

# BOOK *smarts*

A quarterly newsletter from Nebraska Book Company, Inc.

Volume 4 Winter 2001

## Nebraska Book Company Conceives Savvy Marketing Campaign on Behalf of College Bookstores Nationwide

### NEBRASKA BOOK COMPANY (NBC)

launched its "GotUsed" campaign to the college bookstore community this fall with a fun approach to serious business for bookstores. The Web site and campaign, directed towards students, takes a light-hearted approach to buying and selling back used books. NBC teamed up with a network of college bookstores and is receiving positive exposure on college campuses nationwide as a result of the innovative campaign.

"Our marketing tactics were created to bring fun into the mix and get students' attention," says Chris Rodgers, NBC Retail Marketing Director.

GotUsed.com's mission is to increase the number of students who buy and sell back their books at crucial times of the semester. According to Rodgers, currently only 65 percent of students take advantage of these opportunities on their campus, but he is anticipating a significant increase over the next year as a result of the GotUsed campaign.

The campaign's promotions appeal to students' sense of humor; they're attention-grabbing, fresh messages delivered in fun activities. For example,

to promote the Grand Prize of a New York Hotdog Cart and a trip to Spain for the Running of the Bulls, NBC recruited people to walk around at selected colleges dressed as hot dogs and bulls informing students of the sweepstakes. Other sweepstakes prizes include a trip to Canada to hunt for Bigfoot or a lesson on learning to fly a Russian MIG Flight.

Ten swan paddleboats will be up for grabs as well. More than 500 students had registered to win these prizes just two days after the promotion began, according to Rodgers.

"NBC is dedicated to keeping the independent bookstore strong," Rodgers says. "I know this exposure is going to drive students to these college bookstores for buyback."

First National Bank of Omaha is one corporation seizing the opportunity to join Nebraska Book

Company in their promotional endeavors. For the first time in

NBC's history, the company has partnered with a financial institution to present students with an offer to sign up for a First National Bank College Visa card which, when used at bookstores nationwide, entitles the student to five percent off their total purchase.



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# Wireless Networking -



*The following is the last in a three-part series on Wireless Technology. In this final installment, Steve Cox, Assistant Vice President of Research and Development for Nebraska Book Company, reflects on positive and negative aspects of wireless technology.*

In this last installment of my series on wireless networking, I will tell you

the good, bad, and ugly of the whole situation. During our research, many things have come to light that are surprises - and some are not. Also, during the final phase of this research, a controversy has developed around 802.11b having to do with serious security vulnerabilities that had recently been discovered in the wireless protocols.

It seems that, despite limitations, everyone is jumping on the wireless bandwagon these days, including organizations like the Miami-Dade Building Department, the City of Painsville, Ohio, Police Department and NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center. And, during the days following the September 11 tragedy in New York City, wireless networking and similar technologies were instrumental in getting data flowing again to stricken areas of the city.

In recent days, however, some security concerns have been raised about the integrity of the 802.11b signal and its data encryption techniques. That is being worked on as we speak and should not, in my opinion, be of great concern when used within the confines of a bookstore or some similar institution. It does present some potential exposure when used in an open air environment where the signals from the 802.11b devices can be intercepted, but most manufacturers are well on their way to solving this problem.

Is wireless networking going to work for you? The answer is most likely YES - with some qualification. As I mentioned early on in this series of articles, I do not believe that a "Full Wireless" bookstore is ready for prime time yet, and I still have to stick by that statement.

However, wireless can be of great benefit in areas that are not normally accessible by a campus LAN (although you will need a single connection to one) and in areas in which workstations or cash registers are set up in temporary situations, such as buybacks and during rush when you need more workstations.

The scenario before WI-FI was that you had to plan very carefully where your extra stations would be and then run a network drop to each location where a workstation would be located, thus making little wired clusters all over your store (and sometimes outside the store) that were fully wired to your network.



# - Workhorse of the Future

With WI-FI, this scenario is gone if you do your homework right. A WI-FI connection that will support up to 32 users, be they cash registers, workstations, handhelds or whatever, can be serviced from a single Ethernet cable run from your backbone to the approximate area where the cluster of devices will be located. With proper planning, you may have more than one cluster.

As we found at the very beginning of this series, range is the big limiter. Very seldom do the manufacturers' specifications fall in line with reality. It's more like a "cut it in half" situation. But that's still not as bad as it sounds.

I have found that for the most part, good, reliable signals can be obtained up to 100' if nothing is blocking your line of sight from the AP device. Of course this does, as we've talked about before, depend on the location of the AP. If the AP is in "line of sight," it's not unreasonable to expect 100' or more to your working devices. This makes 802.11b ideal for such things as buyback, when you might want to have 10 workstations outside the front of your store. You would simply hang one AP from the overhead or side of the building where it is in plain site of the workstations, run one cable to it, install wireless network cards in the workstations, and you are running wireless. This is a whole lot easier and cheaper than running a cable out there for each workstation and trying to hide it so that no one trips over it, etc.

There are a couple of things to watch for, however, that can give you trouble. The first is 2.4gh DSS telephones (not cell phones) being used in close proximity to your wireless network.



To satisfy my curiosity on this subject, I did an experiment at my home. My home has five 2.4gh wireless security cameras inside and outside the house. Normally these cameras operate with clear, color, flutter-free pictures.

Out of curiosity, I took an AP that runs on 2.4gh, hooked it up at home, and started up a small 802.11b network. The security cameras did not like this at all! The pictures became fluttery, jumpy, and in some cases, unviewable. And, the network did not run as fast as it should.

Fortunately for me, I was able to change the frequency of the cameras a tiny bit and clear up most of the problems. This is enough to show that devices using frequencies near or at the same frequencies as your wireless network could possibly cause you problems. (Actually, I think this was part of the security scare, but I can't be sure.)

The array of features available today with 802.11b network are impressive: High speed data transfer up to 11mbs, compatible with all versions of Windows, roaming, Best Access Point Selection, Load Balancing, traffic filtering, auto fallback data rates for long distance, and noisy communication and 128 bit WEP encryption of the signals. The list goes on and on.

Sadly enough, any new technology is obsolete when you buy it. Manufacturers are already working on the new generations of wireless networking with even more features and higher range. But as with everything, if you wait for the next bell or whistle, you'll be waiting forever.

One thing I should mention at this point, and probably should have mentioned it earlier, is that Wireless 802.11b is available for Windows-based systems only. If you are running IBM 4694 cash registers, you will not be able to run 802.11b wireless on them. You will, however, be able to run it on your SmartChoice registers and PC based

workstations. Later generations of the 4694, along with evolving software changes, may, at some point, allow 4694 registers to be used, but not at this point.

We have learned enough over the past few months to understand Wireless 802.11b networking thoroughly. We are confident of what it can and cannot do and the best applications in which to try to use it.

As those of you who have followed this series know, we have put a tremendous amount of research time into this technology, and we feel that we are now ready to make some very careful recommendations to you regarding how you might use it in your store to your best advantage.

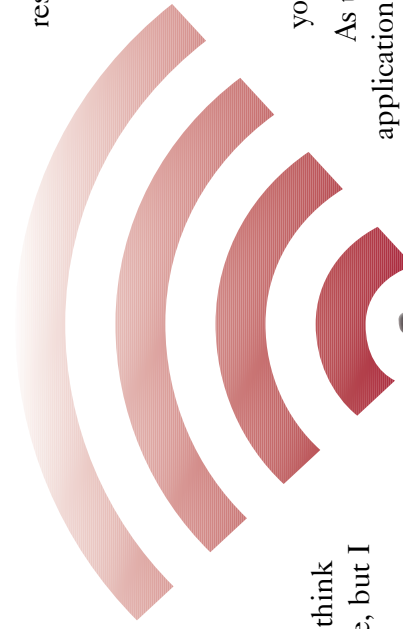
As time goes on, we will develop applications that are much more "wireless friendly" and specifically tailored to fit well with your backroom and wired systems. As I mentioned in another article, the best networks are still those that are a combination of wired and wireless networks. The difference now is that we can tell you with some authority what is a reasonable expectation and what is not. We look forward to moving with you into this newest area of bookstore automation.

For those of you who are interested, most of my testing was accomplished using the Linksys WAP 11 access point, a Handspring Visor with wireless network card in the expansion slot, and a Dell notebook with a Linksys wireless PCMCIA card installed.

There is other equipment out there that we will be constantly looking into for better performance and usability, but the basis of all my testing was the equipment listed above.

It won't be too long before someone says, "my wired network" and the technician will say, "what wires?"

**Manufacturers are already working on the new generations of wireless networking with even more features and higher range.**



# Connect2One Members Will Get Special Attention at 2002 CAMEX Show

**Connect2One** and **NACS** announced in the summer of 2000 that the two organizations will share the same location for the Connect2One Annual Meeting and Buying Show and CAMEX in 2002. The co-location will provide Connect2One members and vendors an opportunity to take advantage of both organizations' events. For its members, Connect2One is offering value-added educational and social activities during the show.

"We saw this as a worthwhile opportunity for everyone involved, especially attendees," says Lynn Williams, Connect2One Director of Communications and Memberships.

As a part of the combined show, Connect2One has scheduled an Education Day for Tuesday, February 19, at the Los Angeles Convention Center, which is the convention's location. The day will be filled with in-depth sessions for C2O members on supply and apparel programs, commodity price information, and vendor, category and product overviews. Michelle Johnson, Apparel Program Director for Connect2One, will moderate an idea exchange, and supply buyers will share their best sellers.

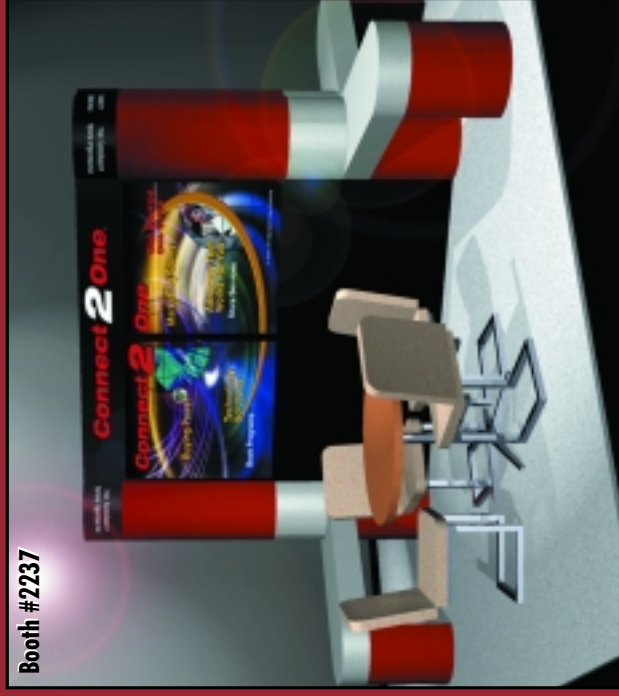
"Attendees will be exposed to the 'meat and potatoes' of our quality programs and services," says Williams.

In addition to the educational sessions, the organization is hosting a social gathering exclusively for store members and vendors. According to Williams, Connect2One members will feel the same camaraderie between members at this combined convention that they expect every year, even though they're sharing the meeting venue with the larger CAMEX group.

As a participant of the CAMEX show, Connect2One will have a presence on the trade show floor as well. A booth staffed by Connect2One personnel will direct members to vendor partners with custom maps identifying partner locations. Catalogs will be sent to attendees prior to the show, to help them plan their daily activities.

A new Connect2One booth also will be positioned in the lobby, providing members with opportunities to

Booth #2237



mingle as well as place orders with their Buyers Advantage Cards. Once the card is full, it can be redeemed for cash or credit, which will assist in defraying the cost of attending the show.

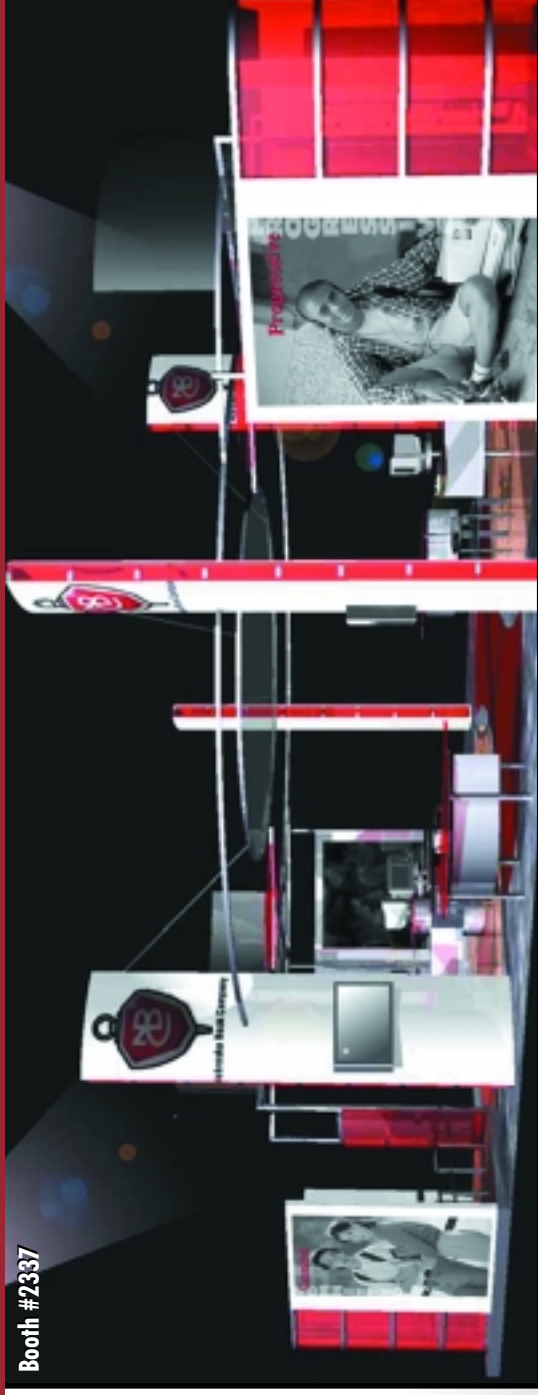
"We want members to walk away from the show with the feeling that they can successfully grow their stores with our help," Williams says.

Currently, Connect2One has 490 members participating in programs. In the year 2000, the organization increased membership by 66 stores. Williams attributes the growth to:

- Strong, innovative programs
- Program directories
- Programs by buyers for buyers
- Responsive Connect2One staff
- The unique Advantage Program

"We are dedicated to helping both institutional and independent stores compete in today's marketplace," says Williams. "And, we're excited about continuing to provide members the same excellent programs that they are accustomed to from Connect2One," says Williams.

# Nebraska Book Company Features Its All-Inclusive Product Line at Los Angeles



Booth #2337

**On your mark, get set...attend!** Nebraska Book Company, Connect2One, CampusHub, PRISM and GotUsed will be highly visible at the upcoming CAMEX Trade Show, February 22 – 24, 2002 in Los Angeles. Nebraska Book Company (NBC) is taking this opportunity to present their complete line of products and services at the world's largest trade show serving the collegiate marketplace.

NBC has attended this show for 40 years, and every year the company seeks opportunities to “wow” attendees. A newly created display booth will be revealed on the exhibit floor this year. This larger, more accessible booth is designed to entice attendees with sharp colors, wide-open space and hands-on demonstrations of new program software. Bookstore managers will also have a chance to sign up to win a variety of prizes. Traditionally, the company provides added value to bookstore managers by offering a variety of educational events before the trade show begins. These sessions allow stores to walk away with valuable information on overcoming daily challenges.

Nebraska Book Company maintains its status as the largest textbook wholesaler in the business by evolving with the ever-changing needs of bookstores nationwide. The company's unwavering belief in providing solutions for bookstores resulted in the addition of various programs and services enabling bookstores to stay competitive in the marketplace.

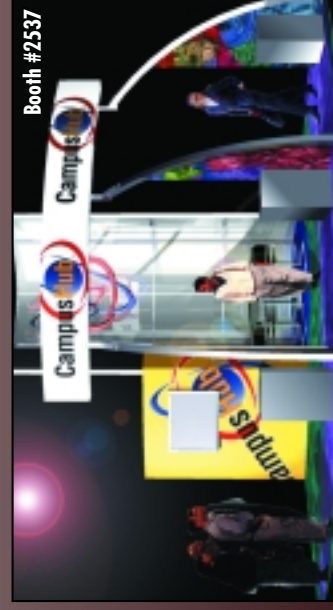
Get a glimpse of the benefits available from Nebraska Book Company:

**Connect2One** is a strategic alliance of independent bookstores offering buying and marketing services.

- Attend the Connect2One day-and-a-half of educational programs
- Learn about the supply and apparel programs
- Participate in the idea exchange
- Learn how to make the most of your marketing dollars
- Redeem Buyers Advantage Cards

**CampusHub** continues to provide bookstores with a totally integrated e-commerce solution for college bookstore Web sites.

- Learn what integration means
- Preview new marketing materials
- Learn how your click-and-mortar site can effectively compete against online competitors



# geles 2002 CAMEX Trade Show

**PRISM** offers bookstores a complete inventory management and point-of-sale solution, integrated to handle textbooks, trade books and the general merchandise whole automation process.

- Meet development, support and sales representatives
- Learn about new WinPRISM, a state-of-the-art, point-and-click product being introduced at the trade show
- Participate in live demonstrations of products
- Learn about other new technologies

**GotUsed** is a network of college bookstores dedicated to lower prices and more used books.

- Learn about the opportunities to participate in the program
- Find out about unique sponsorships occurring with other companies
- Preview new marketing materials
- See why it is important to consider including in-store kiosks within your marketing strategy

**Advantage Program** allows bookstores to receive rebates of up to 15 percent on the value of textbooks sold to Nebraska Book Company. When bookstores commit to sell 80 percent of books every year to NBC for a specific period of time, stores receive Advantage rebates based on the length of that commitment.

- Learn how participating bookstores earned close to \$1 million in rebates
- Meet one-on-one with representatives
- Learn how the program can strengthen your bottom line

The CAMEX Trade Show is an annual experience, but Nebraska Book Company is dedicated to offering its complete product line to the industry every day of the year. Each employee at NBC focuses on upholding the company's focus on **people, products, resources, support and technology.**

Once attendees return home to their stores, Nebraska Book Company sales representatives are available to assist in strengthening their bookstores in the marketplace. For those bookstore representatives who are not attending CAMEX this year, Nebraska Book Company representatives can present company products and services personally. Contact your representative today!

## Connect2One Exclusive Events

February 19, 2002 Los Angeles Convention Center

We are looking forward to seeing you at the CAMEX Trade Show. Don't forget to stop by the NBC, Connect2One, CampusHub, PRISM and GotUsed booths at CAMEX to find out what exciting things we're offering to help make your bookstore successful!

### 8:30 – 10:00 a.m. APPAREL IDEA EXCHANGE CONTINUE THE TRADITION!

Everyone gets in the act as Connect2One buyers show off their best-selling items from the past year. See the best styles, graphics and fashion trends on campuses from around the country. Bring your top 3 bestsellers to the Idea Exchange to share with the group.

### 10:15 - 11:45 a.m. INSIDER INFO ON THE APPAREL PROGRAM

Best buys from the programs will be highlighted by Michelle Johnson, Connect2One program director.

Review price comparisons of commodity items and get a glimpse at what makes these vendors ideal for your situation. Special focus will be on products suitable for game concession sales.

➤ continued from front page

“We are the only wholesale book company that is extending a discount to purchase textbooks,” Rodgers points out.

In addition to the Web site and sweepstakes, other more traditional promotions are scheduled to occur throughout the year. Direct mail and e-mails, point-of-

purchase items, posters, in-store kiosks and an interactive CD are part of the marketing mix.

“We are thrilled with the results so far and look forward to upcoming promotions that will benefit campus bookstores everywhere,” Rodgers concludes.

➤ continued from *Connect2One Exclusive Events*

**11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. LUNCHBON AND Q&A WITH CONNECT2ONE STAFF** Get reacquainted with friends old and new. Over dessert, C2O staff will be on hand to answer your questions about topics that are on your mind. Our special treat, the 2002 Goody Bag, will be distributed at the completion of lunch.

**1:00 – 2:30 p.m. SUPPLIES IN-DEPTH REVIEW** This session provides an overview of the 2002 Back-to-School Supplies Programs by Paula Haerr, Connect2One program director. Top commodity comparisons and category endorsements will be featured.

**2:45 – 4:15 p.m. SUPPLY BEST SELLERS AND PAULA’S PICKS** Learn what other buyers have found to be the hottest sellers in the supply department this past year. Bring your items and promotional ideas to share with the group. Maximize promotional opportunities with a look at “Paula’s Picks,” selected from the thousands of offerings in this year’s programs.

**4:15 – 5:30 p.m. CONNECT2ONE 101** You’ve heard about Supplies and Apparel, now hear the rest of the Connect2One story. Ellen Brady and Lynne Williams will present a quick overview of all the Connect2One program areas. Find out if your store is maximizing membership by participating in all the great offerings.

**6:30 – 9:00 p.m. CONNECT2ONE “BE TRUE TO YOUR SCHOOL” PARTY** Arrive at The Millennium Biltmore Hotel Gold Room sporting your school colors. Be our guest for some appetizing refreshments and old-fashioned hospitality. Catch up with friends from across the country, around your state and in your own backyard!

CAMEX Education Sessions:  
Wednesday and Thursday

CAMEX Buying Show:  
Friday through Sunday

## WE WANT YOUR BUSINESS—NOT YOUR CUSTOMERS



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- We believe the student is your customer.
- We believe the bookstore is our customer.
- We believe in integrity in business dealings.
- We believe college bookstores should be independent.
- We believe in providing solutions to keep your business independent.