The Blackboard Content System

Overview of Product Capabilities

COLLECTION, SHARING AND DISCOVERY

The **Blackboard Content System**™, an advanced knowledge sharing application, uses an Internet file management engine to extend the reach of e–Learning beyond individual classes. Featuring a robust core set of capabilities that allow students, faculty and staff to exchange, reuse and share individual work, as well as educational and digital library content, the Blackboard Content System bridges content across learning communities and creates a progressive path of achievement across all stages of academic careers. These key capabilities include:

Content and File Management:

Allows content and files to be managed, re-used, and shared effectively. Individual files and content objects can be used across multiple courses, organizations and modules without the need for duplication. Users can share their files, giving both read and write access to specific individuals, groups, and institution roles (i.e. all biology teachers). For users outside of the institution, content owners can create "passes" that provide access and enable collaboration for specific time periods.

Versioning:

Allows users to automatically archive, track, and access previous versions of their files. The system creates separate copies after each contributor changes the document, providing an automatic backup for overwritten files. Users can access older versions of a file to review changes or revert to an earlier version thus erasing the changes.

Disk Space and Bandwidth Management:

Enables System Administrators to establish limits by institution role, on the amount of disk space for individuals, courses, and organizations, as well as control bandwidth settings for users based on institution role (e.g., student, faculty). Through these controls, Administrators can better manage computing resources and network utilization, as well as guard against system abuse.

Collaborative Web-enabled File Storage:

Dedicated file and content storage areas for individual users, courses, organizations, or different constituent groups within the institution (i.e. the Business School, the College of Arts and Sciences, Foreign Language Faculty, etc.) as well as the Library. The Web Folders capability leverages the WebDAV standard which allows users to drag and drop content from a local workstation into the Blackboard platform, and open, edit and save files on the Blackboard server directly from their computer's desktop.

e-Portfolios:

Electronic portfolios enable students and faculty members to assemble, present, and share information online for documenting academic growth, career evaluation, and course preparation. Portfolios can be generated via the Portfolio Creation Wizard or customized based on pre-established portfolio templates. Institutions can also develop their own portfolio templates to guide their students in developing their portfolios.

Workflow:

Provides the ability to define a workflow activity (such as Review, Approve, or Grade) and designate settings such as priority, deadline, and permissions. Workflows route content to other users and allow the sender to track the progress on completion of workflow activities.

Learning Object Catalog:
Enables the institution to set up a searchable, hierarchical taxonomy to catalog learning objects and resources that can be accessed by individual users both within and outside the institution. Resources in the Learning Object Catalog can be easily included in courses by instructors.

e-Reserves:
Digital versions of copyright-cleared reserve readings that libraries create for faculty and students. Separate e-Reserve folders can be enabled for each course, and administration of these folders can be delegated to librarians. This capability assures that the library has the necessary level of administrative control to ensure that copyrighted digital content is used properly.

Enterprise Scalability:
Based on robust, industry standard web servers, application servers, and databases, the Blackboard system has a proven ability to scale to hundreds of thousands of active users. Out-of-the-box load balancing supports easy configuration of additional application servers to allow the implementation to grow with adoption. Likewise, multiple database fail-over support assures a reliable, high-availability enterprise environment.

Multi-Language Support:
Enables institutions to run multiple languages on the same system. Instructors can even set the language of the course independently from the language setting of the overall system. In addition to supporting most European languages, Blackboard supports multi-byte character sets such as Japanese and Chinese.

Standards:
Compliance and interoperability with industry standards is a fundamental capability of Blackboard's software products. Blackboard is a strong advocate for open industry standards in the areas of system interoperability (IMS, SIF, OKI, etc.); content specifications (IMS, SCORM, NLN, etc.), privacy (FERPA), accessibility (Section 508), and metadata (IMS, Dublin Core, etc.).

Blackboard Building Blocks (Open APIs):
Our open architecture initiative, **Blackboard Building Blocks®**, provides a public, free software development kit (SDK) that documents application programming interfaces (APIs). Clients and independent software vendors use the Blackboard Building Blocks technology to create new functionality on top of the Blackboard platform or integrate external systems with Blackboard products.

System Integration:
Blackboard's data and system integration capabilities, enabled through the Blackboard Building Blocks architecture, allow institutions to integrate student information systems, campus authentications systems (LDAP, Kerberos, Active Directory, etc.), and other campus back-office systems with the Blackboard platform.

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