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## **Orientation: Adding Content**

### **Adding Content**

Content can be added to content areas in BlackBoard. You can customize these by adding, removing, or changing the link labels (see “Customize Course Menu” module).

### **Adding Course Cartridges**

Course cartridges are collections of material created by publishers to complement textbooks. Be sure to load the cartridge before you start building your course.

To add a course cartridge:

1. Find the Instructor Download Key included with your copy of the Instructor’s textbook, or contact your textbook sales representative to get it. (You can also search for the key in the Course Cartridge screen on BlackBoard).
2. Go to the Control Panel and select Import Course Cartridge.
3. Type in the Key and click Submit.
4. Within 24 hours, the course cartridge will be added to your course.
5. You will receive an email when the installation is complete.

### **Adding Your Own Content**

Edit View allows direct access to buttons for adding items to a content area of your course. Click on the “Edit View” link (fig. 1) on the right side of your screen. To return to the student view, click on “Display View” in the same spot. You can also add content through the Control Panel.

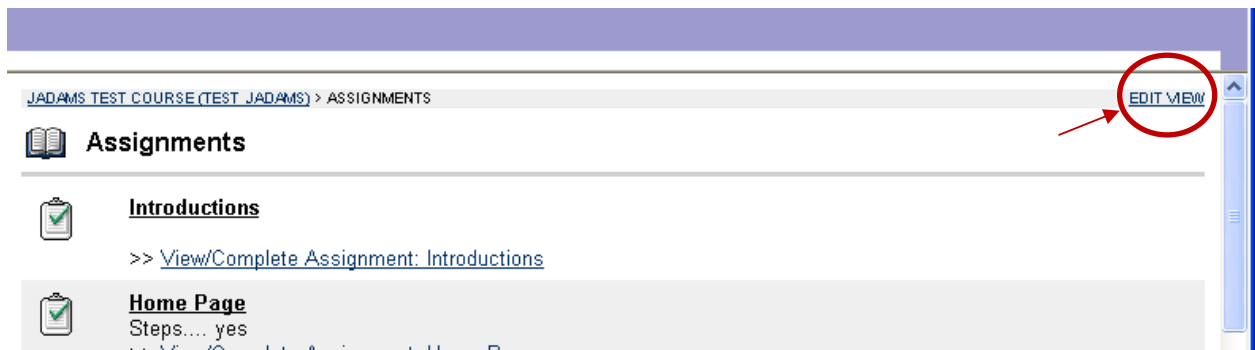


Figure 1. "Edit View" link at upper right on content pages (except on Announcements and Staff Information)

Once in Edit view, you will see the **Add** toolbar, with different types of content to add:



Figure 2. Add toolbar, left side

Also on the far right hand side is a pull down menu with additional choices:

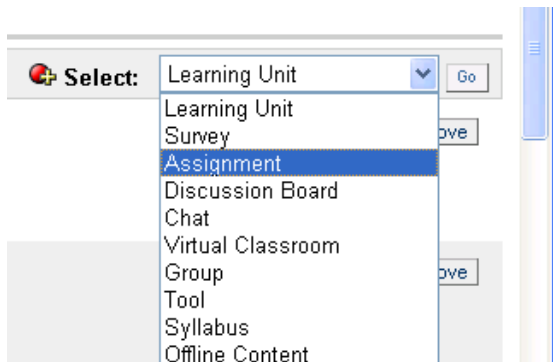


Figure 3. Add toolbar, right side. More selections from the drop down menu

**Item** – add content using Item when you want to post information for read only. Item content is non-interactive.

**Folder** – create a folder to organize your course material into units.

**External Link** – provide a direct link to an external web page.

**Course Link** - link within BlackBoard from one content area to another.

**Test** - create a new test from another test or pool. For more details, see the Assessment module.

**Survey** - make a survey, which is an anonymous, unscored assessment.

**Assignment** – use the Assignment feature to create a private conduit between instructor and student, where you can provide individualized feedback and exchange files that stay associated with the assignment. The Assignment is automatically added to your Gradebook. See the Assignments module for more information.

**Learning Unit** enables the Instructor to set a structured path for progressing through the content within a course.

**LRN Packages** - Microsoft LRN Content enables Instructors to create course content presentations that have a hierarchical structure and sequential navigation. It is only compatible with Internet Explorer 5.x and 6.x Web browsers.

**Content can be added** in three ways. A mix of approaches is often best, as each is effective for different things. The three ways are:

- Adding directly into a BlackBoard page
- Attaching a document
- Linking to a web page created in FrontPage

### Adding Content Directly

BlackBoard has a Textbox Editor for typing and formatting content directly into your course.

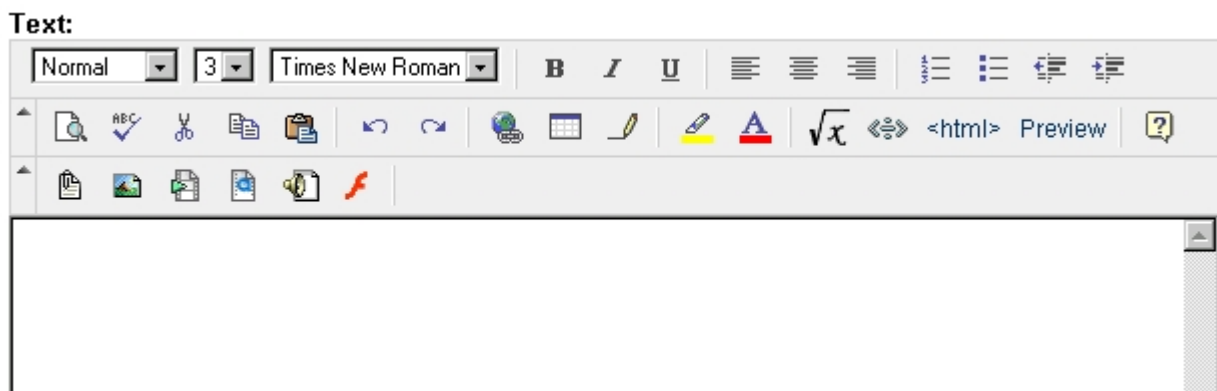


Figure 4. Textbox with editing tools

Features include:

- Formatting buttons
- Spell checker
- Math Formula Editor WebEq- Square root symbol
- Math ML (Math Markup Language) Editor - Division symbol - for more information go to <http://www.dessci.com/en/support/tutorials/mathml/>

## Printing Content

Printing can be challenging for students. This is because BlackBoard opens the content inside a "frame" of the web page. When students print something, they need to:

1. Use the right mouse button (right-click) on the link to that document.
2. Select Open in New Window from the menu that appears.
3. Print the document from the new window.

## Attaching a document

It is often more effective to attach a document rather than enter the text directly into BlackBoard. This is especially true when:

- The document is one that students will need to print.
- The content is a worksheet, handout, or tip-sheet that students will need to save for future reference or that may be used in multiple courses.

Make sure that the file formats you use are accessible to your students. We recommend that you use Rich Text Format (RTF), HTML or PDF files. See the addendum at the end of this document for a discussion of appropriate file formats.

## Instructional Design Note:

PowerPoint documents can create printing difficulties. Often students have to print slides one page at a time. If you want your students to print PowerPoint files, we recommend printing them 6 to a page, then copying and handing them out in class, giving students explicit instructions on how to print 6 slides to a page, or saving your PowerPoint document as a PDF file (best practice).

To attach a document for read-only or printing:

1. Click on the "Item" option on the toolbar.
2. Type in a name for the item, or select from the pull-down menu
3. Locate your file on your computer using the Browse button.
4. Select the display options, available times, etc.
5. Click "Submit"

Note that documents also can be posted using the Assignment feature or as an attachment on the Discussion Board or to an email. Also note, BlackBoard restricts you from uploading any files larger than 50 mb. See "Managing large files" below for more information.

**Printing linked documents** can be challenging for students in the same way that in-line content is. See the note above for tips to print more successfully.

## Linking to a web page

You can also link students to a web page that you've created on Flightline. This is often useful when:

- An assignment or document is used in multiple classes
- A document will be updated or changed frequently

- A document contains many images or other media

To link to a document on your web site:

1. Click on the "External Link" option on the toolbar.
2. Type in a name for the item, or select from the pull-down menu
3. Find the item in your web browser (Internet Explorer or Mozilla/Firefox)
4. Copy and paste the URL
5. Select the display options, available times, etc.
6. Click "Submit"

## Managing large files

### *Keep large files "friendly"*

Powerpoint presentations, video, and audio files are often very large. They can be slow to load, which is a problem for students, and space-hogs on Highline's BlackBoard server.

- An 11MB PowerPoint file takes 4 minutes to load over a cable or DSL connection.
- That same file converts to a 1.5MB PDF (Portable Document Format), which takes less than a minute to download
- A 6MB PowerPoint file takes 2.5 minutes to load over a cable or DSL connection.
- That 6mb file converts to a 0.3MB PDF, which takes around 15 seconds to load.

### *Put the files on Flightline, then link from BlackBoard*

Use your faculty web site on Flightline as storage for your course content. (See the [demonstration movie](#) and [step-by-step instructions](#)).

- Flightline transfers files faster than BlackBoard, so students get materials faster
- It keeps these large files off the BlackBoard server, which has less capacity than the Flightline server.
- Files can be used in multiple courses or from quarter to quarter. It is easier and faster to link to them versus importing them into BlackBoard. If it is a file that needs to be updated quarterly, it's faster to update it on Flightline; the link in BlackBoard will still work.

### *Convert files to PDF*

Convert PowerPoint presentations and read-only documents to PDF. (See the [step-by-step instructions](#)).

- PDF files are smaller in size so much quicker to load.
- Most computers have PDF readers already installed. If not, the plug-in is free and quick to install.
- Unless the student has PowerPoint, presentations will be printed one slide per page. PDFed presentations can be set up 3 slides per page, with handy note-taking lines included.

### *Consider streaming video and audio*

If you have a short video for students, consider having it streamed over the web instead of using a great big download. This delivers the video over the web as the student views it; less wait, more watch.

Contact [Media Services](#) for details.

This information is available online at <http://flightline.highline.edu/blackboard/bp/manage.large.files.html>.

### Notes on Adding and Modifying Content

Posted content may be modified by clicking the "Modify" button next to an item. The fields on the "Add" page and "Modify" page are the same. The Add form opens with empty fields. The Modify form opens with fields already filled. You can change any of the options, including the title, description, or display options.

**Note:** Pay attention to the following options when adding or modifying content.

Do you want to make content visible?

Select **Yes** to indicate that the item will be available to students.

Do you want to track number of views?

Select **Yes** to track the number of times users access this item. Use the **Course Statistics** page to view a report.

### Selecting Document Formats

Word processing programs that are used for creating a syllabus, assignments, or other course information can be imported into BlackBoard using the procedures outlined above. However, the documents should be saved using a file type such that students will not have to depend on a certain word processor to view them.

Below are common file types, along with advantages and disadvantages for each.

#### *Word or WordPerfect Document*

If you choose to use a Microsoft Word or WordPerfect document, your students must also have that program on their computers to view it. Different versions of Word may also conflict and restrict a student's view. Many users have the latest version of Word, so this may not be an issue for your course. With some exceptions, they will see the same format that you do on your screen.

#### *Rich Text Format (.rtf)*

Your original Word document may lose some formatting as an .rtf file, but usually any differences are minor. Your students will be able to view the content no matter what word processor they have. You can convert Word documents (.doc) to Rich Text Format (.rtf) by opening the document, choosing File and selecting Save As, then changing Save as *type*: to Rich Text Format. Once you have saved the file as .rtf, you are ready to import the document into your course site.

#### *Portable Document Format (.pdf)*

PDF files require that you convert the document using the Adobe Acrobat or a comparable program. The resulting file will preserve the layout of your document, as if you'd taken a picture of the page and sent that. Students will need a PDF reader (usually Adobe Acrobat Reader), which is freely available. The

Acrobat conversion program is available in the MIDS lab on the 6th floor of the library, or on some newer office computers.

#### HTML Format

Your original Word document may lose some formatting as an HTML file, but your students will be able to view the content no matter what word processor they have. Compared to Rich Text Format, HTML formatting will preserve more of the graphics. You can convert Word documents (.doc) to HTML (.html) by opening the document, choosing File and selecting Save As HTML... Once you have saved the file as .html, you can import the document into your course site.

ID Note: You can also use this to add content directly to a page. Use Front Page to create the content, then copy and paste the HTML. Click on the HTML tab in the lower left corner of the FrontPage screen. Begin copying at the word <body> and copy until you get to </body>. If you are using HTML, don't forget to select the HTML button at the bottom of the BlackBoard text box.