



Using Blackboard Vista to Supplement Classroom Instruction

- Blackboard Vista is a web-based application designed to support distance education. It has also proven to be a useful tool for supplementing classroom instruction.
- Students have come to expect that information will be made available to them electronically. We encourage all to use Vista as a central repository for all class handouts (if nothing more).
- This document outlines a system on how to build a “class” in Vista. If you can add an attachment to an email message, you can build a class in Vista.

CONTENTS

GETTING ORGANIZED/INTRO TO THE SYSTEM

Suggestions for Planning Your Site and Organizing Your Documents.....2

Access Vista and Log In.....3

Course List4

System Announcements4

Overview of Vista’s 3 Modes (Build, Teach, Student View).....4

Overview of Vista Tools5

Navigating Vista.....5

BUILDING A BASIC SITE

Add/Remove Course Tools (Component Features).....6

Add Documents (files)7

Make Changes Using Action Links.....8

Using File Manager on Blackboard Vista9

Selective Release.....12

Page Options12

Create Folders13

Move Files.....13

Add Links to Web Sites.....14

Using Learning Modules.....15

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

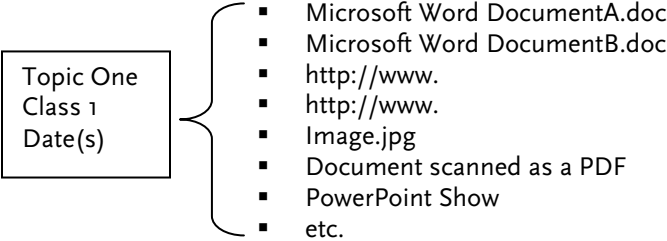
Using Vista at Home15

PLAN YOUR SITE/ORGANIZE YOUR DOCUMENTS

Most likely you already have a syllabus created providing an overview of what subject matter is covered during each class (or series of classes). In essence, you already have the plan!

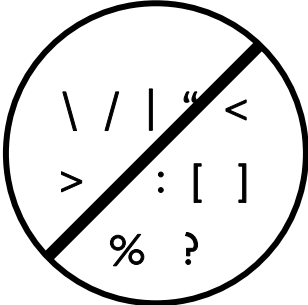
It may be helpful to use a pencil and paper and begin sketching out your site. Consider the following:

What are the topics?



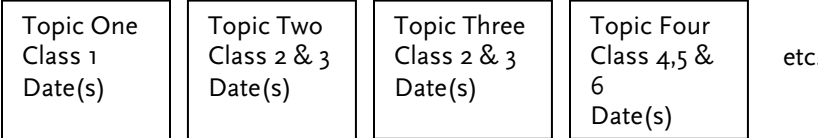
Organize your electronic documents.

IMPORTANT NOTE:
You should not use special characters in your file names.



What is the time frame for each topic?

Vista allows you release information to students by date or by a specific condition (for example: allow access to answer key only after completing the online quiz). It's helpful to think about the time parameters in the planning stage if you want to stage the availability of topics or specific documents.



ACCESS VISTA AND LOG IN

PC Users: Open Internet Explorer or Firefox.

Mac Users: Open Safari.

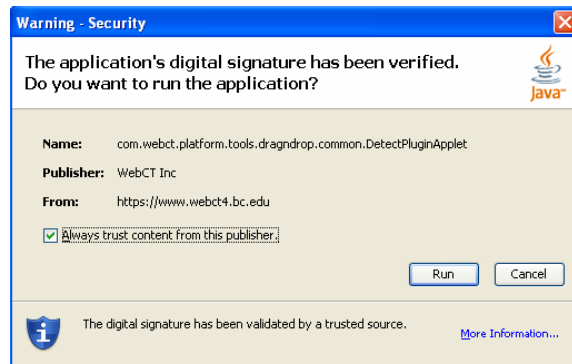


USING A HOME COMPUTER or HAVING PERFORMANCE PROBLEMS?

Please read page 13 for information about browser configuration and use of Java.

Type the address: <https://cms.bc.edu> and enter your BC username and password.

If you see this Security Warning screen (normally associated with a PC) click Run:



COURSE LIST

Click on the name of the course you wish to work on.

You should see a banner that says Course List and below that a list of courses to which you have access. If you do not see your course listed, please contact (cms@bc.edu).

Course List

[MD701 - MD701.01 Economics \(Murphy\) Fall 2006](#)

Section Instructor: David Murphy, helen healy

[MB709 - MB709.01 Managing People And Organizations \(O'Leary\) Fall 2006](#)

Section Instructor: helen healy, Michael O'Leary

[MB852 - MB852.01 Perspectives On Individual + Organizational Change \(O'Leary\) Fall 2006](#)

Section Instructor: Michael O'Leary

[MD708 - MD708.01 Managing In The Global Environment \(Stoller\) Summer 2006](#)

Section Instructor: Gregory Stoller

[MD730 - MD730.01 Strategic Analysis \(Mc Clellan\) Fall 2006](#)

SYSTEM ANNOUNCEMENTS

Occasionally, Blackboard Administrators will post announcements. These will pop-up in a separate smaller window. You will need to read and close the message window before continuing.

OVERVIEW OF THE THREE MODES (FOR WORKING AND VIEWING)

Notice the three tabs in the upper left-hand corner of the screen. These tabs allow you to switch between modes.



BUILD

When you click on the Build tab you are in the build mode. You will be able to add and edit content. This is the mode you will use the most.

TEACH

When you click on the TEACH tab, you will be in a mode that allows you to use features such as a quiz/survey tool (assessment) or the assignment feature. It also allows you to use a grade book.

STUDENT VIEW

The student tab allows you to view the site from the students' perspective. While in this mode, you can view your site as the students will see it. You can test the quiz/survey tool as well as the assignment tool.

OVERVIEW OF TOOLS

The term “tools” is used in different ways within Vista. It can be confusing at first.

COURSE TOOLS

Component features of Vista are referred to as **Course Tools**.

On your initial log in, you will see a list of all of the tools available. The tools selected are displayed in the Course Tools Menu on the left-hand side of the screen.

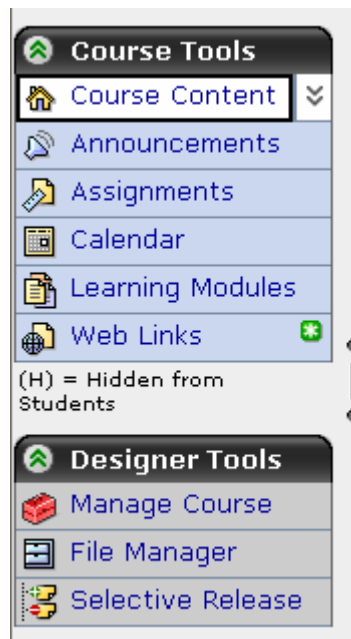
You will always have the option to add additional tools such as a Discussion Board, Chat Room and/or Self-Assessments. You may also elect to remove tools. Whatever tools you currently have chosen to use will display on the left-hand side of the screen.

DESIGNER TOOLS

In the **Build** view you will see **Designer Tools**. These tools will assist you in building your site.

INSTRUCTOR TOOLS

In the **Teach** view you will see **Instructor Tools**, which provide access to some additional teaching tools.



NAVIGATING VISTA

HOME

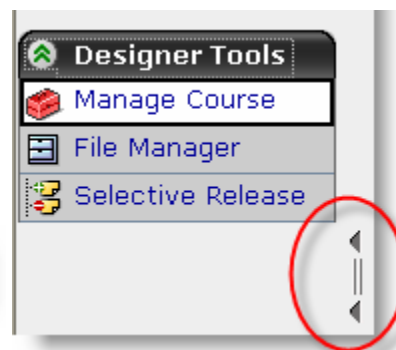
Notice the house icon next to the Course Content Tab. The Course Content page will be your primary (HOME) page. If you get “lost” within the Vista system, click on the Course Content tab on the left navigation bar or if you only see the house icon, click on that to return home.



On the top of the screen, you will see: Your location: and a “bread crumb” trail.



If you prefer to use a full screen, click the collapse button on the left-hand navigation window. When collapsed, the arrows will reverse directions, indicating you can click there to expand/restore the navigation panel.



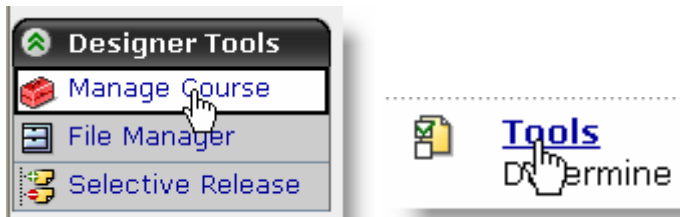
BUILDING A BASIC SITE

The following instructions provide what we feel is the easiest method for creating a site in Vista. There are many ways to build your class but we suggest that new users follow these guidelines.

COURSE TOOLS (COMPONENT FEATURES) & HOW TO ADD/REMOVE THEM

The first step in creating your site is to determine which tools you would like to use.

While in **Build** View, Select Manage Course from the Designer Tool Menu. Then select the tools Menu.



You will see the comprehensive list of tools (Component Features) available to you in Vista.

Robust features such as Discussion Boards, Chat Rooms, Assignments, Assessments, and Voice Tools are not discussed in this document. If you are interested in using these tools, please send a note to cms@bc.edu. Prefer to teach yourself? Bb Vista provides instructions through the Help feature located at the top right of the window.

A small set of tools are included as defaults on every Boston College course. You may add or remove tools by using the check box in front of the tool's name. You must remember to click Save after making any changes. Note: as mentioned before, tools can always be added or deleted.

Two tools to note are announcements and weblinks.

ANNOUNCEMENTS - This is an easy way to post announcements such as room changes, class cancellations, etc. Your announcement will pop-up as a separate window which the students will need to look at and close before continuing. You can specify a time frame for each announcement.

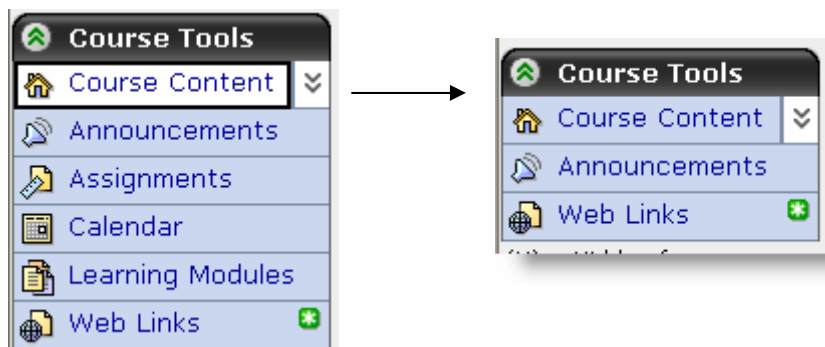
WEBLINKS

This tool allows you to add links to websites.



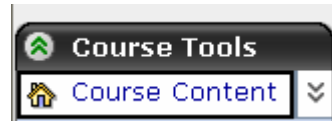
Access Manage Course and click on Tools. Select Announcements and Web Links and deselect all other items. Click Save.

The Course Tools navigation pane will reflect any changes you make.

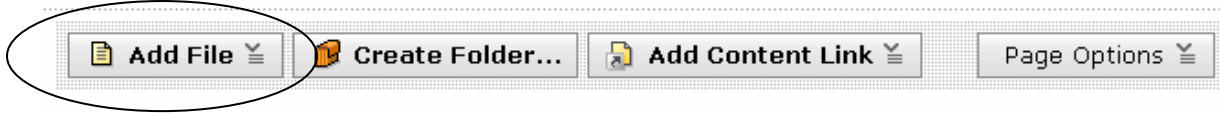


ADD DOCUMENTS (FILES)

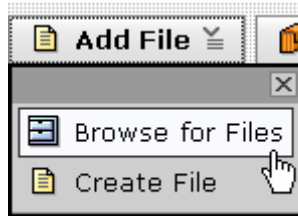
Click on the Course Content link under Course Tools.
You will be in Course Content Home (your homepage).



Your location: **Course Content Home**



Click on Add File.



You will be given the option to browse for a file or create an html file using the html editor.

Select Browse for Files and Click on My Computer (left-hand side)



You will then see your browse window that you are accustomed to using. Choose (highlight) files that you would like to upload and then click Open. (You can upload up to 10 files at a time.)

You should now see the file (s) that you added on your homepage.

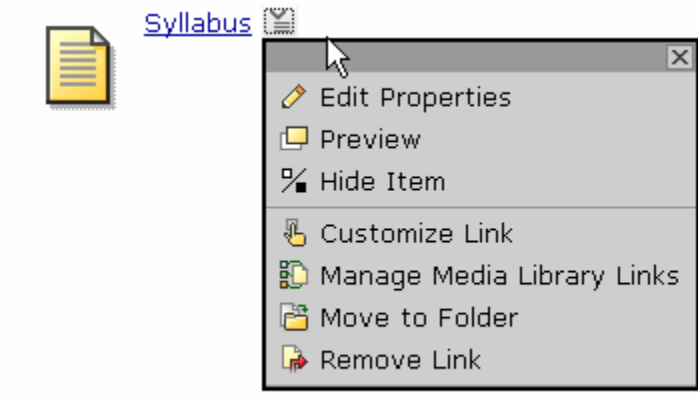
MAKE CHANGES USING ACTION LINKS

Note the little icon next to your Syllabus document:



This is an Action Link.

Action links allow you to edit the properties for that specific item. When you click on the action link icon you will see your available options in a pop-up window.



Rename a Link

To change the name (how it appears on the Page) click Edit Properties and type the changes in the Title box and click Save.

The default Link name will be the name of the file.

Remove a Link

Select Remove Link. **NOTE:** If you need to change or edit the file that represents the link's content, you will need to remove the link and add the file again.

Customize a Link

Click on Customize Link, to change the name of that specific document. You can also change the icon from here.

Move a Link

Click on Move to Folder. Moving files will be discussed later in this document.

Hide/Show Link

You can simply select the Hide Item Action Link until you are ready to release the document/folder of documents when you will select the Show Item Action Link or you can schedule the release by calendar days using Vista's Selective Release.

Using File Manager on Blackboard Vista

Description:

File Manager is the central location of stored course files on Blackboard Vista. Its functions include:

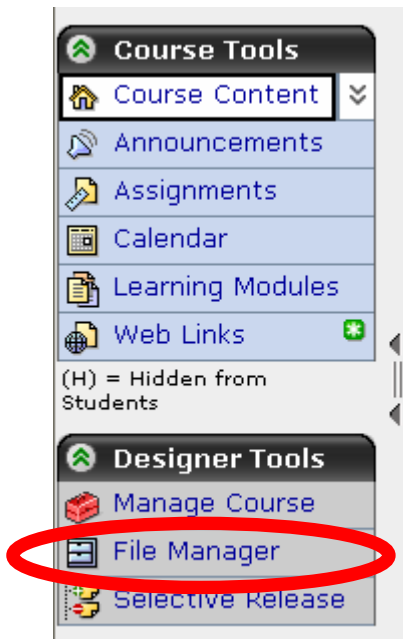
- Managing files (deleting files, creating folders and populating them, sorting files)
- Creating and editing HTML files to be added to your course site later on
- Uploading files from your computer to be added to your course site later on

Getting to know File Manager

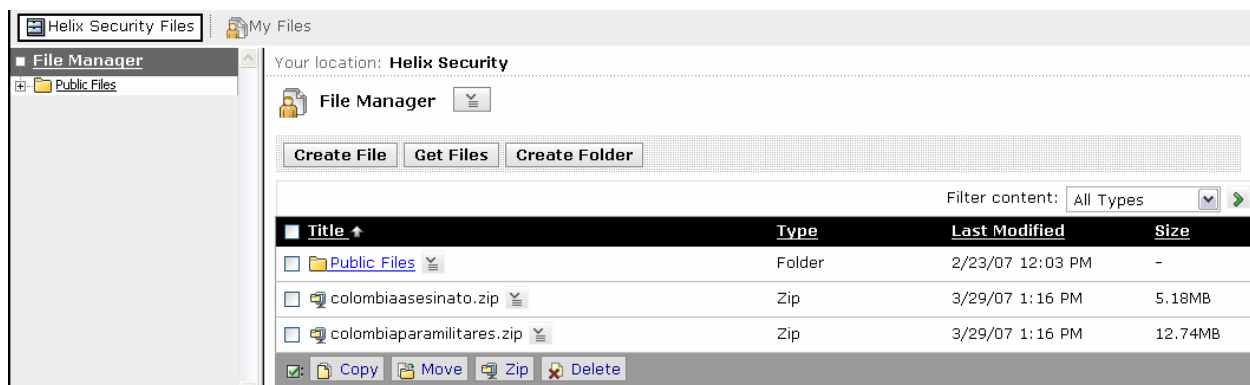
Tabs

Build

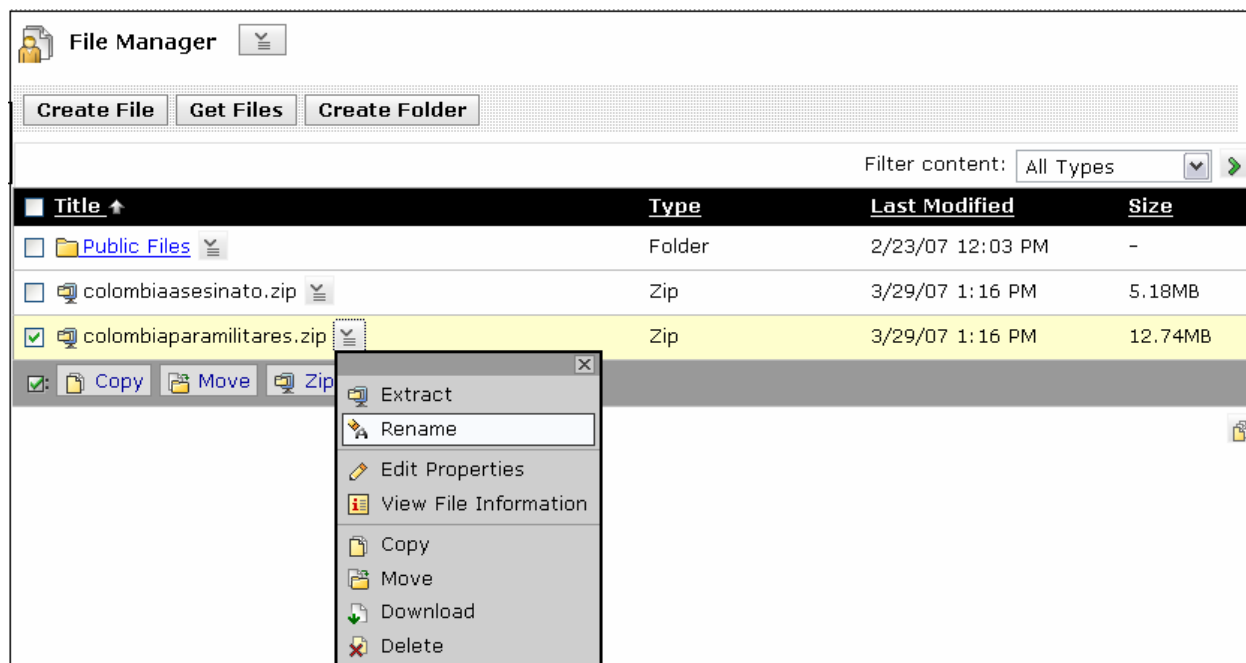
Access File Manager from the Build tab.




The File Manager Interface



Action Links within File Manager



↓ ActionLinks menu – activated by clicking on ActionLinks icon: 

⇒ To rename a file:

1. Locate the file and click *Rename* from its ActionLinks menu. The Rename pop-up screen will appear.
2. Enter a new file name and click OK.

⇒ To preview a file, locate the file and click *Preview* from its ActionLinks menu. A new screen will appear with a preview of the file.

⇒ To copy or move a file to a different folder:

1. Locate the file and click *Copy* or *Move* from its ActionLinks menu. The Content Browser will appear.

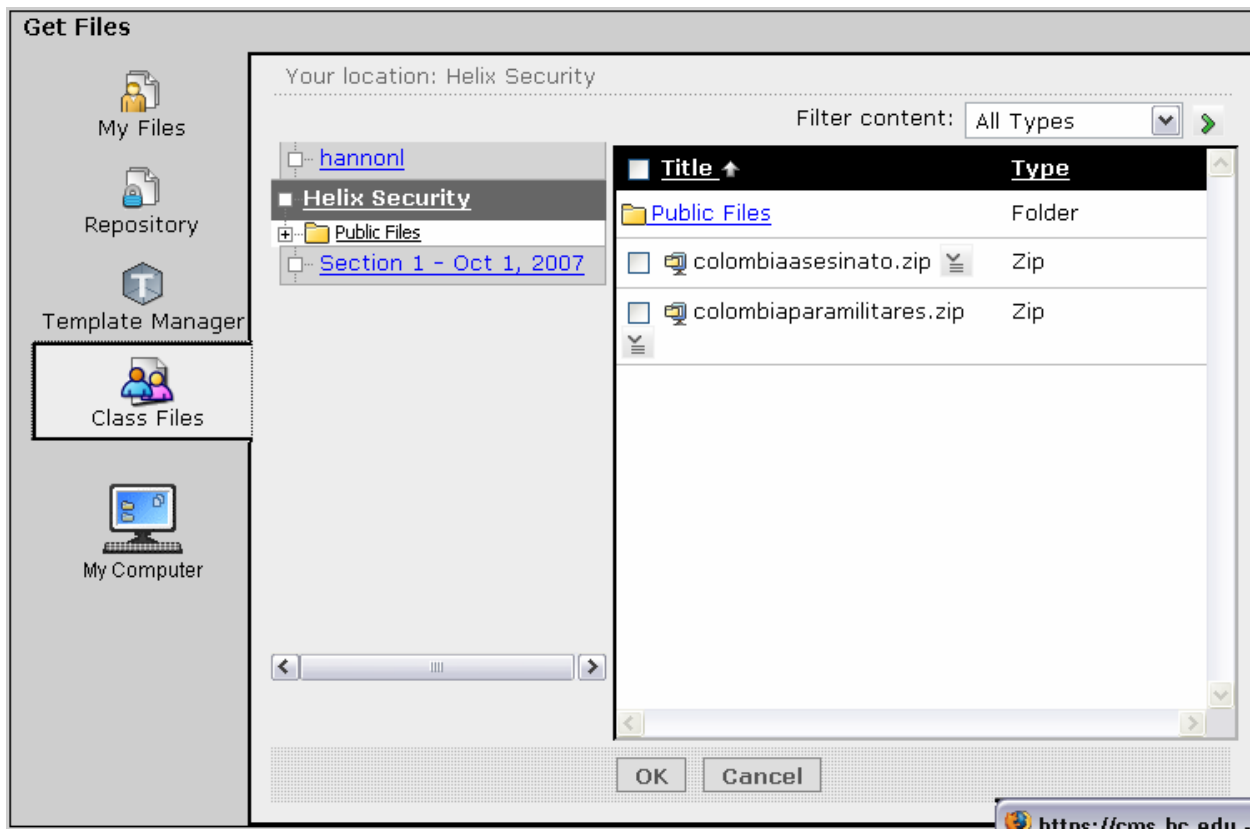
Within file manager you can:

- ⇒ Create an HTML file
- ⇒ Get files from local hard drive
- ⇒ Create a folder

Example:

Uploading from your local hard drive:

1. Click *Get Files*. The Content Browser appears.



2. To select the file or files you want to get.
 - o Click on class files to get a file or multiple files form the previous course/class
 - o Click on my computer to get a file or multiple files your computer
3. Click OK.

Explanation of Left Hand Side Navigation Bar

My files

- o Area for creating and storing personal files
- o Every user has his or her own My Files area that is private and inaccessible to other
- o You can also access My Files from the Content Manager Tab on Blackboard Vista's homepage:

Content Manager

Repository

- o Area from which you can access public files that were saved at parent learning contexts
- o Accessible only to section designers who can use this area to copy or subscribe to files

Template Manager

- o Area from which you can access public files that were saved in templates in parent learning contexts
- o Accessible only to section designers who can use this area to copy or subscribe to files

Class Files

- o Area for creating, stories, and managing course files

Accessible by section designers and instructors enrolled in the course

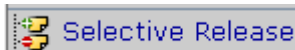
My Computer

- o Takes you to your local desktop
- o Upload one file or multiple files

SELECTIVE RELEASE

EXERCISE

Choose Selective Release from the Designer Tools list.



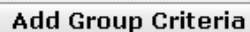
Click on Set Release Criteria next to the Syllabus (or the name of the document you wish to schedule for selective release).

Note: You can set criteria other than Date.



Click on Add Date Criteria and make your selections.


Set Release Criteria for: Syllabus 1



Add Date Criteria


Available Starting

Immediately

 December 1, 2006 11 : 32 AM

Available Until

Unlimited

 December 1, 2006 11 : 32 AM

Save

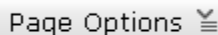
Cancel

Return to Course Content Home



PAGE OPTIONS

Click on the Page Options button.



Edit Header

Click on Edit Header. You can type anything you wish into the box and it will display above your link icons on the Course Content Home Page.

Customize Page Display

Click on the button to see display options. We do not recommend changing colors, etc. but you may want to change how your links display on the page. Remember to click Apply when you are finished.

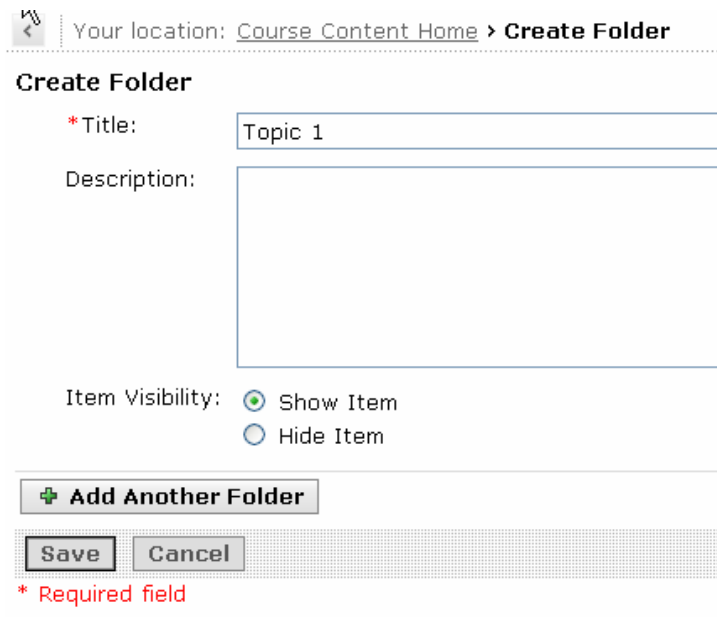
CREATE FOLDERS

If you are not on the Course Content Home Page, return there.



Click Create Folder...

The following window will display. All you are required to do is give the folder a name and then click Save. You may also add comments or choose to keep the folder Hidden.

A screenshot of a "Create Folder" dialog box. At the top, it shows a breadcrumb path: "Your location: Course Content Home > Create Folder". Below this is the title "Create Folder". There is a label "*Title:" followed by a text input field containing "Topic 1". Below that is a label "Description:" followed by a large empty text area. Underneath is the "Item Visibility:" section with two radio buttons: "Show Item" (which is selected) and "Hide Item". At the bottom of the dialog, there is a button with a plus sign and the text "Add Another Folder". Below that are "Save" and "Cancel" buttons. At the very bottom, there is a red asterisk and the text "* Required field".

MOVE FILES FROM ONE FOLDER TO ANOTHER

Once you have created your folders, you can choose to move files by clicking on the action link next to the document you would like to move and then choose "Move to Folder". You will be given a list of folders to choose from.

Nesting Folders

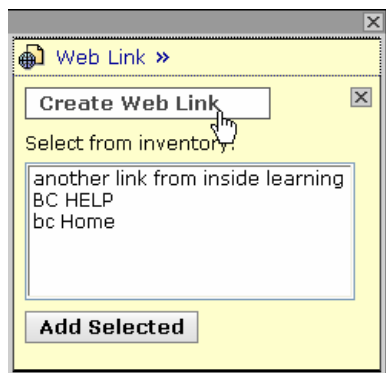
You can add multiple folders and within the folders add as many files as you like to each. If you have large quantities of documents that you would like to post on Vista, there are tools that may make that easier. Someone would be happy to work with you or your assistant.

ADD LINKS TO WEB SITES

Return to Course Content Home.



Click on Add Content Link and select Web Link.



Notice you have the option to Create a [new] Web Link or select from a list of web links you have already entered.

Click Create Web Link

Enter in a title for the link (how it will appear on the page).

Enter the URL (the web address).

We suggest that you select that the link open in a new browser window since it will make navigation easier for students.

You may also enter a description and choose to show/hide the link.

< Your location: [Course Content Home](#) > **Create Web Link**

Create Web Link

*Title:

Description:

*URL:

Open in a new browser window

Item Visibility: Show Item Hide Item

*Required field

Using Learning Modules

A learning module is an alternative way to organize related items in Bb Vista. Learning Modules can contain any combination of BB tools/features including documents, media files, assignments, assessments and weblinks.

To create a learning module. Add the learning module tool to the designer tools in the Build Tab. Click Learning Modules → Create Learning Module. Give the learning module a name. By default, the learning module will display the table of contents on the left hand pane and the first document in right hand pane.

Click Save. You can then add materials to your learning module, by clicking on the name of the Learning module. You can add files and links. We also recommend using headers to organize the materials in the learning module.

USING VISTA AT HOME

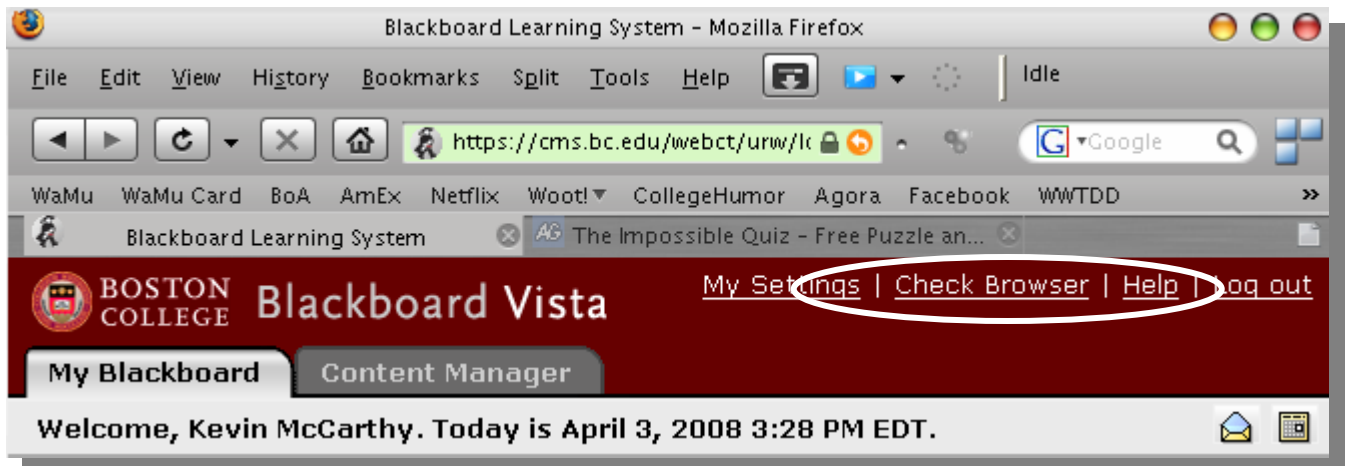
We suggest that you run the Check Browser Configuration before beginning work.

Access: <https://cms.bc.edu>

Click on Boston College

Log In using your BC username and password.

If you see a Security Warning, click Run.



Click on the Check Browser link (upper right).

Running the browser check will confirm the following:

1. That you are running a web browser that is compatible with Vista and is supported by Blackboard.
2. That pop-ups are allowed for this site.
3. That the proper JVM (JAVA Virtual Machine) is installed on your machine.

The browser checker provides a detailed explanation to help you resolve any issues with these three items.

You most likely will need to install JAVA Virtual Machine. If you need assistance with Java VM contact your TC or go to: <http://www.java.com/en/download/help/>

If you experience problems successfully completing the browser check please contact cms@bc.edu.

After completing the browser check you will be prompted to accept 2 security certificates. Be sure to click “Always Accept”.

Add Blackboard to Trusted Site list.

In order to properly download documents from Blackboard Vista, it should also be listed as a Trusted site in your web browser. To make Vista a trusted site in IE:

1. On the toolbar, go to Tools → Internet Options
2. Click the Security Tab
3. Click Trusted Sites
4. Click “Sites”
5. Add <https://cms.bc.edu>
6. Select “Require server verification (https:) for al sites in this zone”
7. Click OK
8. Click “Apply”
9. Click “OK”
10. Quit browser and then re-open browser for changes to take effect.