



Kunle Adejumo

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“Students need to know about this”

Kunle Adejumo is finishing up his fourth year of engineering studies at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Nigeria. By all rights, he should now be in his fifth and final year, but local strikes and instability in Nigeria have added almost a full year to his studies at Ahmadu Bello.

Established in 1952, Ahmadu Bello is Nigeria’s largest university, with 35,000 students. Though the university boasts a large and well-maintained physical infrastructure, its Internet access—like that of almost all Nigerian universities—is extremely limited. Even the computer lab does not have a Web connection. And because of the large number of students and the limited number of terminals, students can sign up for only 20 minutes each week on university computers.

When Adejumo was first introduced to MIT’s OpenCourseWare through a CD-ROM in the university computer lab, therefore, he had only 20 minutes to look through the material. Immediately impressed with the content, he asked the computer lab for a copy of the CD; when they were unable to give him one, Adejumo decided to find the site on his own, and copied down the Web address. From his home computer, he has enjoyed regular access to MIT OCW, and has used it to complement the course materials he has gotten through Ahmadu Bello.

“For example, last semester, I had a course in metallurgical engineering,” offers Adejumo.

“For one of the lectures, having to do with ion making, I didn’t have notes, and I couldn’t find the information I needed, so I went to OCW. I was able to download a course outline on this, and also some review questions. I actually took these to the university and gave them to the lecturer to answer. He was able to answer these questions, and helped me gain a deeper understanding of the material.”

As much as Adejumo has benefited from MIT OCW, it worries him that this resource is not available to the vast majority of students in Nigeria. “You see,” he explains, “in this part of the world, only the rich can afford Internet access. Probably only 500 students at Ahmadu Bello have an Internet connection. In my own case, I visit about four times a week. But most cannot do this.”

For this reason, Adejumo hopes eventually to work with the local radio station to broadcast MIT OCW course material, as well as publicize the site. “I run the Web site for a local radio station,” he says, “and they are interested in broadcasting educational programs. OCW would be the perfect fit... And in the process, more students will learn about the site. Students need to know that these things are available.”