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Stanford School of Engineering Debuts Service Offering Complete Courses Online for Free

'Stanford Engineering Everywhere' Pilot Releases 10 Computer Science, Electrical Engineering Classes under Creative Commons License in Many Formats

STANFORD, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--The Stanford School of Engineering today announced the debut of Stanford Engineering Everywhere (SEE), the pilot of a free online service that provides Stanford's popular introduction to computer science and other computer science and electrical engineering courses. Each consists of complete video lectures and materials such as handouts, assignments, exams and transcripts. With SEE, Stanford Engineering is releasing the courses under a Creative Commons license, explicitly encouraging educators and learners around the world to incorporate the video courses and materials into their educational endeavors and to form virtual communities around the classes.

"We are excited to extend our teaching and learning opportunities worldwide through SEE," said Jim Plummer, dean of the Stanford Engineering School. "We hope SEE will enable a broad range of people to learn, to share their ideas and to make their own contributions to knowledge."

The 10 courses, arranged in three subject areas, include one of Stanford's most popular sequences: the three-quarter introduction to computer science. SEE also offers three courses on artificial intelligence and robotics, and four on linear systems and optimization. The address for SEE is <http://see.stanford.edu>

"The introductory CS sequence at Stanford provided me so much — programming fundamentals, of course — but more importantly, they provided me many of the basic building blocks that I still use to think about software, products and organizations with today," said John Lilly, a Stanford CS alumnus (BS 1993, MS 1995) and the CEO of the open source software developer Mozilla Corp. "These classes were among the most useful of my time at Stanford, and I'm really excited to see Stanford making them widely available under a Creative Commons license."

SEE is produced by the school's Stanford Center for Professional Development (SCPD), which will use its 40 years of distance education expertise to provide an anywhere/anytime open access learning experience. SCPD executive director Andy DiPaolo said the ease of forming groups on Facebook and sharing information will allow learners to use Stanford engineering courses as a basis to engage with each other in the vital social aspects of learning.

"We want people to learn from it, build on it and share with others using popular social networking tools," added DiPaolo.

The SEE pilot's development and launch was funded by Sequoia Capital, a Menlo Park, Calif., venture capital firm.

Open license, popular technology

The Creative Commons license allows for non-commercial reuse of the video lectures and materials so long as proper attribution is given. This allows educators and students to download and incorporate the materials into their own work, so long as they acknowledge Stanford and other consenting copyright holders. Any lecture or course materials for which Stanford

Engineering was unable to secure a copyright holder's consent has been omitted from SEE. With that and a few other exceptions, everything offered on SEE is exactly the same as what is offered to enrolled Stanford students. Stanford registration and credit, however, is not available to those taking courses through SEE.

To facilitate easy downloading, the video presentations are available at the SEE Web site and through iTunes, YouTube, Zune, Bit Torrent and Vyew. Videos are in multiple formats to ensure widespread compatibility and a variety of quality and download times.

Part of the technological infrastructure includes access to course-specific Facebook pages. These pages are meant to be self-sustaining user communities, rather than Stanford-moderated groups.

SEE is the latest effort at Stanford to share information and ideas with the public online. Three years ago the university helped pioneer the use of Apple's iTunes service by academic institutions. Earlier this year Stanford launched a dedicated channel on YouTube. SEE represents Stanford's first free site to offer complete video-based courses and materials available anywhere, anytime and on-demand.

DiPaolo said expansion of SEE beyond the initial set of offerings will depend on the public response. He said he hopes that educators and students around the globe make the most of these free and easily accessed courses to enhance learning.

"In the industrial age we went to school," he said. "In the communications age, school comes to us."

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