Get Started with Blackboard Vista

This document will provide new users with the information they’ll need to open and use their course sections for the first time, and to familiarize themselves with the basics of the Blackboard Vista interface.

The First Time You Launch Blackboard Vista ................................................................. 2
  The “My Blackboard” Screen ...................................................................................... 2
  The First Time You Select a Course Section from the Course List ................................ 2

Navigating the Build Tab ............................................................................................... 4
  Working with the Home Page, Toolbars, and Adding Content Items ........................... 4
  Modifying Page Headers or Page Footers on the Home Page or in Folders .................... 8

Manage Course Options: Hide Tools, Course Backups, Change Tool Settings, etc. ............ 10
  Manage Course ........................................................................................................ 10
The First Time You Launch Blackboard Vista

The “My Blackboard” Screen

In the Connecticut Community Colleges, all faculty and students first log into myCommNet “portal” website, and from there click on the Blackboard Vista icon in order to launch the Blackboard system and view their My Blackboard page, which includes the list of courses they are teaching or taking.

If you are a faculty member, the next step is to select the course section in which you wish to work, by clicking on the course title link in the Course List.

The First Time You Select a Course Section from the Course List

When an instructor first clicks on a course section that has never been opened, they will see several options.

If this is a brand new course and you don’t want to base it on a section of the same course that you had taught in a previous term, select Set up a blank course.

Assign Course Content

Demonstration Course – Nay1
You can assign content to this course from another course or start designing this course without assigning content. Select one of the options below and click Continue.

- Set up a blank course
  Select this option to start designing this course without assigning content.

- Copy content from another course
  Select from courses in which you are enrolled as a designer.

- Assign a template to this course
  Select from templates that have been associated with this course by an administrator.

- Import content from file
  Select this option to start importing course content from exported course file.

Questions/comments on this doc? Contact Tobi Krutt tkrutt@commnet.edu Revised: 3/18/10
If, on the other hand, you have taught the class within the last year or so, and you wish to import the content from that previous section, select **Copy content from another course**.

You will see a list of sections you have previously taught. Click the radio button (the little round button) in front of the section you wish to copy content from.

Then click the **Continue** button at the bottom of the form (you may need to scroll down to see the buttons).

Your old section’s content will be imported into the new course section.

### Importing Content from Course Cartridges

- New options are available for Course Cartridges (formerly called “ePacks”) in Blackboard Vista. **Please speak with your local Distance Learning director if you wish to use an Course Cartridge in your course.**
- Content from Course Cartridges can now be **merged** with existing instructor-created section content, rather than **over-writing** existing course content.
- **Assessments** and **Learning Modules** can still be imported from other course sections, but in Blackboard Vista, **Media Library Collection** entries can also be exported, and then imported into other course sections.
Navigating the Build Tab
Working with the Home Page, Toolbars, and Adding Content Items

If you are working in a brand-new course section (i.e., you did not import content from a previous section), you will first see the **Quick Start** screen. Click the checkboxes in front of the tools you wish to select, which will enable you to choose the instructor/designer and student tools you want to have available. Selecting each tool adds it to your **Course Tools** list once the section is opened.

Be sure to **Save** your selections using the button at the bottom of the form.

(Note, if you wish, you can HIDE tools on the toolbar so instructors, but not students, can see them. See the “Manage Course” > “Hiding Tools & Custom Links” section of this document.

Blackboard Vista has three tabs at the top left of its window: **Build**, **Teach**, and **Student View**.

Each of these tabs has its own unique set of tools, and a unique toolbar that displays beneath the **Course Tools** toolbar:

- The **Build** tab is used while you are developing your course.
- The **Teach** tab is used once the course has begun, and has the tools that enable you to interact with and grade students.
- The **Student View** tab enables you to view and interact with the class as a student would. (“Demo Student” in the Grade Book)
Working with the Toolbars

When you first enter a blank section, you will see the screen at right.

- Tools selected in the **Quick Start** list are displayed in the **Course Tools** toolbar.
- The **Course Toolbar** is vertical by default. (Use *Manage Course* settings under **Designer Tools** to make it horizontal.)
- Toolbars can be collapsed vertically or horizontally.
- Some animated tutorials are available for review initially.
- **Click Done** to continue, and select the checkbox to skip this page in future.
Blackboard Vista Interface Overview
When you are learning to navigate a new town or city, it’s always helpful to have a roadmap to help you find your way around in a new place. To the right you will find a “map” to the major new features of Blackboard Vista.

The toolbars provide you with access to the various instructional tools provided by Blackboard Vista.

The Add File, Create Folder, and Add Content Link buttons on the Home Page and at the top of folders enable you to add links to content files or other resources or activities such as discussions, learning modules, assessments, etc. and to create sub-folders to organize your course content.

The Page Options button enables you to modify/customize your home page or other folders.

Clicking the Action Links dropdown arrow that appears just to the right of icons or any item in a tool list enables you to modify the properties of that item, or apply other applicable actions.
To return to the **Home Page** from anywhere in the course, click the **Course Content** button.

**The Course Map**

*Once you have added some content links in your course, click the dropdown arrow next to the **Course Content** button to expand the **Course Map**, which displays links to all course content including folders, learning modules, and any other type of content item.*

Clicking the dropdown arrow again will collapse the Course Map.

**Page Options** provides:
- A toggle between **Power View** and **Basic View**
- Access to page customization options
- Edit header/footer access

**Customize Page Display** from **Page Options** provides layout templates, column options, icon options, etc.
Modifying Page Headers or Page Footers on the Home Page or in Folders

- From the **Build** tab, click the **Page Options** button
- Select **Edit Header** (or **Edit Footer**, if that’s what you wish to modify)

- The **Create or Edit Header** (or Footer) window will open.
- We recommend that you click the **Enable HTML Creator** button. This will enable you to use the formatting tools available within Blackboard Vista to modify the text that displays in your header (i.e., change font, color, size, etc.)

- At right is the **Create or Edit Header** window with the HTML Creator turned on.
- The instructor has entered her course title on the top line, and her name, CRN, and term/year on the second line, and formatted them, just as if she was using the formatting toolbars in MS Word.

Questions/comments on this doc? Contact Tobi Krutt tkrutt@commnet.edu  Revised: 3/18/10
| Helpful Hints When Creating Headers/Footers | It’s recommended that you keep your header text no larger than 14 point, and no more than 2 lines.  
Use only Arial or Times Roman as text fonts, since fonts displayed are based on the fonts installed on the student’s PC, not yours.  
Pressing Shift+Enter at the end of a line instead of the Enter key alone keeps minimizes space between lines. |
|---|---|
| When you’re done, click the **Save** button.  
To modify the header or footer, just return to the **Page Options** button and repeat the process above. | **Save**  
**Cancel** |
Manage Course Options: Hide Tools, Course Backups, Change Tool Settings, etc.

Manages Course

This is where you will find the designer tools that enable you to:

- Control a variety of course tool settings.
- Import content: Blackboard Vista provides new content import options for users.
- Accomplish Date Rollover in Calendar. Using this feature, instructors can prepare a course for the next term by viewing a list of course items and adjusting their dates and times.

Hiding Tools & Custom Links

Course Tools can be added to the toolbar (so you can make use of them to build course activities), but then hidden from students, by using the Course Menu link on Manage Tools.

For example, an instructor might only want students to navigate to assignments through learning modules. In that case, they would hide the Assignments tool button on the course toolbar.

If you click Hide Link for a given tool, an (H) will show next to it on the Build and Teach tabs, but the tool will be invisible to students, as on the Student View tab.

From the Course Menu screen, you can also add a custom link button to the toolbar to a website or to a content page in your course.

Questions/comments on this doc? Contact Tobi Krutt tkrutt@comnet.edu Revised: 3/18/10
Backing Up a Section

Due to limited server space, we do not want to keep a lot of backup files on the server. Once the backup has been created and downloaded to the instructor’s PC, please be sure to delete the .bak files.

- The number of backups that can be made by faculty can be controlled by the system administrators.

- Once backups are created, the user chooses where to save the .bak file. In the screenshot, it was saved to My Files in the File Manager.

- Next, the user can navigate to the .bak file in the My Files section of File Manager, and download it to their PC.

- Please be sure to delete the .bak file after you have saved it to your PC.

- NOTE: More detailed instructions on how to Back Up a Course Section are also available on the 60 Second Vista website.