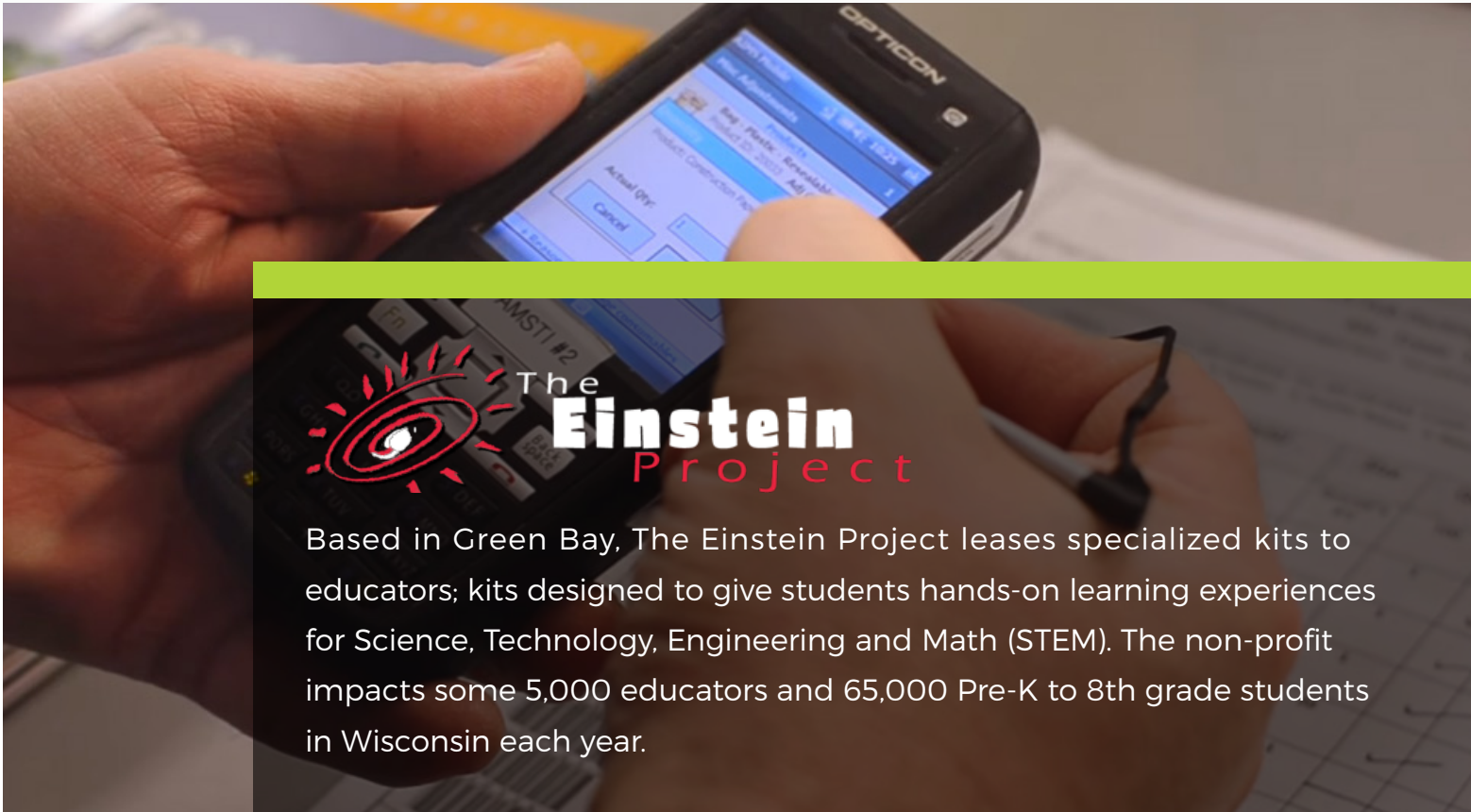


From 3 databases & a fax machine to a single portal.

Transforming a STEM program's inventory management system.



Based in Green Bay, The Einstein Project leases specialized kits to educators; kits designed to give students hands-on learning experiences for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). The non-profit impacts some 5,000 educators and 65,000 Pre-K to 8th grade students in Wisconsin each year.

OPERATION OVERVIEW

The Einstein Project fills more than 2,500 kit orders annually. Each leased kit contains between 50 and 200 individual items — both consumable and non-consumable — all of which are picked and packed by hand. At the end of lease periods, teachers return the kits — which are then inspected, replenished, restocked, and made available for lease again.

Further complicating inventory-management considerations, educators are required to attend certification-training courses before taking receipt of their kits.

INEFFICIENCIES. AND MORE INEFFICIENCIES.

First, orders came in by fax.

A staffer would then make three copies of each order — one for each person maintaining Einstein's three separate databases for tracking and managing its inventory. Every order, and every tracking record, was manually entered.

Information regarding teacher-certification status for each kit ordered, which was often out of date, was entered into one Access database.

A separate Access database was used to track the inventory of individual items and kits across 50 different science and engineering titles.



1500 1st Ave. North
Birmingham, AL
205.408.9991

Tracking which kits were available at any time was managed in an Excel spreadsheet — which, like the Access databases, was prone to human error and **not** connected to the other two databases.

“Our systems couldn’t talk to each other. Orders took weeks to process. Tracking teacher certification status was difficult. And managing the entire process was far too time-consuming. Not just for our staff, but for our educators as well,” explains Executive Director Kelly Ellis.

Through mutual contacts in education, Ellis learned about the WIMS for STEM system (WIMS = Warehouse Inventory Management Solution) — and reached-out to 2B Solutions. She knew the system needed customizations to suit their specific needs. And given her non-profit’s tight budgetary constraints, she knew she would need help to pay for them. “We were very fortunate. A community funding group covered the cost of WIMS for STEM. And the 2B team was willing to deliver a custom solution for us.”

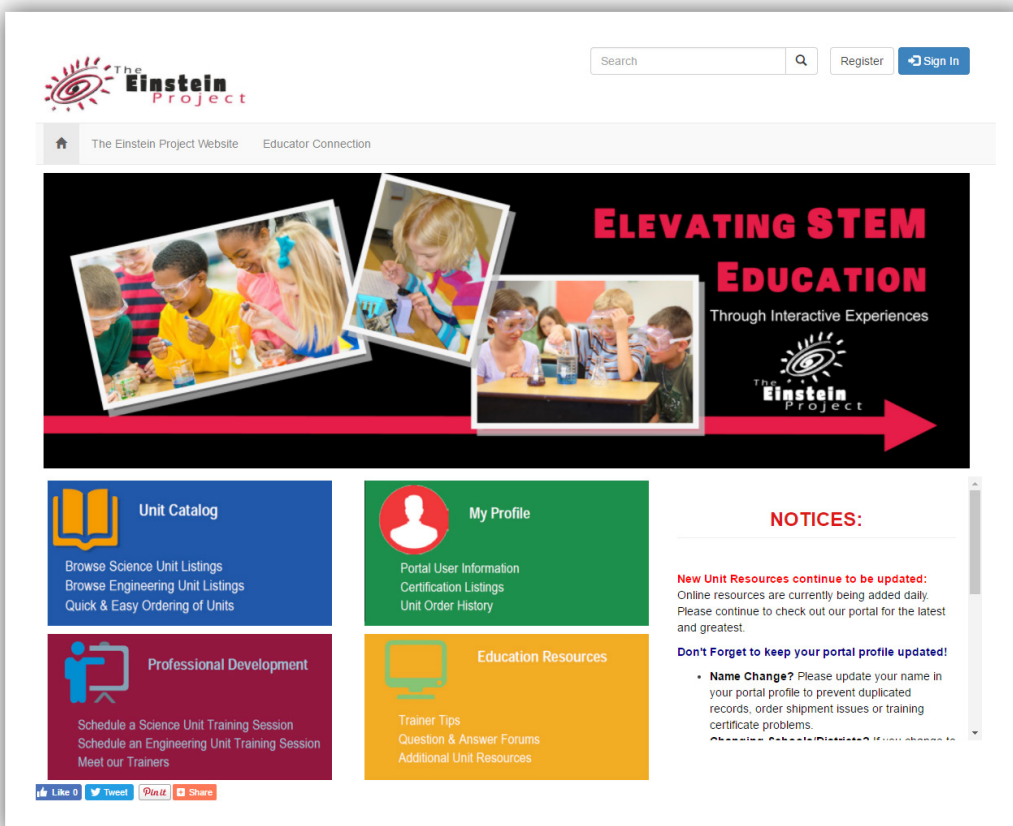
A SYSTEM BUILT TO ORDER

2B Solutions tailored the system to the Einstein Project’s exceptionally challenging inventory management model. Custom solutions ranged from creating a unique product catalog structure and incorporating handheld barcode scanners to streamlining how staffers pick, pack and track inventory.

2B Solutions also developed a web-based portal for The Einstein Project — enabling educators to log-in through the organization’s website to view kit availability, place orders, download resources and more. “This is my favorite aspect of the whole system. Our teachers really appreciate

the online portal — which saves them the hassle of having to call us with questions during our office hours, or using fax machines to order their kits. Now they can do everything when it’s convenient for them. It’s been a huge benefit for everyone involved,” Ellis says.

“We’re saving the equivalent of one full-time employee in administrative work alone. We have new insights into trends and performance. We’re spending more time expanding our community reach. And, most important, we’ve made it much faster and easier for teachers to provide students with a more engaging and effective STEM education.”

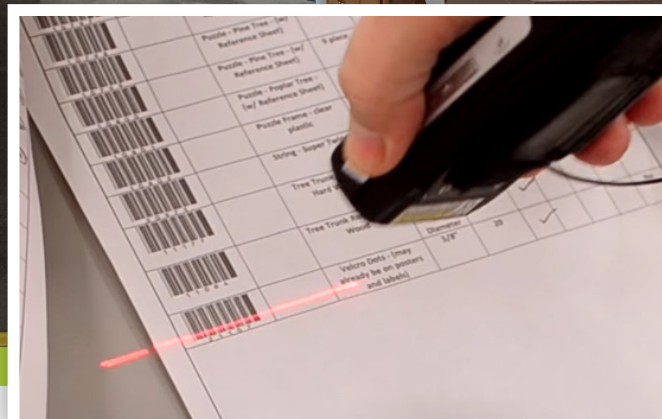


The Einstein Project’s new web-based portal

“We’re saving the equivalent of a full-time employee in administrative work alone. We’re expanding our reach. And we’ve made it much easier for teachers to provide students with a more engaging STEM education.”

Kelly Ellis, Executive Director
The Einstein Project





RESULTS

FIRST YEAR SAVINGS OF \$45,000 IN INVENTORY

In just the first year, WIMS for STEM helped The Einstein Project reduce inventory costs by approximately \$45,000. The solution is expected to continue driving savings as they gain ever-better insights into which products & kits to add, and which to eliminate.

AUTOMATED INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

Handheld barcode scanners have replaced paper labels and clipboards throughout the warehouse. Items and kits have unique barcodes — which are automatically linked and updated in the WIMS for STEM system. Barcodes also link Teacher Tags to each order — and the system instantly alerts both teachers and internal staff, whenever teachers aren't trained on kits they've ordered.

When a kit goes out, a single scan adjusts inventory numbers, marks its order complete, and removes that kit from availability.

ADMINISTRATIVE TIME-SAVINGS EQUAL TO A FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE

By streamlining internal operations, automating manual administrative tasks, integrating systems, and optimizing inventory and ordering processes, the nonprofit was able to manage its growth without having to hire an additional employee.

DRAMATICALLY-IMPROVED KIT UTILIZATION

Instead of relying on stand-alone (and often outdated) Excel spreadsheet, Einstein Project staff and teachers can now review available inventory in real time, at all times. When orders are canceled, kits are automatically placed back into inventory and made available; which has resulted in substantial savings — not only financially, but also in staff-time and internal errors.

The convenience of being able to view kit availability online, instead of having to find time to call during office hours, also means teachers are proactively planning and ordering their kits early.

24X7 ONLINE SERVICE FOR EDUCATORS

Teachers no longer have to call during office hours, or fax-in their orders. They simply set-up their own accounts online — enabling them to view kit availability, place orders, register for professional development, manage their contact information and download professional STEM resources whenever they want. If they aren't certified for kits they're ordering, they are instantly alerted to sign-up for training — then automatically sent follow-up email reminders.

FULFILLING THE MISSION

"As a nonprofit, Ellis notes, "it's critical for us to demonstrate our impact on the community. Our supporters want to know we're making a difference, and serving as responsible stewards of their donations. With the ongoing help of 2B Solutions, we're now in a better position to do that than we ever have been. Their understanding of what we do, and how we function, cannot be overstated."