

*This documentation includes information on the various tools in Blackboard 9.1 that enhance communication and discussion among course members. Online communication tools allow students to express themselves outside the confines of typical, in-class discussions and facilitate group work without having to find a common time and place to work.*

## Communication Tools in Blackboard 9.1

- ◆ [Blogs](#): Shared writing spaces for students that are often used for reflection or opinion pieces.
- ◆ [Chat](#): A writing tool commonly used for virtual office hours or immediate discussion with the instructor and other students online.
- ◆ [Discussion Boards](#): A space for students to respond to topics, questions, or tasks assigned by the instructor.
- ◆ [Email](#): Allows messages to be sent easily to the entire course or to specific students or groups.
- ◆ [Journals](#): A personal writing space for students and a means for private communication with the instructor.
- ◆ [Wiki](#): A space for groups to work collaboratively on a project with the ability to add text, images, audio, or other files in a space accessible by all members.
- ◆ [Wimba Voice Tools](#): Tools that allow recordings, to be shared with the class in one of five manners. Voice Boards, Voice Podcasts, and Voice Email are the most commonly used.



### Blogs

Blackboard 9.1 has built-in blogs that allow students to post reflections or opinions and comment on the posts of others as well. Images, audio, and video files can also be included within blog posts. To create and access blogs on Blackboard, as well as create entries:

1. Open the content area in which the blog link will be located. Hover over the **Add Interactive Tool button** at the top of the content area and click on **Blog** in the drop-down menu that appears.
2. The [Create Link: Blog](#) page will appear. In Field 1, you can choose to link to a preexisting blog or to create a new blog. Clicking **Create New Blog** will open the [Create Blog](#) page.
3. On the [Create Blog](#) page, enter the required information, adjust availability, date and time restrictions, participation, and other settings as you like, and click **Submit**.

*NOTE:* An **Individual to All Students** blog permits only an individual student to post blog entries, though others may view and comment on posts. A **Course** blog permits all enrolled users to post entries and comments. We encourage you to **uncheck** the option to **Allow Anonymous Comments**.

4. Once the blog has been created, the [Create Link: Blog](#) page will appear again with the new blog included in the list of blogs to link. Select the blog to link and click **Next**.
5. Another [Create Link: Blog](#) page will appear with Fields titled **Link Information** and **Options**. Adjust these settings as you like, and click **Submit**. The [content area](#) containing the blog link will open. Clicking on the link to the blog will open the [Blogs](#) page, which will display any entries and their comments along with information about blog authors and blog activity.
6. To add a post, open the blog, then click on the **Create Blog Entry** button. Your post will require a title in addition to the post content. Once finished, click **Post Entry**.



## Chat

Collaboration (Chat) is an instant messaging service within Blackboard that allows course members to communicate instantly. Chat is commonly used for virtual office hours and at other times so students can ask questions and receive immediate feedback from the instructor. To access the chat function in Blackboard 9.1:

1. Open the content area in which the chat link will be located. Hover over the **Add Interactive Tool button** at the top of the content area and click on **Chat** or **Virtual Classroom** in the drop-down menu that appears.
2. Two types of Collaboration Sessions exist: Virtual Classrooms and Chats. To join a Collaboration Session, click on the on Session Name link (**Lecture Hall** and **Office Hours** are default preexisting collaboration sessions).  
NOTE: Make sure that you change your browser settings to allow pop-up windows for Blackboard. If a collaboration window does not automatically appear and a loading screen is displayed, you may need to select **Click Here For an Accessible Version**.
3. A separate window will open, showing that the Java software is loading. Once the chat window opens, you will be able to communicate with all other course members who are also logged into the chat.



## Discussion Boards

Discussion Boards provide a space for threaded conversations among course members. Within a Discussion Board, you can set up various forums on different topics in which students can respond to particular questions or discussion prompts. To create a Discussion Board Forum:

1. Open the content area in which the Discussion Board link will be located. Hover over the **Add Interactive Tool button** at the top of the content area and click on **Discussion Board** in the drop-down menu that appears.
2. When the Discussion Board page opens, any forums that you have already created will be displayed in a list that includes forum activity information.
3. To create a new forum, click the **Create Forum** button. The Create Forum page will open, prompting you to name your new forum and configure its settings. You must include a name for your discussion forum, and you can include the prompt or topic information in the Description box. Fields 2 and 3 allow you to choose various options. It is strongly suggested to *never* **Allow Anonymous Posts**. (Students typically won't participate in an on-line discussion unless it is worth credit). In addition, you *always* want to **Allow Members to Create New Threads**. This allows students to respond not only to the forum discussion question, but also to other students' posts. Once your settings selections are complete, click **Submit**.



## Email

Within Blackboard 9.1, you can easily send e-mail to your entire class or to specific course members, including members of particular groups or teaching assistants. To send email:

1. Click on **Tools** within the Content Dashboard and select the **Send Email** link.

2. The [Send Email](#) page will open, providing you the option of sending an email to all users, specific students, teaching assistants, etc. Click on the **user group** to whom you wish to send the email.
3. An [Email](#) screen will appear next. Add a subject line, write your email message, add an attachment if appropriate, and click **Submit**. The message will be copied to you, the sender, automatically.

*NOTE:* All email messages are sent to the user's Denison email account unless this setting is manually changed.



## Journals

In Blackboard 9.1, journals and blogs are very similar, except that journal posts are only accessible by the professor, while blog posts are accessible by all course users. To create journals:

1. Open the content area where you would like the journals to be located, hover over the **Add Interactive Tool** button, and select **Journal** from the drop-down menu that appears.
2. On the [Create Link: Journal](#) page that opens, click **Create New Journal**.
3. The [Create Journal](#) page will open, which will allow you to set up your Journal. Complete the fields according to your preferences and click **Submit**.
4. Once you are directed back to the [Create Link: Journal](#) page, your newly created Journal will appear in the list of journals to link. With the **Link to a Journal** button selected, choose the appropriate journal name from the list and click **Submit**.
5. Another [Create Link: Journal](#) page with more fields for journal information will appear. Once your settings are configured, click **Submit**.
6. To create an entry, click on the **journal's link** and select **Create Journal Entry**. You can edit the post's title and text, as well as media files like images, audio, and video. When finished, submit the post by choosing **Post Entry**. Student entries will only be visible to the student who posted them and the instructor. As instructor, you can view all journal entries on the right side of the screen.






## Wiki

Wikis allow students and instructors to work collaboratively on a project by providing a single location for different resources for the same topic or project. A wiki is composed of a home page with the wiki's description, written by the instructor, that governs the entire wiki, and multiple other pages as added by members. To create a wiki:

1. Open the content area of your Blackboard course page where you would like the wiki to be located. Hover over the **Add Interactive Tool** button across the top of the content area page and select **Wiki** from the drop-down menu that appears.
2. The [Create Link: Wiki](#) page will open. Within a content area, you can either link a specific wiki or link the [Wikis](#) Page, which includes a list of all wikis associated with your course.
  - a. To provide a link to the [Wikis](#) page, select the button **Link to the Wikis Page** and then **Next**. Another [Create Link: Wiki](#) page will open, allowing you to customize the description of the link and accessibility options. When the settings are configured as you like, click **Submit**.

- b. To provide a link to a particular wiki, select the **Link to a Wiki** button. A list of available wikis to choose appears under this option; you can choose an existing wiki or create a new one.
  - i. To use an existing wiki, select it from the list and click **Next**. Another Create Link: Wiki page will open, allowing you to configure the link settings. When everything is customized as you like, click **Submit**.
  - ii. To create a new wiki, click the **Create New Wiki** button to open the Create Wiki page, allowing you to customize the title and instructions of your new wiki, along with other features and settings. Once your wiki is configured as you like, click **Submit**.
3. The first time you click the wiki link, you will be prompted to create the wiki home page. Once you have filled in the requested information for the wiki home page, click **Submit**.
4. To add additional pages to the wiki, open the wiki and click **Create Wiki Page**. Different pages of the wiki will not be viewable simultaneously, but you can navigate to different pages of the wiki using the wiki navigation boxes on the right side of the wiki page.

* About This Wiki	
Number of Wiki Pages:	2
Number of Comments:	1
Creation Date:	6/24/11 9:38 AM
* New Blackboard Features	
 New Blackboard Features	<input type="checkbox"/>
 Writing the Wiki	<input type="checkbox"/>
 Documentation	<input type="checkbox"/>



## Wimba

The Wimba Voice Tools allow instructors and students to post audio recordings for a course within a Blackboard page. The Wimba suite includes 5 distinct tools: Voice Authoring, Voice Email, Voice Board, Voice Presentation, and Voice Podcaster. (Voice Authoring and Voice Presenter are not used as commonly and not covered in this document. To add a voice tool to a Blackboard course:

1. Open the content area where you would like the voice tool to be located, hover over the **Add Interactive Tool** button, and select **the appropriate option** from the drop-down menu that appears.
2. Follow the on-screen instructions that appear for a particular tool, entering all necessary information and customizing the tool as you like.
3. To send a voice email, click the **Voice Email link** and choose the appropriate link on the next page that opens, on which you can select the **recipients** for your voice email. Record your message using the record and playback buttons, include any text you would like, and click **Send**.
4. If you have not set up a **Voice Board** or a **Voice Podcast**, clicking on one of those **links** will result in the option to **Add Board** or **Add Voice Podcaster**. A Create screen will appear, allowing you to customize your voice tool. Once settings are configured how you would like, click **Submit**. You will now be able to access your voice tool by selecting the appropriate **voice link in Tools** from the Content Dashboard or by navigating to the content area.
5. With a Voice Board or Voice Podcaster created, you or students in your course will be able to post audio files in response to your specifications and the prompt of the voice tool.

