

## ***They Use WebCT, So Why Shouldn't We? Some Novel Uses of Online Courseware to Further Communication with Faculty and Students***

Courseware packages, such as WebCT or Blackboard, provide an ideal platform for librarians to interact with faculty. The many communication tools available can be used for collection development interactions, announcement of new materials and services, and delivery of instructional tools and modules to be used in course development. An initial framework for such a "course" has been developed and serves as a template to be easily adapted for interaction with a variety of faculty departments or disciplines.

Is it possible to maintain the personal attention and service faculty received from the branch library after moving to a more distant, centralized library? How can we leverage technology to maintain, improve and personalize communication with faculty?

Courseware can provide:

- A single virtual space that can be customized by department or user group
- Ability to deliver many formats of information
- Integrated communication tools that encourage both group and individual conversation
- Space to archive the discussion, tools, etc.
- Software they already know and use daily
- Delivery of information on their schedule
- One stop shopping for all library/teaching interactions
- Delivery of tools ready to harvest for their classes
- Interactive space to discuss resource needs
- Delivery to their desktops, where ever they may be

Why WebCT?

- Faculty are too busy to enthusiastically learn new software
- Using courseware that they already visit daily puts information "in their face"
- Librarians needed to become savvy with courseware to be able to help students working on Library computers and to understand how library services can fit into the new teaching environment

Components of Courseware:

- Controlled access
- A single login accesses all the WebCampus courses they are part of
- The personalized entry screen signals when there is new content to see
- Totally customizable content organization and delivery
- Delivers all formats of files

Communication tools:

- Bulletin board allows threaded or non-threaded discussions
- White board and live chat tools allow synchronous discussion
- E-mail can be sent to anyone or everyone within the roster
- Multiple testing options (designed for creating student quizzes) allow polling of the faculty by multiple choice, short answer, etc. (with no stuffing of the ballot box)
- The Roster allows each member of the course to create a profile complete with friendly picture
- The Mail function allows you to set up subsets of the roster

Some content possibilities:

- 3-5 minute animated tutorials
  - Uploading to EndNote Web
  - Using Limits in PubMed
  - Setting up campus wireless on your laptop
  - Using the “Find It” link (SFX) to get full text
  - Ordering a book through Link+
- A developing ‘Wish list’ for interactive requesting of books, journals, or videos
- A review space for weeding, serials review
- Sample assignments that can be used as is or adapted to a specific course
- A highlighted resource space to give some PR to new or underused databases, services, etc.
- Links to non-library student resources, such as math and writing centers
- A page of grant resources tailored to the discipline

To learn more about WebCT/WebCampus visit: <http://www.blackboard.com>

*Amy Shannon, Life Sciences Librarian*

*University of Nevada, Reno*

*Mailstop 206*

*Reno, NV 89557*

[ashannon@unr.edu](mailto:ashannon@unr.edu)

*(775)682-6624*