

# What's New in Blackboard 9.1

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## Adding and Removing Files

In Blackboard, faculty have always had to upload files and delete files one at a time. Now they can upload or delete all course files at once. Faculty can add multiple files to Blackboard, and then later determine where they would like to place them in the class. They can also delete multiple files at once, regardless of where they are in the course.

Faculty will find this great new feature in the Control Panel under Files. Click on Files, then the Course ID will show up. Click on the Course ID, and the window that appears will show all of the files uploaded in the class.

To upload files, click the double down arrow next to upload. Upload files will let faculty upload a single file. To upload an entire folder, zip the folder, and then choose Upload Package. This will upload an entire zip folder which will automatically be unpackaged by Blackboard.

To use any of the content that has been uploaded, when you are in a content area and you have the option to find a file, choose Browse Course Files.

To delete a file from the Course files, choose the box next to the item you want to remove and click Delete.

This area can get crowded because every file you put in your class will appear here. There is a Create Folder button which can help to keep files more organized; making it easier to find what is needed, when it is needed. A great way to organize this area is based on Topics, Units, or even Weeks.

You can also create a Web Folder to allow easier file management, file addition and removal.

## Views

When viewing Course files, at the top right of the window, there is a choice of *View List* or *View Thumbnails*.

*View List* will show the list with an icon next to each file to show what kind of file it is. *View Thumbnails* will display a larger icon of the file. If it is an image file, it will show a preview of the image, other files display an icon to show what kind of file it is.

When in Thumbnail view, there is a slider to allow the professor to make the thumbnails larger or smaller.

# Building Content

Faculty will find that with Blackboard 9.1 there are many new ways in which they can add content to their classes. Below is a list all of the items that are available in the Build Content menu of any Content area in your course.

## Create

- **Item:** You can add multiple files without having to submit each time. If you choose Browse Course you can search to upload a file, a package, or an entire folder.
- **File:** This allows you to post files without any description. If you choose Browse Course Files you can search to upload a file, a package, or an entire folder. The icon displayed is a floppy disk.
- **Audio:** This allows a new method of including an audio file. Allows you to include an audio file and a transcript, without any description other than the name. Acceptable audio files include: .aiff, .asf, .moov, .mov, .mp, .mp3, .wav, .wma, .wmv. Make sure you do not select AutoStart or Loop so users can control the video. Students may be prompted for their username and password to play the file.
- **Image:** This allows a new method of including an image file. Allows you to include an image with name, Alt text, and a long description. How do you determine which is necessary? If the description you need to add is greater than about 80 characters, just use the long description. When creating the alt text or long description, a good way to think about it is to describe the image as though you were talking on the phone to someone and describing it.
- **Video:** This works the same way file and audio did, allowing a new method of including a video file without any description other than the name. Acceptable video files include: .mpeg, .avi, .mov, .qt, .swa, .swf, .wmv. If you are using a video that does not have captioning, it is important to add a transcript here as you would an audio file.
- **Web Link:** This is the same as what was previously called “Add External Link.” Simply add a name and an exact web address and you’ll have a direct link to the other page. To keep your students from leaving Blackboard, make sure you select Yes to the “Open in New Window” option.
- **Learning Module:** This allows you to create what will appear to you as a folder, but will be shown one item at a time to the students in the order set by you. This can be a good way to make sure the students at least browse through all of the content you normally place within a folder. You can determine whether the students have to go through each item each time they enter the module, or if there is a list of contents allowing the students to choose what they want to view.

**Lesson Plan:** A lesson plan is similar to a folder, but it combines information about the lesson (the image shows all the information you can include in the lesson plan itself), as well as curriculum resources (the same as you would use in any other content item). This feature displays a tabbed format to let you add different content items. The feature is designed to allow the students to see a lesson profile and instructional objectives. You can choose what of the lesson plan the students see, and what you use just for your own planning purposes.

- **Syllabus:** Allows you to either upload an existing syllabus or create a new one within Blackboard.
- **Course Link:** This feature gives you the ability to create a shortcut to another area within your Blackboard course.
- **Content Package (SCORM):** If you have created a SCORM package outside of Blackboard, this is the tool that will allow you to import it in. If it is a SCORM item, it will automatically create the correct columns in the course gradebook.

## New Page

- **Content Folder:** Create a folder to help organize materials, assignments, etc.
- **Blank Page:** This item allows you to add an html page to a content area or the course menu. The item will need to be clicked in order to enter the new page which will appear within the Blackboard shell.

## Mashups

Mashups are new content items that allow the professor to pull content from three different third-party providers. You can use content others have uploaded, or you can create your own accounts and use your own content. With each of the mashups, license information is displayed. Also, the content has been narrowed down to only show items that are appropriate for all audiences.

- **Flickr Photo:** This feature allows you to import photographs from Flickr. You can either display a thumbnail which when clicked will display the image in its own window, or embed the image at your choice of sizes. If the image is embedded, the student will be able to click on it, but they will get an error message stating that Flickr does not allow embedding and will not display the image. Check for copyright before using any image.
- **SlideShare Presentation:** SlideShare offers presentations you can use in your class. Again, you can choose to embed the presentation or display a thumbnail which will allow the student to click to view in a new window. Related presentations are shown after the linked presentation ends.
- **YouTube Video:** Now you can look for YouTube videos directly in Blackboard instead of having to go to YouTube, find the code for the video, and then place it in the text editor.

## Assign Textbook

When teaching a class, it is important that the students get the appropriate textbooks. Using the new Assign Textbook feature, under the Publisher Content drop-down menu, you can include all of the information about the book(s) you use for a class by simply entering in the ISBN number, title, or author. Once the correct book is chosen, the students will be able to view the title, author, ISBN, publisher, price, and more about the book. You can also specify whether the book is required or recommended.

## The Grade Center

The first big difference you'll notice with the Grade Center is where it is located. It is no longer located within the Evaluation heading in the Control center. That area now only houses the Course Reports, Early Warning System, and the Performance Dashboard. The Grade Center now has a heading all to itself. The reason it has been put into its own area is so that as you create Smart Views, you can make them favorites and they will appear there. This allows you to go straight to the view you want without having to go to the Full Grade Center First. Creating Smart Views has not changed, except for the addition of the star that appears when viewing all of the Smart Views under the Manage Menu.

The biggest changes in the Grade Center take place within a column created by an assignment or test. These features are found by clicking the double-down arrow next to the name of an assignment or test. There are some new features which can make your grading easier and perhaps more objective.

### Column Information Menu for an Assignment

- **Grade Attempts:** To enter a grade and feedback for a particular assignment, this feature will allow you to use Save and Next to go from one student to the next within a particular assignment. If a student has submitted more than one attempt, it will cycle through all of the attempts for a particular student. While in this mode, you can choose Hide User Names to grade all attempts anonymously.
- **Grade Anonymously:** This works similarly to Grade Attempts, letting you cycle through all the attempts, the difference being once you click Grade Anonymously you do not need to select Hide User Information.
- **Assignment File Cleanup:** This feature allows you to remove all the files submitted by your students for a particular assignment after you have finished with an assignment.
- **Assignment File Download:** feature allows you to download all the files submitted by students for a particular assignment at one time. Downloading files this way also adds the assignment name and student id to the file name.

## Column Information Menu for a Test

- **Grade Anonymously:** This item allows you to go into the tests students have taken without seeing the student names. You can cycle from student to student seeing all of the information, except the student name. You can include feedback and grading notes, as well as giving credit for specific questions.
- **Grade Attempts:** Works the same as Grade Anonymously except the student names are shown. In order to hide the names you would need to click Hide User Information.
- **Grade Questions:** This item allows you to grade a particular question for all students who answered it. The screen that appears will show all of the questions on the test. If you want to grade the responses anonymously, you can choose Grade Responses Anonymously, located above all of the test questions. To the right of the points possible is a clickable number that displays how many responses there were to that particular question. If you click on the number, a window will appear that will show who answered the question and what answer they put. At the top of the window you can choose Hide User Names to grade anonymously. If you want to change the score a student received for the question, you can click on edit next to the score. Once you finish with one question, click back to questions to return and choose another question.

## Tests, Surveys, and Question Pools

Blackboard 9.1 has made it easier for faculty to manage their questions within a course. If you aren't already familiar, you have access to your tests, surveys, and pools by going into the Course Tools section of the Control Panel.

### Find Questions (or Create Question Set)

Located under the Reuse Questions menu, faculty can create tests using questions that are located within other tests, surveys and pools by performing a simple search. By default all tests and pools are included in the initial search, so it is necessary to click the double down arrow next to Pools and then next to Test to select only the particular pools and/or tests you want to include. Be careful using the Search Current Results because rather than narrow down and only show items including the words you search for, it excludes them.

### Random Block

Works similarly to how it did before, but gives the professor more options. When initially choosing a block, the professor chooses where the questions will come from, and then what types of questions to include. It isn't until the professor gets back to the test canvas that the points for each question and how many questions will be used are displayed.

## Batch Deletion

In a test or a pool that does not use a random block, the professor can view questions based on question type or category. This can allow the professor to remove all of the questions of a particular type or from a particular category at once. To delete questions, all the professor needs to do is to check the box next to the question, then once all the questions to be removed have been selected choose Delete at either the top or the bottom of the list. Blackboard only remembers questions on one page at a time, so if you plan to go through multiple pages, choose Show All before making any selections.

## Point Updates

The same way the professor can delete particular questions, he/she can also change the points that the questions are worth. This saves a lot of time from previous versions of Blackboard where the professor had to go in to each question to edit it and change the points. To change the points, check the box next to each desired question, once all the questions that will be worth the same amount of points have been checked, type in the points at the top or bottom of the list of questions and click submit. Again, if there is more than one page of questions, choose Show All before making any selections.

## Copy Tests, Surveys, and Pools

With previous versions of Blackboard, if a professor needed two versions of the same test, it would have to be exported out and then imported back in. Now a simple copy will do this for you. To copy, just choose the double down arrow next to the name of the test, pool, or survey and choose copy.

## Packages and Utilities

There have been some changes and additions to the Packages and Utilities area of the control panel that can help make reusing courses and files easier.

- **Bulk Delete:** New Name – Previously called Recycle. Removes all content in a course. The professor can choose which content areas and other materials are removed from the course. To keep files from being accidentally removed, the professor must type Delete to complete the request.
- **Course Copy:** Allows the professor to copy a course from one Blackboard shell into another. A new feature in Course Copy is the ability to *Calculate the Size* of the course and remove any files that do not need to be copied. Deleting the files from the copy will provide links to the original course instead of copying them into the new course. Files that are copied will appear in the Course Files section and will be linked to from the content areas. *Be sure not to select Include Enrollments in the Copy.*
- **Export/Archive Course:** Allows the professor to export a course, and then save the course on to a computer. It can later be imported back into a Blackboard shell. A new feature in Course Copy is the ability to *Calculate*

*the Size* of the course and remove any files that do not need to be copied. Deleting the files from the copy will provide links to the original course instead of copying them into the new course. Files that are copied will appear in the Course Files section and will be linked to from the content areas.

- **Import Course Cartridge:** Allows the professor to import a course cartridge provided by a publisher.
- **Import Package/View Logs:** Allows the professor to import a course that has been exported previously.
- **Move Files to Course Files:** This feature copies all of the files that are used within a course into the Course Files area so all files existing files will appear in this area. Files from a previous course that is copied will automatically be moved into the Course files area only if they were in that area previously. Any courses that originated before 9.1 will not have the files listed in the Course Files area unless this step is taken. Any new files put in the class will automatically display there.