



## What's New in Blackboard 9

Blackboard 9 features fewer clicks to navigate and to complete course setup options. The new version offers new and improved social learning tools such as blogs and journals, easier navigation, and other Web 2.0 technologies that allow for greater interactivity and collaboration.

## Interface

- The My Dashboards tab is now what was called the My Blackboard page.
- The My Blackboard tab contains Hot Links, Course List and My Organizations.
- Blackboard 9 uses a Web 2.0 interface that allows users to drag and drop items that appear on the screen, select from drop down menus, and access contextual help.
- Blackboard 9 offers support for content reordering and style sheets, increasing the accessibility.

## Edit Mode

The most important detail instructors need to know about Blackboard 9 is where to find the Edit Mode button which allows instructors to manage their courses. This button is located in the upper-right corner of each Course area and in any subfolders. With **Edit Mode ON** you can easily manage course content. With Edit **Mode OFF** you see what your students see.

## New Course Home Page

- Each **new** course opens to a course home page that contains the modules that are designed to provide students with information on what has changed in the course since they last visited, what items require attention and what items are past due or due in the near future.
- Instructors can modify the course home page to meet their needs.
- For those instructors who prefer to have the Announcements as the course entry point they may do this easily by changing the entry point.
  - Add a Tool Link on the Course Menu
  - Select Announcements as the Type and make it Available to Users
  - In the Course Management area select Customization and Style
  - Change the Course Entry Point to Announcements
  - Go back to the Course Menu and Hide Link for the Home Page

## Improved Course Management Workflow

- Course content creation and edition tools are embedded throughout the course and no longer require the instructors to access the Control Panel. Instructors click on the Edit Mode switch in the top right corner of any Blackboard page.
- All options in the Control Panel are available from the main Course Menu.

- Instructors have direct access to edit and organize the Course Menu and may use the drag and drop feature to change the order of menu items.
- Course Menu items that do not contain any content are automatically hidden from student view but are visible to the instructor while in Edit Mode.
- Course Tools and Communication Tools are combined into a single tools area in the Course Menu.
- Instructors have direct access to the tools they want to enable or disable for students.

## **Inline Confirmations**

Gone is the separate receipt page that the user sees every time they successfully perform an action. Confirmations now appear on the same page that the user is working.

## **File Collection and Exchange**

- The Digital Drop Box has been replaced by the Assignments Tool. This tool allows instructors to download all of the student files for a particular assignment in a single zip file. Blackboard automatically renames each student's file to include the name of the assignment, the student's username, and the filename the student originally submitted.
- There is a Group File Exchange that works like the old Digital Drop Box.

## **Private Blog and Journal Tools**

- Blackboard 9 has a built in private Blog and Journal tools that allow students to create and share ideas with their instructors or other students enrolled in the same class. Both of these tools may not be viewed outside Blackboard.
- The Journal tool replaces what was the Electric Blackboard and the Student Homepage tool has been replaced with the Blog tool.
- Individual journals allow students to record what they are learning. These thoughts can be private between a student and instructor or shared with others in the course. The author and the instructor can add comments.
- Group journals allow groups of students to reflect collaboratively and comment on group member's finding. To maintain privacy, group members may anonymously add journal entries.
- Individual blogs provide each student in a course with their own area to share thoughts and work with others in the course. Students are able to receive comments and feedback on their individual blog from others in the course.
- Course blogs allow users in a particular course to share thoughts and work in a common area where all the students in the same course can read and add comments.
- Group blogs allow groups of students in a course to collaboratively post thoughts and comments on each other's work while everyone else in the course can view and comment on the groups' entries.

## **Groups**

- Instructors can now create any number of groups at once.
- Students can randomly be assigned to groups, manually assigned by the instructor, or asked to sign-up for a group themselves.

- Students can create their own self-enrollment groups, although instructors have the option of modifying or restricting access to the student created groups.

## **Completely Redesigned Grade Center (formerly the Grade Book)**

- Instructors can enter results, scores, percentages, and other forms of grading directly into the Grade Center spreadsheet. This inline editing process is similar to Microsoft Excel.
- Each grade entered into the Grade Center is automatically saved.
- The Grade Center automatically records each grade's history. If an instructor or TA changes a grade, the grade history will show the new grade, the old grade(s), when the grade(s) was changed and who made the changes.
- Instructors can create "Smart Views" that categorize students based on selected criteria. This is helpful for courses that have been combined as instructors are now able to view students by section. It also works well for instructors who use TA's and want to divide the management of student grades between those TA's.
- Instructors have the ability to create and print grade reports.
- The Grade Center supports average grade and minimum/maximum grade calculations. Instructors are also able to now drop the lowest score easily.

## **Announcements**

- Instructors can now change the display order of their announcements.

## **Assignments**

- Instructors can now choose to deploy Assignments to all students individually or to groups of students. This allows instructors to assign a single grade to all of the students in a group and also to override that group grade and assign a student a different grade.
- Instructors can allow students to submit multiple attempts for the same assignment. Each attempt can be graded and commented on individually.
- Instructors have the ability to give specific students an additional attempt at an assignment.

## **Calendar**

- Instructors can add start and stop times for any event in an increment of time.

## **Tests, Surveys, and Questions**

- Instructors can reorder questions in a test or survey using the new drag and drop feature.