

Georgia Virtual School

Portable Content for a Portable School: Georgia Virtual School and SoftChalk



Georgia Virtual School (GaVS) puts a high premium on portability and flexibility when developing eLearning content. After all, they serve thousands of students across Georgia with accredited online learning programs. All of the content developed for their virtual school programs is also made available (free of charge) for use by any public school in Georgia. By developing content that is high-quality, portable, and interoperable with many delivery systems, GaVS ensures that their course materials have a life beyond one student, course or school year.

How do they do it? GaVS depends on SoftChalk's eLearning content authoring solution to create high-quality learning content that is also portable, flexible, and scalable. "We wanted the content to be more portable. It was originally created in separate HTML pages inside our learning management system, making the sharing of content with all Georgia school districts a challenge" says Tami Echard, Manager of Instructional Development at GaVS. Because SoftChalk content works with any learning management system (LMS), GaVS can create the learning content once, and it can be used by any Georgia school district no matter what LMS they are using. "We still use our learning management system to deliver instruction. SoftChalk makes the course creation process more efficient and more portable."

Tami and her team also like the modular nature of SoftChalk content. Individual "parts and pieces" of a SoftChalk module can be saved as learning objects that can be re-used within other SoftChalk modules. Tami and her team are also able to readily incorporate SoftChalk learning objects that other educators have created and shared. Typically, GaVS developers create small learning modules that can be combined as needed to create full courses. For instance, most Credit Recovery courses are built from 8-10 of these modules.

Most importantly, the learning content developed by GaVS really works for students. Using embedded activities and

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self-assessment quizzes, students are able to see if they are mastering course materials as they work. This helps students keep track of their progress towards meeting crucial graduation requirements, and allows AP students to assess their mastery of college-level topics and skills. The ability to easily embed interactive assessment into the SoftChalk-created learning content is critical. In addition, SoftChalk content also helps GaVS deliver a consistent experience for all students across a large Virtual School system.

Georgia Virtual School is an accredited Georgia Department of Education statewide program that offers 120 high school (and some middle school) courses to homeschool, private school and public school students. These courses span all subjects and levels of difficulty, from career and technical education to fine art classes to Advanced Placement (AP) courses. In the GaVS Credit Recovery program, students with failing grades get a chance to make up the credits they need to finish high school by taking free, online courses. All GaVS courses created since 2009 were built entirely using SoftChalk content authoring software.

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