

## Advanced Topics: Using Multimedia in Blackboard

### I. What is considered multimedia?

Multimedia is using text, graphics, videos, animation, etc... together to present information. When many of us think about multimedia Microsoft PowerPoint comes to mind. While PowerPoint is a good place to start when just beginning to incorporate multimedia into the classroom there are many other options available. All of which can be incorporated in different ways into a Blackboard course.

### II. Why incorporate multimedia into a Blackboard course?

- Different learning styles
- Creates more interest
- More interactive
- Can help cultivate community feeling missing in online courses

### III. Working with Images

Blackboard has built-in support for images in the following locations

- Course Banner
- Profile Image
- Content Areas
- Quizzes/Exams

Supported image formats

- GIF - supports up to 256 colors, best used for image with few colors
- JPEG - supports up to 16 million colors, best used for color photos

*Choosing which file format to save an image is not an exact science. When in doubt try both and compare image quality and size.*

Step-by-Step Instructions

- Course Banner
  1. Click the Control Panel button within the course you would like to add a banner image
  2. Click on Course Images
  3. Click on Course Banner
  4. Click the Browse button
  5. Locate course banner image on computer
  6. Click the Submit button
  7. A receipt of success page appears, click OK button
- Profile Image
  1. Click the Control Panel button within the course **where you** would like to add a profile image
  2. Click on Staff Information or Faculty Information
  3. *(If no profile exists)* Click the Add Profile button, enter profile information in the textboxes provided
  4. *(If a profile does exist)* Click the Modify button to the right of profile
  5. Scroll down to Options area



6. Click the Browse button
  7. Locate profile image on computer
  8. Click the Submit button
  9. A receipt of success page appears, click OK button
- Content Areas - Add Item
    1. Click on the Control Panel button within course
    2. Click the content area link you would like to add content
    3. Click the Add Item button
    4. Click the Browse button to the right of the File to Attach textbox
    5. Find graphic to attach
    6. Enter Name of Link to File
    7. Select 'Display media file within the page' from the Special Action drop-down list
    8. Set Options by selecting yes or no to the questions listed
    9. Click the Submit button
    10. A message will appear stating - "When embedding a file, the text is changed to 'HTML'." Click OK button.
    11. The Multimedia Options page will appear, set parameters as desired
    12. Click the Submit button
    13. *(To move image on page)* Click on the Modify button to the right of the item with image, and place text in text area around image comment box as desired, click the Submit button to save changes
  - Content Areas - Learning Units (Add File Option)
    1. Click on the Control Panel button within course
    2. Click the content are link you would like to add content
    3. Click the Add Learning Unit button
    4. Enter Learning Unit Information
    5. Set Options by selecting yes or no to the questions listed
    6. Click the Submit button
    7. A receipt of success page appears, click OK button
    8. Click Learning Unit name to add content to unit
    9. Click the Add File button
    10. Enter name of image in Name textbox
    11. Click the Browse button to the right of the File to Attach textbox
    12. Enter name of link to file
    13. Click the Submit button
  - Quizzes/Exams - Use Advanced tab when adding questions to receive image options. Images can be used in the question text as well as answer.

#### Tips for working with images

- Enter alt tag information for accessibility issues
- Resize images to reduce file size and limit scrolling
- Save images with a resolution of 72 dpi a standard for web
- When adding an image to an item within a content area and the image needs to be between text first upload the image to Blackboard then modify item to insert text.

#### IV. UT Martin Streaming Server and Blackboard

UT Martin has a streaming server with the capability to stream Windows Media and QuickTime files. Streaming files play as they are received instead of waiting to download before playing. This makes it easier for students with slower Internet connections to view larger files. Streaming files are protected from being copied since they do not download to viewer's computer. The



streaming server should be used when incorporating audio and video with Blackboard. Other file types can be placed on the streaming server such as Flash, however, these files will not stream. They will download as if they were located on a web server. Putting large files of this type on the streaming server is recommended.

*To gain access to the UT Martin Streaming Server contact the ITC.*

## V. Working with Audio and Video

Audio and video files can be used within almost any location in Blackboard. However, Blackboard has built-in support for audio and video in the following locations.

- Content Areas
- Quizzes/Exams

Supported audio and video file types

- Audio: WAV and AIFF
- Video: MPEG, QuickTime, and AVI

*If file is not one of the supported media formats, a link to the file is created. Any audio or video file that is greater than 2 MB in size should be placed on the streaming server.*

Step-by-Step Instructions

- Content Areas - Add Item
  1. Click on the Control Panel button within course
  2. Click the content area link you would like to add content
  3. Click the Add Item button
  4. Click the Browse button to the right of the File to Attach textbox
  5. Find audio/video file to attach
  6. Enter Name of Link to File
  7. Select 'Display media file within the page' from the Special Action drop-down list
  8. Set Options by selecting yes or no to the questions listed
  9. Click the Submit button
  10. A message will appear stating - "When embedding a file, the text is changed to 'HTML'." Click OK button.
  11. The Multimedia Options page will appear, set parameters as desired
  12. Click the Submit button
- Quizzes/Exams - Use Advanced tab when adding questions to receive audio/video linking options. Audio/video can be linked in the question text as well as answer.
- Linking to Audio/Video Files on the Streaming Server
  1. Save audio/video to the streaming server
  2. Choose location in Blackboard to add audio/video
  3. In text area, type link to audio/video file.

The following is an example of a link to a Windows Media video file on the streaming server: `mms://streamer.utm.edu/folder/filename.wmv`

- folder – name of your folder
- filename – name of the file you are linking to
- For example, `mms://streamer.utm.edu/jpublic/ch1.wmv`



Blackboard does not understand how to make a hotlink when using 'mms:/' as it does when using 'http:/'. So, some html is necessary to make the link hot.

Use the following HTML:

```
<a href="Insert link to file on streaming server here">Click here</a>
```

4. Set Options if necessary (will depend on what area you are adding the link)
5. Click the Submit button

*As mentioned previously, the streaming server can stream QuickTime files. However, creating true streaming QuickTime files is more involved than creating streaming Windows Media files. For additional help with this setup an appointment with an ITC staff member.*

Tips for working with audio and video

- Choose one format to deliver all audio and/or video in course
- Provide a link to free player for students to download
- Provide transcript for students with disabilities or for those that may have problems accessing

## VI. Working with Flash

Blackboard has built-in support for Flash files in the following location: Content Areas.

Step-by-Step Instructions

- Content Areas - Add Item
  1. Click on the Control Panel button within course
  2. Click the content area link you would like to add content
  3. Click the Add Item button
  4. Click the Browse button to the right of the File to Attach textbox
  5. Find flash file to attach
  6. Enter Name of Link to File
  7. Select 'Display media file within the page' from the Special Action drop-down list
  8. Set Options by selecting yes or no to the questions listed
  9. Click the Submit button
  10. A message will appear stating - "When embedding a file, the text is changed to 'HTML'." Click OK button.
  11. The Multimedia Options page will appear, set parameters as desired
  12. Click the Submit button
- Content Areas - Add Item - Packaged Flash Files

Sometimes Flash products have additional files associated such as HTML. For instance, a Flash application may be embedded in an HTML page with other content surrounding. When this is the case, all files should be packaged (zipped) together before uploading to Blackboard for the Flash application to work correctly. This can be accomplished by using a program such as WinZip (Win), Stuffit (Mac), or if on Windows XP select all files then right-click on selection and choose Send To...Compressed (Zipped) Folder.

To upload package file:

1. Click on the Control Panel button within course
2. Click the content area link you would like to add content
3. Click the Add Item button



4. Click the Browse button to the right of the File to Attach textbox under Content Attachment
  5. Find flash file to attach
  6. Enter Name of Link to File
  7. Select 'Unpackage this file' from the Special Action drop-down list
  8. Set Options by selecting yes or no to the questions listed
  9. Click the Submit button
  10. The Package Entry Point page will appear, choose entry point for the package file. This will most likely be an HTML file.
  11. Click the Submit button
- Linking to Flash Files on the Streaming Server
    1. Save Flash (and related files if necessary) to the streaming server
    2. Choose location in Blackboard to add Flash file
    3. In text area, type link to Flash file.

The following is an example of a link to a Flash file on the streaming server:

<http://streamer.utm.edu:8080/folder/filename.swf>

- folder – name of your folder
- filename – name of the file you are linking to
- For example, <http://streamer.utm.edu:8080/jpublic/ch1.swf>

4. Set Options if necessary (will depend on what area you are adding the link)
5. Click the Submit button