

Faculty and Service



Rob Willhoft, Professor of Computer Science, just returned from a weekend in Charlotte, NC working with TEN3. Rob serves as Secretary of the Board and a technical consultant for TEN3 (Transformational Education Network to the Third Generation), which focuses on providing Christ-centered, technical curriculum for schools in Africa. Dr. Anthony Petrillo, founder and President of TEN3, has been involved in education in Africa for over 20 years. Rob has been involved in this ministry for over 10 years, and through it actually learned about the position that he currently holds at Roberts.

TEN3 is focused on providing curriculum for Africans developed by Africans. Many of the members of the TEN3 team have been missionaries in Africa or have other strong connections to African Christians. Rob has visited Africa twice, once in 1970 to visit his aunt and uncle who were missionaries with Africa Inland Mission (AIM) and in 2010 to spend time with his daughter, Adrienne, who was teaching English at a university in the Horn of Africa.

Rob is currently involved in a TEN3 project to create a system to help principals of African schools deal with scheduling and resource management. One of the features of this program that makes it uniquely African is the need to deal with limited electrical power. Many of the schools, both public and private, that are working with TEN3 either have to deal with daily power outages or manage generators to provide the power that is needed. The scheduling system being developed by TEN3 helps the principals correlate the student computer usage and classroom schedules with power requirements. This unique software tool will not only help schools where TEN3 curriculum is currently used, but will be a potential open door to other schools that need this type of help. Rob Willhoft is providing training in the Python programming language, technical assistance with the interfaces with databases, and help with the high level, object-oriented design.

Another unique opportunity that TEN3 faces is a need by African mothers to understand the basics of technology. Cell phones, e-commerce, and the Internet are sweeping Africa just like everywhere else in the world. Young people are using the technology on a daily basis, but the older generation, especially the mothers, are often in unfamiliar territory in this area. African women can find themselves victims of identity theft by their children, or by others posing as their children, because of their lack of understanding of basic security guidelines such as not sharing passwords. Christian mothers have approached TEN3 through the churches and requested help in this area. TEN3 is currently working on a Mothers and Technology project that will help provide these women with basic training in computers, cell phones, and other technology. Rob will be providing information from courses that he teaches on Computer Security to help with this curriculum development.

Rob was amazed during his most recent trip to Africa that even in places where almost all commerce was in open markets, there were stores selling cell phones and internet access. It seems that we are truly on the edge of a technological tidal wave in Africa. TEN3 and other Christian organizations are using this powerful movement as a force for the Gospel in Africa.