

# DATABASE

## TRENDS AND APPLICATIONS

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## University of DC Opts for OpenInsight

*Professor offers course in multivalued database programming.*

### By Kara Kridler

It's called seeding the market. Software companies work hard to get their products into the hands of college students for one simple reason: The tools they learn in school today will be the tools used in the workplace tomorrow.

Revelation Software has now joined the ranks of database vendors whose products are taught at the university. Next semester, computer programming students at the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) will learn the basics of database programming using the company's flagship OpenInsight applications development environment.

Carl Friedman, an associate professor in the Computer and Information Systems department at UDC, decided to use OpenInsight. He was first introduced to Revelation in the 1980s. At that time, he was doing a great deal of consulting for city government agencies in Washington D.C. His clients were looking for a database program to analyze data. Friedman attended a presentation where the company was offering its Advanced Revelation multivalued database, which, at the time, ran under DOS. He tried the free tutorial and liked what he saw.

"It was a fantastic package," Friedman said. "I toured through

the whole tutorial in a weekend. It just beat everything on the market. There was nothing close to it. Even today, it cannot be touched. I was in love with it," he said.

Friedman has stuck with the product through a series of corporate twists and turns over the past 15 years. Mike Ruane, whom Friedman described as a "super programmer," now heads Revelation Software. The company unveiled its latest version, OpenInsight 4.1, this fall. OpenInsight is a complete application development environment with a multivalued database as its centerpiece.

With the new release, Revelation has shed its database of much of its original DOS origins, and the support for some of the features he uses has been diminished, Friedman said. Nevertheless, he said, the overall package is a "developer's dream" and is still the best database program available. He has been working with Ruane and Revelation to develop strategies that will help OpenInsight find a wider audience. People who are unfamiliar with multivalued database concepts have to go through a learning curve, he noted.

As part of his commitment to broadening the user community for OpenInsight, Friedman has decided to offer a class to his students. The older version of

Revelation could not reasonably be taught in a world dominated by Windows-based programs, he noted. The earliest Windows-compatible versions were also not appropriate. But with the latest version OpenInsight, Friedman felt that it was time to take the plunge and introduce multivalued database programming to his students.

Friedman will use the program in a class called Database Programming. The majority of Friedman's students are seniors who have already studied several different programming languages. Students enrolled in the class must be familiar with the commonly used databases, such as Oracle, IBM DB2, MS SQL Server and MS Access. "I consider OpenInsight the best multivalued database on the market today and that is why I had no hesitation teaching it. The tools that come with it also work just handily on Oracle and Lotus Notes," Friedman said.

Even though Friedman is focused on the multivalued aspect of the program, he is enthusiastic about the other skills his students will obtain. "Everything they [his students] are learning, except the actual multivalued aspects themselves, can be transferred over to all of the other major database systems," he said. Friedman added that the most important aspect of using OpenInsight in his class is that when his students are finished with his class, they will have marketable skills, regardless of

what they encounter.

The intention is for OpenInsight to help his students develop tools that the other programs do not supply. "You can run the tutorial and after running the tutorial you can put together an application," Friedman said. OpenInsight should be a good match for UDC students, since they tend to remain in the DC area after graduation, and there is an existing demand in Washington for these programming skills. Friedman hopes his students will have a competitive edge for those jobs. His students will have an advantage over employees that do not have OpenInsight experience. Without experience, employees will have to be sent away for training. This is timely and costly to the employer.

Friedman said that most important factor in his decision to introduce OpenInsight in the classroom was because he strongly dislikes inefficiency. He wants to see more people doing things the fastest way. "If I do my job well, I expect my students to be in a position within a shorter time than, say, other schools--because I have older students--to have some influence in what software selections are made, and OpenInsight may then become part of the decision mix or the solution mix in their organization," Friedman said.

*For a free evaluation copy of OpenInsight visit [www.revelation.com](http://www.revelation.com)*