

Chapter 1

Your First Look at Blackboard

In This Chapter

- ▶ Introducing Blackboard
 - ▶ Finding your way in the course
 - ▶ Mapping out the Control Panel
 - ▶ Discovering a few shortcuts
-

We understand that finding how to use a new application or even staying up-to-date with upgrades and new features can be overwhelming, especially with Web-based applications. You may ask, “Why is that?” The reason is that, depending on which browser you use, you may or may not encounter problems for some items versus others, and some features are supported in one browser and not in another. The list of issues can seem endless at times.

You may also be wondering why we’re starting out this chapter with a less-than-motivational introduction. The reason is that what you will love about Blackboard may also be the source of some frustration, much like in other Web-based applications you may be using. Remember that you’re working on the Web, and keep in mind the four concepts in the following list. (The first letter of each concept combines to create, sort of, the acronym *AKA Bb* — or “also known as Blackboard” — so we use that as a mnemonic device to help you remember.) Here’s our list:

- ✓ **Access** — get connected: To access Blackboard, you need to have Internet access. That’s the beauty of Web-based applications such as Blackboard: After you get connected to the Internet, you can access your Blackboard account from any Internet-connected computer anywhere.
- ✓ **Knowledge** — know your browser: Get comfortable with the options in your browser, such as enlarging or reducing text size, locating or setting your default folder for downloading files, and enabling or disabling your pop-up blocker. Allowing pop-ups is important because Blackboard utilizes pop-ups for some of its functions.

- ✓ **Address** — remember your Blackboard URL: You probably know many ways to access your Blackboard login page and have already bookmarked all of them, right? Just in case your memory fails you, write down your Blackboard Web address and keep it in your back pocket so that you can access it from any Internet-connected computer anywhere. Also keep your institution's IT help desk number handy, just in case you have no idea what the address is.
- ✓ **Be aware and beware.** Make yourself aware of the instructional tools that Blackboard offers, and keep in mind that you should test your course environment thoroughly before releasing it to your learners.



If you haven't taught online, be sure to consult the appendixes in this book for some additional support in using Blackboard effectively. Blackboard is designed to offer you much flexibility in your course design, so take advantage of it!

Logging In to Blackboard

Blackboard is a secure Web-based application that requires all its users to enter their unique login information (username and password) in order to access the courses they are either teaching or are enrolled in (see Figure 1-1). To be able to log in to Blackboard at your institution, find out what that login information is. Your Blackboard administrator or your institution's IT help desk should be able to provide you with this information. While you're at it, find out what the URL is for the Blackboard login page at your institution. You need to have these two key pieces of information at hand to get your first look at Blackboard.

Figure 1-1:
Logging
in to
Blackboard.

Login Here

Have an account? Enter login information here and click the Login button below.

Username:

Password:

[Forgot your password?](#)

[Download Blackboard Backpack](#)



The Visual Text Box Editor (WYSIWYG) editor in Blackboard works only with Internet Explorer. Although Blackboard supports all major browsers for all other functionalities, the Visual Text Box Editor doesn't display all available functions if you use another browser to access Blackboard.

Navigating Your Way Around Blackboard

In every Blackboard course, you, the instructor, can customize the course menu to your liking and in effect allow or disallow navigation options for your learners. In other words, Blackboard allows you to include a course map as part of the menu. Because the *course map* is a navigational map, a user can jump to any item in the course. In addition, you can display the course menu in either Quick view or Detail view. When both views are enabled, therefore, a user can either expand the menu in Detail view (thus making it more like the course map) or use Quick view to click the menu items (buttons or text) to navigate to a desired area of the course (see Figure 1-2).

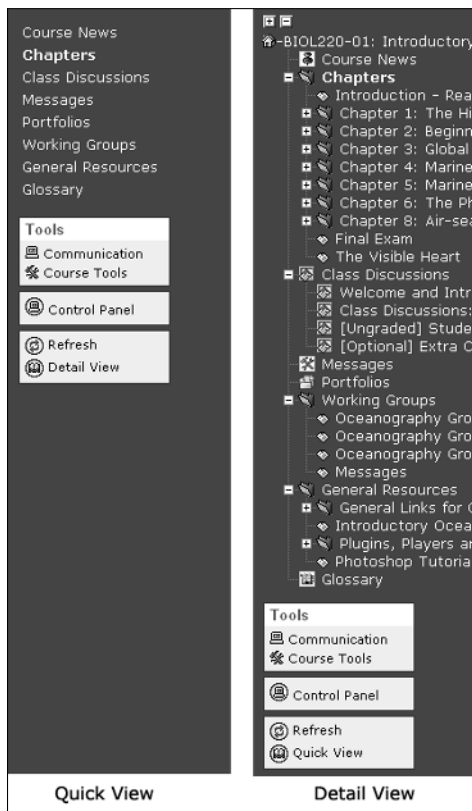


Figure 1-2:
Comparing
Quick view
and Detail
view on a
course
menu.

As you're building your Blackboard course, you should keep track of your bread crumb trail. No, we don't mean to insult your eating habits; we're referring to the trail of links at the top of the page in any Blackboard course. You may have noticed this type of link in other Web environments. The deeper you get into a course, the more the trail expands and the more easily you can navigate back to where you came from by using the bread crumb links (see Figure 1-3).

Figure 1-3:
The bread
crumb trail.

COURSES > BIOL220-01: INTRODUCTORY OCEANOGRAPHY 01 > CHAPTERS > CHAPTER 1: THE HISTORY OF OCEAN EXPLORATION AND OCEAN SCIENCE

Get in the habit of using the bread crumbs as an orienting tool in the course while adding or modifying content items. After you develop this habit, which, by the way, is a good habit to have for any Web-based application, you don't make mistakes when you're adding folders and items and end up wasting your time. You can simply look up, check your bread crumb trail, and know whether you're in the correct location in the course before you start adding content.



Clicking the course title always takes you to the entry page of the course, which is basically to the view that learners have.

Traversing the course Control Panel

In your Blackboard course, you have access to the Control Panel — and your learners don't (see Figure 1-4). You therefore have the power to add, modify, copy, and remove content; turn course tools on or off; and decide how to display the Course Menu and in what language (or locale). With the power to manage the Control Panel comes great responsibility: to provide your learners with a well-designed learning environment.

Note that your first look at your Blackboard course is determined by what the powers that be at your institution decided to include on the Course Menu. With Control Panel access, however, you can customize your learners' first look at your Blackboard course. So, plan before you implement.

To help you plan, think of the course Control Panel as being composed of these areas:

- ✓ Course administration
- ✓ Course materials
- ✓ Communication and collaboration
- ✓ Assessment

Figure 1-4:
A first look
at the
course
Control
Panel.

Content Areas		User Management	
Course Information	Assignments	List / Modify Users	Enroll User
Course Documents	External Links	Create User	Remove Users from Course
		Batch Create Users	Manage Groups
Course Tools		Assessment	
Announcements	Messages	Test Manager	Gradebook
Course Calendar	Manage Chalk Title	Survey Manager	Gradebook Views
Staff Information	Content Collection	Pool Manager	Performance Dashboard
Tasks	Course Portfolios	Course Statistics	
Send Email	Check Collection Links		
Discussion Board	Copy Files to Collection	Help	
Collaboration	Add Users by Role	Support	Contact System Administrator
Digital Dropbox	Advanced Group Management	Manual	Quick Tutorials
Glossary Manager	Discussion Grader		
Course Options			
Manage Course Menu	Course Copy		
Course Design	Import Course Cartridge		
Manage Tools	Import Package		
Settings	Export Course		
Recycle Course	Archive Course		

Course administration

Your course administration options (see Figure 1-5) reside mostly in the Course Options pane. You can use these options to customize the course menu, enable or disable course tools, change the course availability and entry page, and import, copy, export, and archive your course. In addition to all these instructor administration options in your course, we have good news for language instructors and international readers: You can now customize your Blackboard course interface so that it's displayed in one of eight languages.

Figure 1-5:
Course
administra-
tion options.

Course Options		User Management	
Manage Course Menu	Course Copy	List / Modify Users	Enroll User
Course Design	Import Course Cartridge	Create User	Remove Users from Course
Manage Tools	Import Package	Batch Create Users	Manage Groups
Settings	Export Course		
Recycle Course	Archive Course		



If your institution or organization has the Blackboard Academic Suite or the Blackboard Learning System (but not the Basic Edition), you as an instructor can set the language of the course independently from the language setting of the overall system. Blackboard supports English, Spanish, French, Italian, German, Dutch, Portuguese, Japanese, and simplified Chinese (see Figure 1-6).

Depending on how your institution handles user accounts and course creation and modification, you may or may not be able to create and modify user accounts, create courses, and enroll or remove users from a course. These options are available in the User Management pane.

Course materials

Course materials — such as your syllabus, readings, assignments, and tests — can be added to the Content Areas of your course (see Figure 1-7).

Figure 1-6:
Setting the
language for
a course.

Figure 1-7:
Managing
the course
materials.

Content Areas	
Syllabus	Working Groups
Course Documents	Assignments
Chapter Material	General Resources

In any Content Area, in fact, you can use these options to perform a task:

- ✔ **Item:** Create content and upload files.
- ✔ **Folder:** Layer or organize content.
- ✔ **Course Link:** Create links to other areas within the same course.
- ✔ **External Link:** Create links to an external Web site.
- ✔ **Test:** Add a test.
- ✔ **Learning Unit:** Develop a sequential set of items or a tutorial.
- ✔ **Survey:** Survey your learners or take a poll.
- ✔ **Assignment:** Add an assignment for paperless feedback and grading.
- ✔ **Offline Content:** Access offline content on a CD-ROM, for example.
- ✔ **Syllabus:** Create a new syllabus and lessons.


You can also perform these tasks in any Content Area:

- ✔ Import SCORM, IMS, or NLN content by using the desired content-packaging option.
- ✔ Select a tool option to link to individual tools, such as Discussion Boards, Chat, Virtual Classroom, Group, and more.



If your institution uses the Blackboard Learning System, Basic Edition, you cannot include SCORM objects.

Note that when you use these options to add content to your course, you can also manage the content item by enabling Adaptive Release of Content, accessing tracking, and reviewing status tracking (see Figure 1-8).

 **Adaptive Release**

Create an Adaptive Release rule for this content item. Each criteria narrows the availability of this item to users. To create multiple rules on an item or remove this rule, use Adaptive Release: Advanced.

Content Status: Available
Date Restrictions: Display After Aug 9, 2002 1:30:00 PM

1 Date

Setting a Date criteria for this item will restrict the dates and times of the visibility of this item.

Choose Date Display After Display Until

Aug 09 2002 01:30 PM Oct 23 2005 12:35 AM

2 Membership

This content item is visible to all users until a Membership criteria is created. Users must be specified in the Username list or must be in a selected Group.

Enter one or more Username values or Browse to Search. Separate multiple Username values with commas.

Username

Course Groups

Available Course Groups		Selected Course Groups
Dummies Group Oceanography Group #1 Oceanography Group #2 Oceanography Group #3	▶ ◀	
<input type="button" value="Invert"/>		<input type="button" value="Invert"/>

3 Gradebook Item

This content item is visible to all users until a Gradebook item criteria is created. Possible points on a Gradebook item are listed in brackets beside the name. The score entered must be numeric.

Select a Gradebook item

Select Condition

Item has at least one attempt.
 An attempt is recorded for any Gradebook item when the user submits a test or survey, or when a score is entered or modified.

Score

Score Between and

4 Review Status

This content item is visible to all users until a Review Status criteria is created. Selecting an item will enable Review for that item.

Select an item

5 Submit

Click **Submit** to finish. Click **Cancel** to quit.

Figure 1-8:
An Adaptive
Release of
Content
item.

Additional options may be available to you as part of the Content Area interface, depending on whether your institution has added third-party products or building blocks within the Blackboard course environment.

Communication and collaboration tools

Communication tools — such as announcements, collaboration, e-mail, a discussion board, and messages — are available in your course Control Panel and can be included as links within Content Areas or as course links on the course menu (see Figure 1-9).

Figure 1-9:
Communication and collaboration tools.

Course Tools	
<u>Announcements</u>	<u>Messages</u>
<u>Course Calendar</u>	<u>Manage Chalk Title</u>
<u>Staff Information</u>	<u>Content Collection</u>
<u>Tasks</u>	<u>Course Portfolios</u>
<u>Send Email</u>	<u>Check Collection Links</u>
<u>Discussion Board</u>	<u>Copy Files to Collection</u>
<u>Collaboration</u>	<u>Add Users by Role</u>
<u>Digital Dropbox</u>	<u>Advanced Group Management</u>
<u>Glossary Manager</u>	<u>Discussion Grader</u>

Some of the tools available to you in the Course Tools pane are highlighted in Table 1-1. Again, depending on your institution's Blackboard setup, you may have access to more or fewer tools.

Table 1-1 Communication Tools in Blackboard		
<i>Tool Name</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Use Case</i>
Announcements	Inform users	Use this tool when you want to remind learners of assignment deadlines or upcoming events, for example. Don't use it when you want to communicate with immediacy, because learners must be logged in to Blackboard to view your announcements.
Staff Information	Post user profile	Use the Staff Information tool to post information about you, your teaching assistants (TAs), section leaders, and guest lecturers, for example, in the course. Don't use the Staff Information tool if your goal is to have your learners post their own, personal profiles; direct them to use the Student Homepage instead.

<i>Tool Name</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Use Case</i>
Course Calendar	Inform users	Use the Course Calendar to add descriptions of sessions or lessons and upcoming events, for example. Use the Course Calendar in conjunction with announcements to reinforce deadlines and help learners stay on track. Don't use the Course Calendar if you're going to keep it hidden in the Tools area of the course: Be sure to unbury it by creating course links from your menu or Content Areas, or both.
Tasks	Define and organize user activities	Use the Tasks tool to provide learners with a list of activities with set due dates while allowing them to monitor the list of activities and prioritize those tasks. As with many of the course tools, don't use Tasks if you're not planning to integrate it into your course design and track learners' progress status regularly.
Send Email	Inform users	Use the Send Email tool when you want to let learners know of a change in class location or a cancellation or change in an exam or assignment due date. Use Send Email in conjunction with the Announcements tool to reinforce your message. Don't use Send Email in Blackboard to generate class discussions because it doesn't act like a distribution list: To the people receiving the mail, it looks as though they're the only ones receiving it.
Discussion Board	Carry out group discussion asynchronously	Use the Discussion Board tool to have learners post discussion questions, respond to each other, lead discussions, engage in peer review, and more. With a bit of creativity, you will find that the discussion board has a myriad of uses. Don't use it if you want to engage in real-time discussion; use the collaboration tools instead.

(continued)

Table 1-1 (continued)

<i>Tool Name</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Use Case</i>
Collaboration	Carry out group discussion synchronously	Use the Chat or Virtual Classroom options in the Collaboration tool to hold virtual office hours and to replace or supplement face-to-face class time, for example. Don't use Chat or Virtual Classroom with large groups unless you're a whiz! Having more than a handful of folks in a Collaboration room can get chaotic, if you don't manage it well.

Assessment tools

The Assessment options available to you in Blackboard are extensive and flexible, with more than 15 different question types for creating tests, surveys, and question pools. In addition, you can upload your own questions all at one time and select questions from existing assessments or pools in your course.

The Gradebook allows you to use weights for your assessment items; display grades in score, letter, percentage, or text entry; or create your own customized display of the grade. You can modify the range of scores within the Gradebook settings so that it conforms to your own course-grading criteria for displaying letter grades. You can download the Gradebook, modify it in a spreadsheet program, such as Excel, and upload it back into Blackboard. Your learners can then view their individual grades by using their My Grades tool.

We have to mention a couple more things about the Assessment options in your Blackboard course: the Performance Dashboard (see Figure 1-10) and Course Statistics (see Figure 1-11). The Performance Dashboard allows you to view an individual user's access of content utilizing adaptive release and/or review.

The Course Statistics screen offers you a summary of access data for overall or specific tools and pages in the course.

Had enough? We could go on and on about the Assessment options in Blackboard, but we do that elsewhere in this book.

Performance Dashboard

Use the links provided to view user progress details for each performance measurement.

Print

Last Name	First Name	Username	Role	Last Login	Days Since Last Login	Review Status	Adaptive Release	View Grades
Demo	AS	asdemo	Instructor	Jan 19, 2006 11:27:04 AM	0	0		
Chu	Cathy	cchu	Instructor	Jan 19, 2006 9:30:38 AM	0	36		
Cruz	Cindy	ccruz	Student	Dec 2, 2005 2:32:50 PM	47	2		
Randall	Caroline	crandall	Instructor	Jun 23, 2005 6:40:58 PM	209	0		
Goldman	Greg	ggoldman	Student	Oct 12, 2004 5:28:38 PM	463	0		
Holland	Hector	hholland	Student	Nov 13, 2005 10:58:07 PM	66	0		
Foster	Jessica	jfoster	Instructor	Jan 10, 2006 12:00:32 PM	8	0		
Foster	Jess	jfosters	Student	Dec 22, 2005 11:34:21 AM	28	0		
Foster	Jessie	jfostert	Instructor	Nov 9, 2005 4:32:25 PM	70	0		
Jones	Jeremy	jjones	Student	Dec 28, 2005 3:30:45 PM	21	0		
Smith	John	jsmith	Student	Never	Never	0		

Figure 1-10:
A view of the Performance Dashboard.

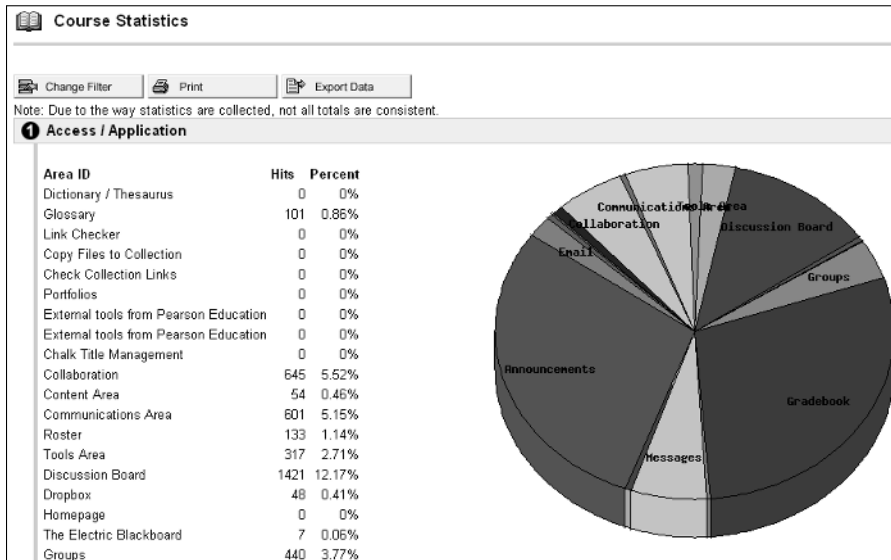


Figure 1-11:
A simple view of Course Statistics.

Comparing Edit view and Display view

As we mention earlier in this chapter, in the section “Traversing the course Control Panel,” the Control Panel offers you the ability to take control of your Web-based course environment, much like, if you please, a captain at the helm of a ship. It’s not like you’re steering the *Titanic*, but rather like guiding Darwin’s *Beagle*, or Columbus’s *Nina*, *Pinta*, and *Santa Maria*.

To make adding and editing your content in the Content Areas more flexible, Blackboard also offers you two views of your course: Edit and Display. Think of these views as shortcuts into and out of the Control Panel (much like a wormhole — too much, right?). As you navigate in your course by using the Course Menu, as though you were a learner in the course, notice in the Content Areas the Edit View link, to the right of the bread crumb trail, in the upper-right area of the screen.

Clicking the Edit View link, in the upper-right corner of the screen, enables you to edit the content items you have in the Content Area you're in without having to access that area by clicking the Control Panel link and then clicking the Content Area's name from the Content Areas pane. After you're in Edit view (see Figure 1-12), you can add new content and modify, remove, manage, copy, and move existing content items by using the tools available to you in the Content Area.

COURSES > BIOL220.01: INTRODUCTORY OCEANOGRAPHY.01 > CHAPTERS > CHAPTER 6: THE PHYSICAL PROPERTIES OF WATER AND SEAWATER EDIT VIEW

Chapter 6: The Physical Properties of Water and Seawater

Objectives
The presence of liquid water on Earth has had a tremendous impact on the planet's past. Water is a precious resource today, and it is imperative that we, as human beings, care for our water. To do this effectively, we must study water environments as well as water itself. The transformation of water from one phase to another, and the transport of water from one place to another, are major factors in the distribution of mass and energy at Earth's surface. Water can destroy landforms but is also where life originated. By the end of this chapter, you should:

- Understand the structure, geometry, and polarity of the water molecule.
- Be familiar with light and sound transmission in seawater.
- Understand the thermal properties of water including heat capacity and latent heat.
- Appreciate the dynamics of the hydrologic cycle.

6.1 - The Water Molecule

6.2 - Surface Tension and Viscosity

6.3 - Light Transmission in Water and Seawater

6.4 - Sound Transmission in Seawater

6.5 - The Thermal Properties of Water

6.6 - The Water Cycle

Key Terms

Figure 1-12:
Edit view of
a Content
Area.

Note that after you're in Edit view, the link name changes to Display View. Clicking the Display View link allows you to view the Content Area without all the editing and tool options displayed. After you're back in Display view (see Figure 1-13), you again navigate your Blackboard course much like the rest of the passengers onboard the ship (okay, fine — much like your learners in the course).

The screenshot shows the Blackboard interface in Display View. At the top, the breadcrumb trail reads: COURSES > -B101220-01: INTRODUCTORY OCEANOGRAPHY 01 > CHAPTERS > CHAPTER 6: THE PHYSICAL PROPERTIES OF WATER AND SEAWATER. The page title is "Chapter 6: The Physical Properties of Water and Seawater". Below the title is a navigation bar with icons for Item, Folder, External Link, Course Link, and Test, and a "Select:" dropdown menu set to "Learning Unit".

The main content area lists seven items, each with a document icon, a numbered dropdown menu, a title, and a set of action buttons (Modify, Manage, Copy, Remove):

- 1 Objectives
The presence of liquid water on Earth has had a tremendous impact on the planet's past. Water is a precious resource today, and it is imperative that we, as human beings, care for our water. To do this effectively, we must study water environments as well as water itself. The transformation of water from one phase to another, and the transport of water from one place to another, are major factors in the distribution of mass and energy at Earth's surface. Water can destroy landforms but is also where life originated. By the end of this chapter, you should:
 - Understand the structure, geometry, and polarity of the water molecule.
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 - Appreciate the dynamics of the hydrologic cycle.
- 2 6.1 - The Water Molecule
- 3 6.2 - Surface Tension and Viscosity
- 4 6.3 - Light Transmission in Water and Seawater
- 5 6.4 - Sound Transmission in Seawater
- 6 6.5 - The Thermal Properties of Water
- 7 6.6 - The Water Cycle

Figure 1-13:
Display view
of a Content
Area.

