Instructors can cultivate collaborative learning and interaction between students, between students and their instructor, and with the course content through the use of Blackboard’s blogs, wikis and journals tools.

**Distinction between Blogs, Wikis and Journals**

- A **blog** (short for “web log”) is a type of website that is maintained by a single author or group of contributors. A blog is a collection of entries (or “posts”) of commentary, news or descriptions of events, and may include text, links, photos or video. The entries are most commonly arranged in reverse-chronological order, with the most recent post appearing on top. On the Internet, blogs are generally public to the world, although they may also be geared to smaller, more defined groups. Readers are able to respond to posts by leaving comments. One example of a group blog is Crooked Timber ([http://www.crookedtimber.org](http://www.crookedtimber.org)), a political blog run by a group of academics from around the world. Good ideas for using blogs in teaching and learning include encouraging reactions to class readings, course content or current news events; or for following up on class discussions with relevant links or materials. NOTE: Blogs that are made ‘public’ in Blackboard are only available to the students registered in the course.

- A **wiki** is a series of linked Web pages collaboratively created by many authors. They are collections of information organized with one topic per page of the wiki, and are available to the world to read and often to write. One of the most well-known wikis on the Internet is Wikipedia ([http://wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org)). Wikis can be used in teaching and learning to build a glossary of terms, create a knowledge base, write a collaborative document, create a collection of clarifications or explanations, organize signups for class presentations, or show the steps for working out specific problems in a math or science course. They are extremely flexible.

- A **journal**, like a diary, are personal reflections. By default, journals in Blackboard are private between a student and instructor, but can be shared if the instructor wishes. Ideas for using journals for teaching and learning include student reflections on internships, service learning experiences, field work, or specific course assignments. They can also be a great addition to students’ e-portfolios.
Here are the basic steps for creating a blog:

- Under Control Panel, select Course Tools → Blogs.
- Create the new blog, then open it and add the first entry. Students access the blog through their Tools menu.
- Optional: Add your blog to a content area or add a button for it on your course menu.
- Make sure your syllabus contains instructions, rubrics, models, a schedule of when to contribute, etc.

**Using Blogs**

1. From your course’s Control Panel, go to Course Tools and select Blogs.
2. Click Create Blog.
3. Give your blog a name.
4. In the text box, add step-by-step instructions for your students along with specific instructions for the blog assignment and any desired formatting for the blog entry.
5. Set up blog options as desired, including: availability, date restrictions, individual vs. course blogs, indexing options (we recommend monthly), and grading. If you elect grade it, a column will automatically be added to the Grade Center.
6. Click Submit.
7. Click on the name of your blog to open it.
8. Click on Create Blog Entry. Give your blog entry a name and enter your blog content in the text box. Your students will also use the Create Blog Entry to add blog entries.
9. Click Post Entry, or Save Entry as Draft if you are not ready to publish it yet. Finished blog entries pages will be listed in the right-hand column of the wiki. All blog authors can comment on blog entries using the Comments button. NOTE: The step-by-step instructions you wrote in step 4 are located at the top of the page and can hidden by clicking the tiny “x.”
Should I create an individual or a course blog?

When you create a blog, you have the option to make it an individual or a course blog. Both of these can be seen by all members of the course, but the posting options are slightly different:

- **In a Course Blog**, all course members can add entries and comments. Only the instructor can create a Course Blog and determines the topic to be addressed.
- **In an Individual Blog**, only the owner of the Blog can add entries, but all other course members can view and add comments. The instructor sets up individual blogs for students. The links to individual blogs can be found along the right side of the page.

We recommend selecting Course Blogs, as it allows all Course members to contribute and comment. If you would rather have students create private posts that only the instructor can see, we recommend using Blackboard’s Journal Tool.

**Important:** Once you have created a blog, you cannot go back and change the blog type. Instead, you will need to delete the blog and create a new one.

Grading Blogs

If you choose to grade the blog, a column will be added to the Grade Center automatically. Instructors can assign an overall grade for the student’s blog contributions. To grade a student’s blog posts, you can either enter the grades through the Grade Center or directly from the blog. To grade from the blog, do the following:

- Enter the blog that you wish to grade.
- Click on a student’s name to access that student’s blog posts.
• Click on the **Edit Grade** button on the right side of the screen.
• Enter the grade and any feedback, and click **Save Grade**. This will be a grade for the overall blog, not for individual posts.
• You can go back and edit the grade at any time. The grade will be saved in the Grade Center automatically.

### Grading a Blog

#### Adding a Course Menu Button for a Blog

- Select the plus sign at the top of your course menu.
- Select **Create Tool Link**.
- Give Button a Name.
- Under Type, select Blogs
- Select “Available to Users.”
- Click **Submit**. This will link to all course blogs.

It is also possible to add a specific blog to a course Content Area (e.g. “Course Documents” or “Course Information”) using **Add Interactive Tool**.
Getting Help with Technology at the University of Hartford

**Faculty Center for Learning Development (FCLD)**

FCLD provides consulting and instructional support to faculty and staff who are using technology in teaching and learning. The FCLD Faculty Lab in Mortensen 203a is available for faculty support and use and is equipped with instructional technology-related equipment including: PCs, Macs, scanners, and projectors as well as support staff. Faculty wishing to use the lab may contact FCLD.

**Phone:** 768-4661  
**Email:** fcld@hartford.edu  
**Website:** http://uhaweb.hartford.edu/fcld/

**Information Technology Services (ITS)**

**ITS Help Desk – Computing Center**

For general computer and Internet/network support questions (not directly related to the classroom but rather passwords, Internet/email problems, Banner, campus Facebook).

**Phone:** 768-5999  
**Email:** its@hartford.edu  
**Website:** http://uhaweb.hartford.edu/its/

**Media Technology Services (MTS) – Harry Jack Gray Center E113**

MTS maintains and installs classroom equipment, such as projectors, Symposiums, and interactive white boards, delivers and sets up technology needed for classes such as laptops, overhead projectors, microphones, sound systems, DVD/VCRs, digital cameras, etc., and provides instruction on its use. MTS is also responsible for overseeing ECHO360 Lecture Capture classrooms and administers WebEx web conferencing accounts.

**Phone:** (860) 768-4643 (Main) or (860) 768-4662 (Tech Line)  
**Website:** www.hartford.edu/mts