will review academic papers submitted for publication and recommend which ones should be published. Additionally, he proposed a topic for a special issue of the journal and was selected to be the guest editor for an issue on the topic, “Regional Clusters and Global Competitiveness.”

“It's quite an honor for me to be an editor, a guest editor for a prestigious journal,” he said.

To learn more about ePLU, or for questions about e-Business Day 2007, contact Lee at ext. 8718 or clee@plu.edu.

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University Communications staff writer Megan Haley compiled this report. Comments, questions, ideas? Please contact her at ext. 8691 or at halevmk@plu.edu. Photo by University Photographer Jordan Hartman.

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