FlightPath is an open-source, web-based academic advising system designed for universities. Originally created by The University of Louisiana at Monroe, the software package was released as open-source on March 13, 2013.

FlightPath is designed to facilitate more accurate advising sessions on campus, as well as provide a complete history of past advising sessions. Advisors may select which courses they wish a student to register in, up to several semesters in to the future, as well as leave comments for the student and other campus staff. Students and advisors may also try out other degrees using the "What If?" tool, to see their courses applied to a different degree plan.

Origins

FlightPath was created by The University of Louisiana at Monroe's Student Success Center,[5] after searching for a commercial solution to online academic advising and retention services,[6] but failing to find a software package which was both affordable and provided the required features. The original release of FlightPath, in Fall of 2006, was functional but lacked the framework necessary for contributions from the open source community. By 2012, FlightPath's core code had been modified to resemble many of the development framework features of Drupal, a popular open-source CMS, making it now suitable for adoption by other universities. FlightPath has since been made mobile-friendly, and is now part of ULM's mobile app.[7]

See complete advising history

Easy to customize for developers and administrators

Compatible with all major browsers

Mobile theme

Features

FlightPath's core features are centered on the functionality of advising and degree audit, and are expanded through the downloading of add-on modules.

Some of the core features are as follows:[8]

View student's transcript and degree plan, grades, etc.

Perform substitutions and exceptions

View transfer credit equivalences

View course descriptions

Search complete set of degree plans available

Leave comments for students or other staff

Minimum of 1GB of RAM and 10GB hard disk space

Server Requirements

FlightPath uses industry-standard web server hardware and software:[10]

MySQL

Apache

PHP

Linux, Unix, or Windows

Why Open Source?

FlightPath is distributed as an "open-source" software package. So, what exactly does that mean?

It means that FlightPath may be download, modified, and put to use without having to pay for any license fees. It may even be redistributed, but only so long as it remains "open-source," under specific conditions outlined here and in the COPYRIGHT.txt and LICENSE.txt files packed with FlightPath. The goal is to increase the amount of "free" software in the world, which is why FlightPath is being distributed in this manner.

You may be wondering "Why should I use open source software?" as opposed to proprietary 3rd-party software. This article from PCWorld sums up the business advantages very well, and is recommended reading.

But aside from the benefits of costs and flexibility, there is a less tangible benefit to open source software: the community and collaboration which grows up around a project. This is especially important to schools and universities, where the sense of cooperation and higher education perfectly aligns with the spirit of the open source software movement.

There is a good chance that your school or university already uses some open source software. Perhaps your web site is run on a Linux server? Or you have applications installed such as Moodle, Zimbra, uPortal, or others? Maybe some of your desktop applications require Java to run, or you browse the web with FireFox? Or perhaps you benefit indirectly through the use of Google, Youtube, Facebook, or Wikipedia (all of which run on open source technologies).

But perhaps the greatest advantage of open source software is the notion that your budget is invested back into your own institution, and into the people working in your IT departments (as opposed to leaving campus, to support an outside company), and usually at a far smaller cost than the price of just one proprietary software package or support contract.

LICENSING MODEL

The GNU General Public License (GNU GPL or GPL) is a widely used free software license, which guarantees end users the freedom to run, study, share and modify the software.[7] The license was originally written by Richard Stallman of the Free Software Foundation (FSF) for the GNU Project, and grants the recipients of a computer program the rights of the Free Software Definition.[8] The GPL is a copyleft license, which means that derivative work can only be distributed under the same license terms. This is in distinction to permissive free software licenses, of which the BSD licenses and the MIT License are widely used examples. GPL was the first copyleft license for general use.

Historically, the GPL license family has been one of the most popular software licenses in the free and open-source software domain.[7][9][10][11][12] Prominent free software programs licensed under the GPL include the Linux kernel and the GNU Compiler Collection (GCC). David A. Wheeler argues that the copyleft provided by the GPL was crucial to the success of Linux-based systems, giving the programmers who contributed to the kernel the assurance that their work would benefit the whole world and remain free, rather than being exploited by software companies that would not have to give anything back to the community.[13]

In 2007, the third version of the license (GNU GPLv3) was released to address some perceived problems with the second version (GNU GPLv2) that were discovered during its long-time usage. To keep the license up to date, the GPL license includes an optional "any later version" clause, allowing users to choose between the original terms or the terms in new versions as updated by the FSF. Developers can omit it when licensing their software; for instance the Linux kernel is licensed under GPLv2 without the "any later version" clause.[14][15]

IDEA:

FlightPath was created by The University of Louisiana at Monroe in 2006. It was designed to help standardize advising practices on campus, as well as provide a history of past advisings which students and advisors could review.

since those early days, FlightPath has undergone several revisions, including a complete rebuild from scratch.

In March of 2013, the administration of ULM decided to release FlightPath as open source. Richard Peacock, one of the original developers, currently maintains the project and this site (getflightpath.com).

Other original developers and staff from ULM who worked on FlightPath were: Joe Mansour (Mainframe and Banner data coordinator), and Joann Perrer (degree and course data coordinator).

IMPACT

y Your School Will Love FlightPath Labs

Students love it for its clean, friendly interface and features.

Advisers love it for its fool-proof advising, reporting, and auditing.

Administrators love it for its ease-of-use and money-saving solutions.

At FlightPath Labs, we host and support FlightPath for you, so your school doesn't need to tie up its IT resources in the technical details and headaches of hosting. You always have the latest features, and on request, you can have new features and functionality developed just for your school.

HELP AND SUPPORT SERVICE

Why do you need FlightPath Labs?

FlightPath is a flexible and extremely versatile platform for advising students and degree audit.

It handles substitutions and transfers easily, makes short work of degree audits and trying out other degrees, and reduces advising errors.

FlightPath Labs takes care of all the hosting and support for you, from the creators of FlightPath.

Training and Consultation

Need a little extra help? No problem! FlightPath Labs is happy to offer both free and paid support and training, to make sure you get the most out of FlightPath. In addition to a wealth of freely available tutorials online, you can also count on us walk you through any rough patches you may encounter.

It's our goal to make sure you are as thrilled to have FlighPath Labs a part of your school as we are to have you as our client!

FlightPath

While the open source community version of FlightPath typically requires dedicated staff to install and maintain (including an investment in hosting infrastructure), FlightPath Labs provides all the consulting services and expertise needed to enable your school to shape and customize your advising environment to fit your needs and curriculum.

As a trusted FlightPath partner, FlightPath Labs is hosted in the cloud, so you receive the latest innovations and updates, as well as the ease of growth your school may require.