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College Stores Save Students Money Through Encouraging Custom Course Materials

NACS Media Solutions announces “smart” partners

February 16, 2012 (OBERLIN, OH) - Custom publishing is making its way into the spotlight in the college bookstore industry as a way to save students money and build relationships with faculty and publishers.

To help stores, NACS Media Solutions (NMS) launched its [Grow Custom](#) initiative. Implementing or expanding custom course materials and other custom products is another excellent way for stores to answer student demands for less expensive, higher value course materials, according to [NMS](#), the technology research and development subsidiary of the [National Association of College Stores](#).

Mark Nelson, Ph. D, NACS chief information officer and vice president of NMS, said custom publishing done well increases the value to students by providing “just what they need to succeed” in the classroom and provides value to faculty by gathering the materials that match “what they want to teach, how they want to teach it.”

Doing custom well means building more “smart” custom documents. Smart custom publishing focuses on collecting information specifically linked to learning objectives, created in a partnership between publishers, faculty, and the college store. “This isn’t just moving stuff around to create a unique ISBN,” Nelson said. “Smart custom publishing is examining the content and determining whether it has the value.”

COLLABORATION KEY TO SUCCESS

In order for smart custom to be successful, there needs to be agreement from all parties: the business office, the bookstore, faculty members, and academic affairs. Publishers also must be willing to aggregate content. “The faculty works with publishers on content and the bookstore works with the publisher on price. All three are working together transparently,” Nelson said.

The NMS Grow Custom initiative launches this month with 11 major sponsors: AcademicPub, Cengage Learning, Collegiate Retail Alliance, Flat World Knowledge, LAD Custom Publishing, McGraw-Hill, Pearson Higher Education, University Readers, Virdocs Publishing, John Wiley and Sons, and XanEdu Publishing.

NMS plans to provide a number of promotional and educational activities throughout the year to build awareness for the value of custom publishing. “College stores will contribute to the student’s academic success, while also improving the affordability of education,” Nelson said.

“It’s about strengthening the alignment of the store to the academic mission it was created to serve.”

About NMS

[NACS Media Solutions LLC](#) (NMS) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the National Association of College Stores (NACS), headquartered in Oberlin, Ohio. Founded in 2008, NMS and its network of partners develops and supports technology and content solutions that enable collegiate retailers to become an effective and vibrant channel for the delivery of digitally-enhanced products and services, helping to support faculty choice and redefining the learning experiences of college students.