

Faculty Development Center

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Developing a Blackboard Course Web Site

Blackboard 6.1



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April 2004

Most of the information was obtained from the TIGERS Grant: Training and Support Materials for Blackboard version 6.0 provided by the California State University system.

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Table of Contents

Adding Content	1
Add Items	1
Add Folders	4
Add Link	5
Add Course Link	5
Add Test	6
Add Survey	8
Add Assignment	9
Add LRN Package	9
Modify, Copy, or Remove Content	10
Using Course Tools	11
Announcements	11
Course Calendar	11
Staff Information	12

Developing a Blackboard Course Web Site

Blackboard 6.1 includes a large number of features and capabilities that allows you to provide your students different types of information. You can provide your students class information such as the syllabus, handouts, PowerPoint Presentations, assignments, quizzes, and surveys. In addition, you can post new information or changes in your class using announcements, you can organize your content in folders, copy materials to different locations, use a calendar, and provide contact information.

Adding Content to a Blackboard course Web site

To create a Blackboard course Web site, you will use the Control Panel and add course content. Blackboard 6.1 provides the ability to add different types of materials:

- Item (documents, PowerPoint Presentations, etc.)
- Folder
- External Link
- Course Link
- Test
- Learning Unit
- Survey
- Assignment
- LRN Package
- SCORM Content
- IMS Content & Packaging
- NLN Content

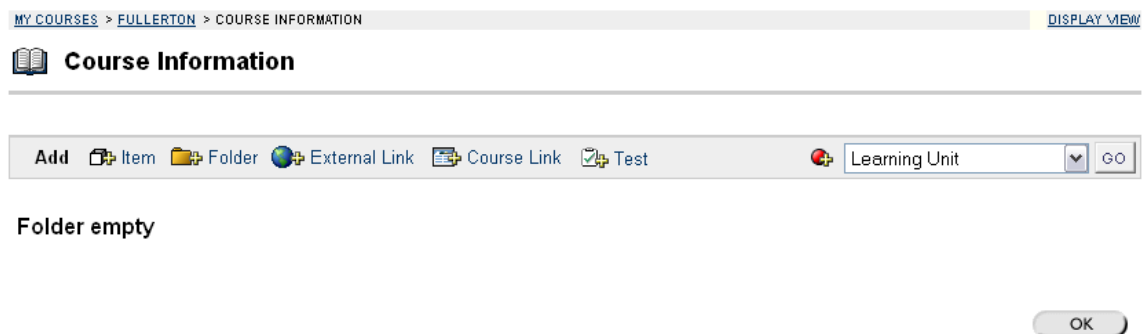


Figure 1. Adding Content Options in a Blackboard Course Web Site.

Add Items

The Add Items feature allows you to add content to your course site. Files can be uploaded in their original format (such as .doc or .ppt documents) and when students click on the link created, the files are displayed on the screen. Students

can download the document to the students' computer. HTML or web supported graphic files (such as .jpg's or .gif's) can also be added, which can be viewed directly within the Blackboard page.

Note: Because Blackboard is cross platform (works on Macs and PC's) and also cross browser (Netscape and Internet Explorer) all files should have a three letter file extension (such as .doc or .htm) which designates its file type. To prevent conflicts, file names should contain no spaces or special character except the underscore (_) and only one period before the file extension (ex: HomeWorkOne.doc).

From the Control Panel:

1. Click on desired Content Area (Course Documents, Assignments, etc.).
2. Click the **Add Item** icon in the gray bar at the top of the page.
3. Choose a **Name** from the drop down menu or enter your own name for the document in the **Name** field.
4. Enter a description into the **Text** field.
5. Click the **Browse** button to find the file to upload from within the Content Attachment section.
6. Enter text in the **Name of Link to File** field.
7. Type two or three words in the **Name of Link to File** field to create the link to your document. If you don't type anything here, the name of your file will be displayed.
8. Choose an option from the **Special Action** menu.
9. Select items from the **Options** section.
10. Scroll down to the bottom of the page and click the **Submit** button.

Note: The Text field includes the Text Box Editor that allows you to format the content using a WYSIWYG (What You See is What You Get) toolbar.

This toolbar allows you to format text using HTML, check for spelling, add equations using WebEQ and MathML, and use different types of multimedia files. The toolbar is **only available to Windows Operating System Users** with Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.x or later version. The maximum number of characters allowed in the text box is 4,000.

The Text Box Editor also includes a spell check tool. This tool supports a full English dictionary and custom word lists can be stored as a cookie on the instructor's computer.

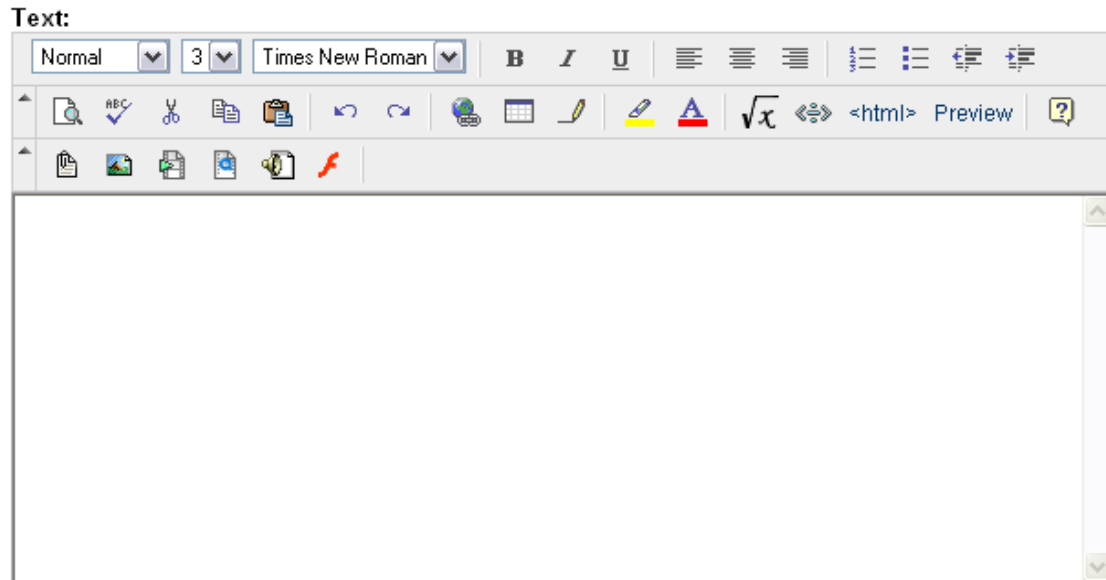


Figure 2. Text Box Editor.

Special Action Choices:

Create a link to this file - Use this default option to create a link to a document or download.

Display media file within the page - Use this option when working with graphic images or media files you want to display within the page.

Unpackage this file - Use this option when uploading .zip (or compressed) files. This is typically used with PowerPoint presentations saved as HTML or collections of linked web pages.

Options Section:

Do you want to make the content visible? - Visible means that your students can see the document. Typically, documents are made "invisible" when you don't want students to access them yet. You can change this at any time.

Do you want to add offline content? - This is used when your course has a companion CD-ROM.

Do you want to track number of views? - This option lets you track how often individual users view the document.

Do you want to add metadata? - This option indicates if metadata will be used. Metadata is data about the added item, such as ownership, resource format, and copyright information.

Choose date restrictions - This option lets you set the dates that the document will be visible and invisible. This automates the "make contents visible" option.

Note: students may need to install appropriate software and plug-ins to view the files.

Blackboard 6.1 includes a shortcut to edit the documents after they uploaded directly from the Blackboard course Web site. You can access the control panel by clicking the “EDIT VIEW” link. After you finish updating the content, you can return to the course Web site by clicking the “DISPLAY VIEW” link.

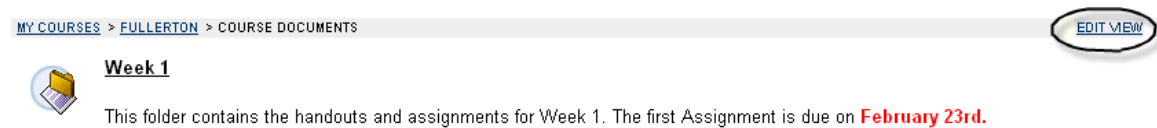



Figure 3. Edit View link.

Add Folders

The Add Folders feature allows you to create folders which help you organize and sort your course content. Folders make it easier for students to find documents by limiting the amount of scrolling they need to do and by labeling specific content areas. There are two main ways of using folders to organize your material; content-based and chronological order. An example of content-based organization is creating a folder for all your lecture notes, another for readings, a third for PowerPoint presentations, etc. An example of chronological order is to create a folder for all Week One materials, another for Week Two etc.

Note: Items must be uploaded into each folder. Although items (not folders) cannot be dragged and dropped from other areas of Blackboard, they can be copied between areas or courses.

From the Control Panel:


1. Click on the Content Areas you wish to access.
2. Click the  **Add Folder** icon in the gray bar at the top of the page.
3. Choose a **Name** from the drop down menu or type a name for the folder into the **Name** field.
4. Type a description of the folder contents into the **Text** field.
5. Click the radio button of your choice, to make the folder visible or invisible to students.
6. Select the **Display Before** and **Display After** check boxes to set the Dates of Availability.
7. Add documents or other items as desired.
8. Scroll down to the bottom of the page and click the **Submit** button.

Note: You can add folders into folders for an additional level of organization.

Add Link

The Add Link feature allows you to place links to outside Web sites within any content areas of a Blackboard course site. Students click on the link and are taken directly to the linked Web site. As many students do not yet have experience using the Internet for research purposes, this feature allows you to provide them a list of approved reference sites. Adding URL's can also be used to provide online "field trips" where you send your students to a particular business or organization to look around or participate in online activities.

From the Control Panel:

1. Click on preferred Content Areas.
2. Click on the  **Add Link** icon.
3. Type a name for the URL or link in the **Name** field.
4. Type the complete address for the Web site in the **URL** field.
5. Check for typos and make sure to include the http:// .
6. Add a short description in the **Description** field.
7. Click the **No** radio button, if you do not want the link to be visible at this time.
8. Click the **Yes** radio button, if you want the URL to open in a new window.
9. Scroll down to the bottom of the page and click the **Submit** button.

Add Course Link

The Add Course Link feature allows you to link to other items that are part of your Blackboard course Web site. For example, Add Course Link can be used to add a discussion forum or quiz right after a specific posted article. Instructors can easily refer to previous documents, or the syllabus, which may reside in different sections of the same course.

From the Control Panel:

1. Click on desired Content Areas.
2. Click the **Add Course Link** icon.
3. Choose a **Name** from the drop down menu or enter the name of the document in the **Name** field. Enter a description into the **Text** field.
4. Click the **Browse** button to find the item to link to.
5. Click on the plus sign next to the folder icon you wish to open within the course map window.
6. Select the radio button next to desired document or folder.
7. Click the **Submit** button at the bottom of the course map window.
8. Choose an option from the Special Action menu.

9. Scroll down to the bottom of the page and click the **Submit** button.

Special Action Choices:

Create a link to this file - This option is used to create a link to a document or download.

Display media file within the page - This option is used when you are working with graphic images or media files you want displayed within the page.

Unpackage this file - This option is used when uploading .zip or compressed files. This is typically used with PowerPoint presentations saved in HTML format or as a collection of linked web pages.

Options Section:

Do you want to make the content visible? - This option allows you to make the visible, or accessible to your students.

Do you want to add offline content? - This option is used when your course has a companion CD-ROM.

Do you want to track number of views? - This option lets you track how often individual users view the document.


Do you want to add metadata? - This option indicates if metadata will be used. Metadata is data about the added item, such as ownership, resource format, and copyright information.

Choose date restrictions - This option lets you set the dates that the document will be visible and invisible. This automates the "make contents visible" function.

Add Tests

The Add Tests feature allows you to add a test, quiz, or survey to any Content Areas of your course site. You can use this feature to either create a new test or to add an existing test. Tests created in Blackboard are automatically graded and entered into the Gradebook.

From the Control Panel:

1. Click on preferred Content Areas.
2. Click the  Test icon.
3. Select your test from the Select an existing test list.
4. Click the Submit button.
5. Click the OK button.
Note: If you have not yet created a test, click Create. See the Test Manager document for step-by-step instructions on how to create a test.
6. Click Modify the test if you wish to modify the text of the test.
7. Click Modify the test options to set the test properties and availability of test, as specified below.
8. Scroll down to the bottom of the page and click the Submit button.

Modify Options

Test Information - Change the color of the test link, add a short description of the test and/or have the test open in a new window.

Test Availability

Do you want to make the link visible? – This feature allows you to give your students access to a specific test. Visible means that your students can see and take the test. Typically documents are made “invisible” when you don’t want students to access them yet. This can be changed at any time.

Allow multiple attempts - This feature allows students to take an assessment multiple times. Only the most recent score is saved, not the highest one.

Set time limit - This feature allows you to limit the time your students have to take a test. The clock starts as soon as the student begins taking the test and displays in the lower left corner of the screen on the browser. Students get a five-minute or one-minute warning, depending on time limit. If the student goes over the limit they will still be allowed to complete the test, however, they will not receive a grade. The status of the test will be "Needs Grading." You will have to review the test and the time they exceeded, in order for you to change or accept the score.

Display after - This feature allows you to put an automatic timer on when the test is available to students. Make sure to check the dates for both sections (**Display until**), as this calendar function may not automatically display the current time and date.

Display until - This feature removes the functionality of the test link on a specified date. This feature does not alter the visibility of the link.

Set password - This feature requires that students enter a password, which is assigned by the instructor, before taking the assessment. This optional choice can increase security for on-line tests.

Test Feedback - This feature allows you to select how much feedback you want your students to receive after they take the test. Options include: just the score, the score plus the correct answers, or more detailed feedback.


Test Presentation – This feature allows you decide whether to present your test in a continuous screen to scroll down, or one question at a time. You can also choose whether you want to randomize the questions or prohibit backtracking.

Add Learning Unit

The Add Learning Unit feature allows you to create and place a Learning Unit anywhere within the Content Areas. Learning Units are organized collections of

content that students move through on a structured path. They can contain documents, assignments, media files, Web site links, quizzes and surveys. Learning Units can be set to open in a new window, which reinforces the idea that they are distinct learning modules. They can also be set to be viewed in sequential order or to let students move through the items in any order.

From the Control Panel:

1. Click into desired Content Areas.
2. Choose **Learning Unit** from the  **Add Other** pull-down list on the right side of the page.
3. Click the **Go** button.
4. Choose a **Name** from the drop down menu or enter the name of the document in the **Name** field.
5. Enter a description into the **Text** field.
6. Select items from the **Options** section.
7. Scroll down to the bottom of the page and click the **Submit** button.
8. Click on the name of the newly created Learning Unit.
9. Choose any of the content options to add to the unit.

Options:

Do you want to make the content visible? - Visible means that your students can see the Learning Unit. You can change this at any time.

Do you want to enforce sequential viewing of the Learning Unit? - This means that students must go through the “pages” in the order you have created them. Choosing ‘No’ for this option allows students to use the table of contents to jump between pages in any order.

Do you want the Learning Unit to open in a new window? - This option opens the LU in a separate window from the course site.

Do you want to track number of views? - This option lets you track how often individual users view the document.


Do you want to add metadata? - This option indicates if metadata will be used. Metadata is data about the added item, such as ownership, resource format, and copyright information.

Choose date restrictions - This option lets you set the dates that the document will be visible and invisible. This automates the "make contents visible" function.


Add Survey

The Add Survey feature allows you to create and place a Blackboard survey anywhere within the content area.


From the Control Panel:

1. Click into preferred Content Areas.
2. Choose **Survey** from the  **Add Other** pull-down list on the right side of the page.
3. Click the **Go** button.
4. Click the **Create** button and refer to the Survey Manager tutorial or select an existing survey from the list.
5. Scroll down to the bottom of the page and click the **Submit** button.

Add Assignment

The Add Assignment feature allows you to link your files to any of the Content Areas. This tool is accessible via the  **Add Other** pull down list on the upper right side of the page. It can give your students access to a drop box and also creates its own Category in your online Gradebook, which allows students to upload, save and place their assignments into the Gradebook.


From the Control Panel:

1. Click on desired Content Areas.
2. Choose **Assignment** from the  **Add Other** pull-down list.
3. Click the **Go** button.
4. Type the **name** of the assignment in the **Name** field.
5. Type the total points that will appear in the Gradebook in the **Points Possible** field.
6. Type text into the **Instructions** field.
7. Click on the **Yes** radio button to make your assignment visible.
8. Click on the **Display After** and the **Display Until** check boxes.
9. Select the date from the pull down **Dates and Times**.
10. Click the Browse button to attach files you wish to display.
11. Scroll down to the bottom of the page and click the **Submit** button.

Add LRN Package

The Add LRN Package feature allows you to create and place Microsoft LRN Content anywhere in the Content Areas. LRN Content is created using the Microsoft LRN Toolkit. For more information on this feature go to <http://www.microsoft.com/elearn/resources.asp>

From the Control Panel:

1. Click on preferred Content Areas.
2. Choose LRN Package from the  **Add Other** pull-down list on the right side of the page.

3. Click the **Go** button.
4. Choose a **Name** from the drop down menu or enter your own name for the document in the **Name** field.
5. Enter a description into the **Text** field.
6. Click the **Browse** button to find the file to upload.
7. Type link name into the **Name of Link to File** field to create the link to your document. If you don't type anything in this field, the name of your file will be used as the link.
8. Select items from the **Options** section.
9. Scroll down to the bottom of the page and click the **Submit** button.

Options:

Do you want to make the content visible? - Visible means that your students can see the Learning Unit. You can change this at any time.

Do you want to add offline content? - This is used when your course has a companion CD-ROM.

Do you want to track number of views? - This option lets you track how often individual users view the document.

Do you want to add metadata? - This option indicates if metadata will be used. Metadata is data about the added item, such as ownership, resource format, and copyright information.

Choose date restrictions - This option lets you set the dates that the document will be visible and invisible. This automates the "make contents visible" function.

Modify, Copy, or Remove Course Content

After you add new content to your Blackboard course Web site, you can change the content, copy it, or delete it if necessary. To modify, copy, or remove content follow these steps:

1. Find/identify the content in your Blackboard course Web site.
2. Click the "EDIT VIEW" link.
3. Click the modify, copy, or remove button.
 - a. If you click the modify button make the necessary changes and click the Submit button.
 - b. If you click the copy button, select the destination and click the Submit button.
 - c. If you click the remove button, click the OK button to confirm you want the content deleted.

Using Course Tools

Announcements

The Announcements page is the first page the students see when they enter a Blackboard course, so it is an key place to put time-sensitive information such as deadlines, changes, corrections, clarifications, and schedules.

From the Control Panel:

1. Click on the **Announcements** link in the Content Area section.
2. Click on the **Add Announcement** button.
3. Fill in a descriptive **title** in the Subject field.
4. Fill in the text in the **Message** field.
5. Scroll down to the bottom of the page and click the **Submit** button.

Modify

1. Click on the **Announcements** link in the Content Area section.
2. Click on the **Modify** button.
3. Scroll down to the bottom of the page and click the **Submit** button.

Course Calendar

Instructors can use the Course Calendar to indicate important course related events. The dates and events that appear on the Course Calendar are for all students registered in a specific course. Suggested items to include in the calendar are section meetings, assignments due dates, exams dates, and dates for guest speakers.

From the Control Panel:

1. Click on the **Course Calendar** link under the Course Tools section.
2. Click on the **Add Event** button.
3. Type in the **Event Title** in the text field.
4. Type the **Event Description** in the text field.
5. Choose the **Event Date** from the pull-down list.
6. Choose the **Event Start Time** from the pull-down list.
7. Choose the **Event End Time** from the pull-down list.
8. Scroll down to the bottom of the page and click the **Submit** button.

Staff Information

The Staff Information tool lets you post information about people such as yourself, teaching assistants, or guest speakers. It gives your students a resource to look up names, email addresses, office hours, and photographs.

Adding a Profile

From the Control Panel:

1. Click on the **Staff Information** link in the Course Tools section.
2. Click on the **Add Profile** icon.
3. Type **information** in the appropriate Profile Information fields.
4. Scroll down to the bottom of the screen and click on the **Submit** button.

Options:

Do you want to make the Profile visible? - Enable this option to give your students access to your assignment.

Profile Image – Use this option to upload a picture into your profile. Your image should not exceed 150x200 pixels.

Personal Link – Use this option to place a link to a useful website in your profile.