



Northeastern University

Ira Krull, Associate Professor of Chemistry

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The people at Pearson are true professionals. They know what they are doing and come through on their promises. They made it easy and fun to collaborate on a new project.

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Founded in 1898, Northeastern University is a private research university located in the heart of Boston. It offers a comprehensive range of undergraduate and graduate programs leading to degrees from six undergraduate colleges, eight graduate schools, and two part-time divisions.

Ira Krull, associate professor of chemistry at Northeastern University, was in a bind. The fall 2007 semester was six months away, and his chemistry department had no physical space in which to conduct the lab section of his forensics class—nowhere to teach the critical skills involved in activities like fingerprinting and arson investigation. Krull needed a virtual lab but questioned whether one could be created in time.

Krull had been using the leading textbook in the field, *Criminalistics: An Introduction to Forensic Science* by Richard Saferstein, along with Saferstein's hard-copy lab manual. He wanted to continue using the *Criminalistics* text, so he contacted the publisher, Prentice Hall, to see whether the company could solve his problem. Prentice Hall knew just where to turn: Pearson Learning Solutions.

The editors at Pearson Learning Solutions went straight to work. They contacted Saferstein, explained Krull's dilemma, and asked Saferstein if he'd be willing to work with them on a virtual lab. Saferstein agreed. Pearson arranged to fly two instructional designers to the author's home, where the three spent 12 straight hours combining Saferstein's forensics expertise with professional instructional design. Together the group created 100 percent original material. In addition, Saferstein revised the lab manual to better suit the virtual environment, added more sections, and developed new "crime show" scenarios to make each lesson more engaging for students.

To ensure that Krull received the learning solution he needed, three of Pearson's business units—Pearson Learning Solutions, Pearson Custom Publishing, and Prentice Hall—worked together and got it done in about one-fifth the time and at one-tenth the budget of similar projects. Six virtual labs were ready for the beginning of fall classes, and a total of 13 were completed by the end of the same month.

"There was always total collaboration and assistance," says Krull. "Everyone showed a complete understanding of the job and the industry. It could not have been a better working relationship."

The virtual labs offer an unanticipated plus for Krull and his students: they require no chemicals. And that means three more valuable advantages:

1. **Safety.** No chance for dangerous chemical interactions.
2. **Economy.** With no chemicals to buy, students can now perform the same fingerprinting exercise over and over without the school's incurring any extra costs.
3. **Ecology.** No chemicals to pollute the environment; no trees cut down to make hard-copy manuals.

"The virtual forensic labs have been very well received by the students. They are able to quickly and easily teach themselves how to run the labs and feel very comfortable performing them any number of times," a pleased Ira Krull is happy to report.