# ADVANTAGE
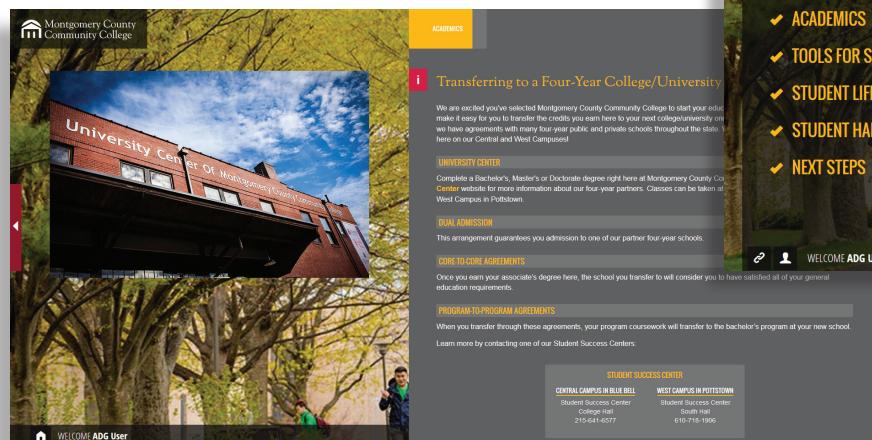DESIGN GROUP

Creativity • Technology • Results

## Montgomery County Community College
Online Orientation

# Case Study

About a year-and-a-half ago, a group at Montgomery County Community College got together and created a small scale online orientation for their virtual students. They found that this endeavor wasn't as smooth as they had hoped. It was very time-consuming, the videos quickly became outdated, and it was not comprehensive enough, so they started looking for other options for online orientations. They did some research and found Advantage Design Group.

*"We did look at a few other companies offering online orientations, but when we saw some samples from Advantage Design Group, we thought they were very high-quality. We also read some of the feedback that other schools had provided on their website and saw which other schools were using their product and decided if we could get this done, we'd really like it to look like this,"* said Kelly Trahan, Director of the Virtual Campus at Montgomery County Community College.

## First impressions are important.

*"As a former graphic designer, I understand the look of something is important. The online orientation is the first impression of the school. If it's something that's high quality, students are more likely to associate that with a high quality education."* explained Trahan.

Not only was Advantage Design Group's online orientation visually appealing, but it was also easy for the college to make modifications to keep their orientation current. Advantage Design Group provides training that allows colleges to quickly and easily update content. This was a very appealing feature to Montgomery County Community College because the purpose for their online orientation evolved and got bigger during the development process.

## It started as one thing, and grew bigger.

The initial concept for the online orientation was that it would be only for their virtual students, since their other students had a face-to-face orientation. During the process of developing their online orientation, the college quickly realized that the online orientation would be a great tool for all students.

*"We wanted to make sure all of our students received the same message and information. The online orientation would be consistent and students from both of our campuses and the virtual campus would receive the same information,"* said Trahan. *"It would also be a continuing resource for them to go back to whenever they needed information and would follow them through their experience in college."*

## Easy to modify content themselves.

Since the online orientation was originally for the virtual students, the group of individuals who spearheaded this effort from Montgomery County Community College wasn't the correct group for an orientation designed to meet the needs of all students. However, because of the flexibility of the product and the ability for colleges to modify content themselves, they were able to move forward anyway and make adjustments to content accordingly.

*"We did pull some of the needed people into it, but it primarily stayed with the virtual campus people. Once we had the content in there, we got in touch with the people in-charge to make changes and easily updated the content."* said Trahan.

Additionally, the college created a form on their website where content area experts could submit information to update at any time, and the college plans to conduct six-month content reviews so content experts can submit needed changes regularly. The college also plans to keep their online orientation fresh by updating images and may even update the flow of the online orientation as they get feedback from the students.

## Funding came through, and got bigger.

Initially, the group at Montgomery County Community College didn't expect to get funding. Once they received their funding and moved forward with the project, additional funding became available as the college began to realize the potential for making the student enrollment process smoother by adding technological functions to their online orientation. This included adding user tracks, login integration and the post back piece that would automatically create an orientation record for each student that advisors could access to ensure students are completing the required online orientation.

*"We were very happy with the videos. We wanted to get a good perspective of our diverse group of students, and show what our campuses are like,"* explained Trahan. *"The video shoot was great. We had a lot of fun. Everyone was very professional, the scripts were ready, and it was completed in an efficient manner."*

## Moving forward.

Montgomery County Community College has heard a lot of positive feedback since launching their online orientation in November 2015. They are pleased that the online orientation is comprehensive and that all students will get everything they need to be successful. It will also be a resource for them to revisit when they need a link to more information on various topics.



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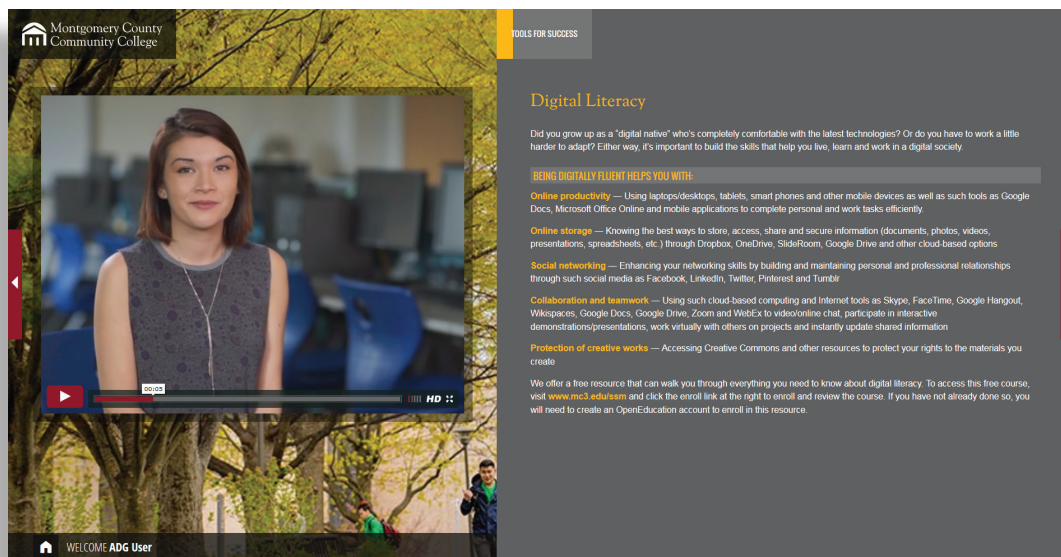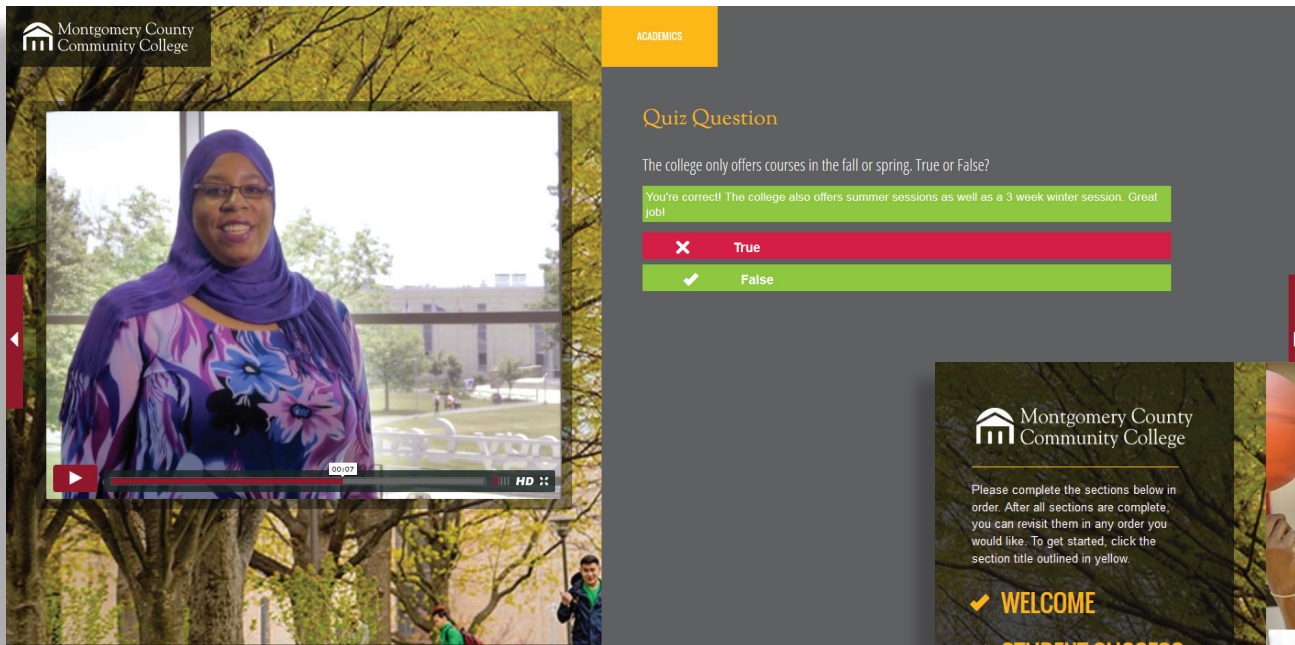
Online orientation is available as soon as students are admitted to the college and is mandatory for new students. Students may also continue to access the online orientation whenever they would like to refer back to information provided in it at any time during their career as a student at Montgomery County Community College. The college continues to host a face-to-face orientation, but this is no longer a requirement for students to attend.

*"We can now truly require orientation from the students. Before, a face-to-face orientation was required, but if students couldn't make it, there was no way to make it up. Now this online orientation takes the place of the face-to-face orientation requirement and it is something accessible for all students – anytime and anywhere. When students go to register for classes, they can use a computer to do their orientation first if they have not completed it yet,"* said Trahan.

*"Our orientation is no longer an afterthought, but an important resource for all students. It holds us to a higher standard and holds students to a higher standard, and gives them the information they need to be successful."* – Kelly Trahan, Director of the Virtual Campus at Montgomery County Community College.

Advantage Design Group is an award-winning multimedia design and development firm based in Jacksonville, Florida. For nearly 20 years we've helped organizations show their story with a unique balance of creativity and technology. Today, our Advantage Orientation Platform is helping colleges and universities across America reach measurable goals for student orientation, transition, retention and success.

We can do the same for you. Contact us for a demonstration.

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