UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD

FACULTY CENTER FOR LEARNING DEVELOPMENT

Blackboard Wikis

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), 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). 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, and like blogs, they can be set up so that only invited users can read them and/or post to them.

- A ***journal***, like a diary, is for recording personal reflections. By default, journals in Blackboard are private between a student and instructor, but they can be shared if the instructor wishes. Journals can be used to record student reflections on internships, service learning experiences, field work, or specific course assignments. They can also be a great addition to students' e-portfolios.

Basic Steps for Using a Wiki

- Under Control Panel, select **Course Tools → Wikis**.
- Create the new wiki, then open it and add the first entry. Students access the wiki through their Tools menu.

- Optional: Add your wiki 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.

Setting up a Wiki

1. Go to **Course Tools** and select **Wikis** from the dropdown menu.
2. Click **Create Wiki.**
3. Give your wiki a name.
4. In the text box, add step-by-step instructions telling your students how to add a wiki page, (see sample below), along with specific details about the wiki assignment and desired formatting.
5. Set up Wiki options as desired, including: date restrictions, whether the wiki is open or closed to editing (read-write vs. read-only), and grading.
6. Click **Submit**.

Editing a Wiki

1. If you like, you can open your wiki and the first wiki page. Click on your wiki name to open it.
2. A form appears automatically when you first open the wiki. This form is used to add the first wiki page to your wiki. All subsequent pages will use the **Create Wiki Page** to access the form and add a wiki page. Give the page a name and enter your wiki content in the text box.

   This first wiki page can be used as:
   - an index page
   - the first page of wiki content
   - to provide a sample entry for your students
   - to elaborate further on instructions,
   - the first actual content page for your wiki.

Finished wiki pages will be listed in the right-hand column of the wiki. All wiki authors can comment on wiki entries using the **Comments** button.

Linking Wiki Pages Together

Typically wikis are a collection of web pages linked together by hyperlinks (think Wikipedia). In Blackboard, you can link to multiple Blackboard wiki pages together, or use the hyperlink to link out to web pages on the Internet. The first might be a good way to organize a student wiki project, with the first page as a table of contents, while the second example might be a good way to put together an annotated bibliography, as shown here:
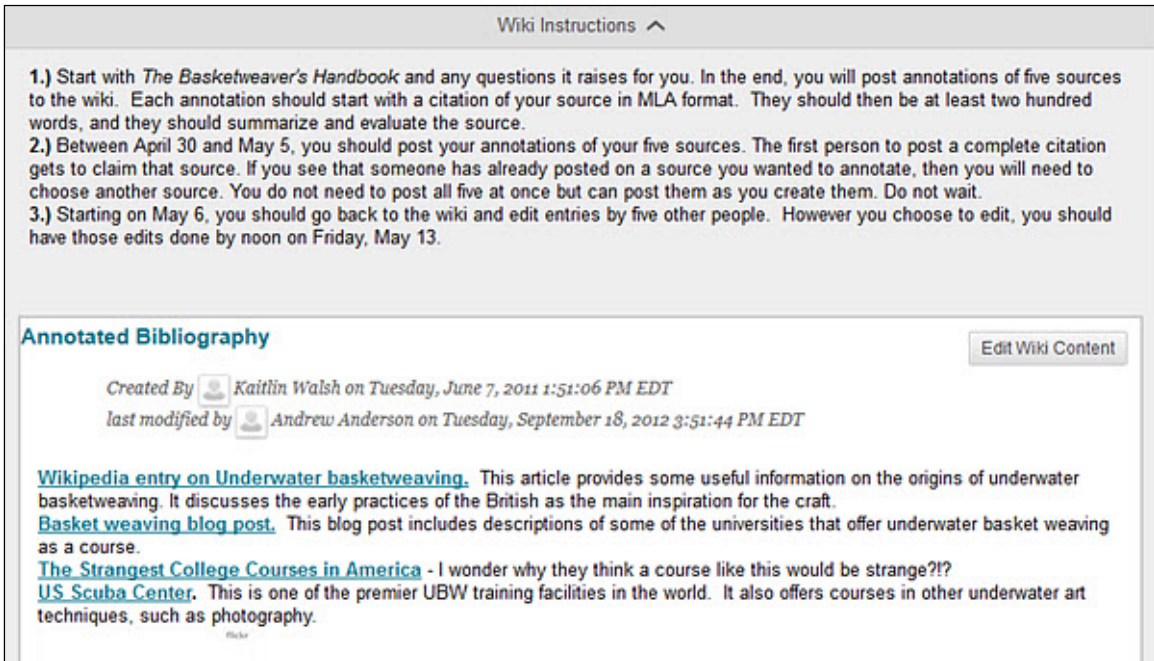
Sample Wiki Page

To link wiki pages together in Blackboard:
- Create your initial wiki page. Be sure you have some text on it.
- Create a second wiki page with a title page. You should now have two wiki pages.
- Go back to the first page. Edit the page to add the title of the second page.
- Highlight the text, then select the **Link to Wiki Page** icon.
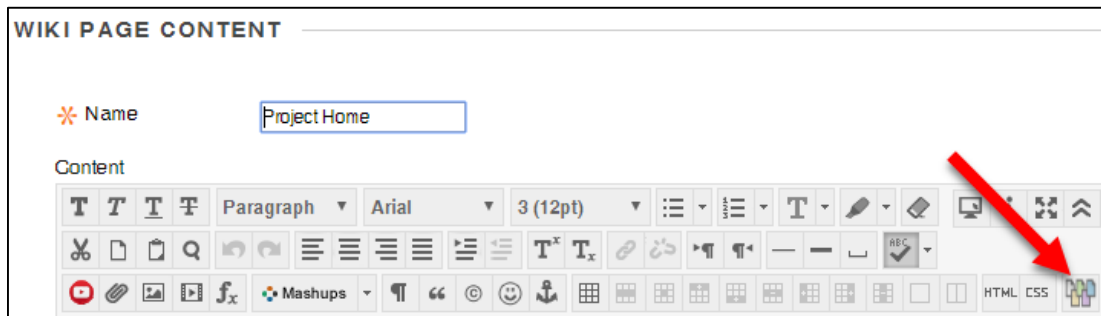
Link to Wiki Page Icon

A new window opens. Under *Select Wiki Page Link*, select the wiki page you are wish to link. Click **Submit**.

NOTE: It is also possible to change the highlighted text on the initial page to the linked page name by using the Wiki Page Options → Rename Wiki Page Link.

Accessing the Wikis

Students can get to a wiki by clicking **Tools,** then **Wikis** from the course menu. (Alternatively, instructors can add Wikis to the course menu for students. See below, "Adding a Course Menu Item for a Wiki".) Once in the wiki, students add content either by using the **Create Wiki Page** button or the **Edit Wiki Content** button. Detailed instructions should be provided by instructors about how students might proceed with their work in a wiki.

Adding a Course Menu Button for a Wiki

- Select the 'plus' sign at the top of your course menu.
- Select Create Tool Link.
- Give Button a Name.
- Under Type, select Wikis.
- Select "Available to Users."
- Click Submit. This will link to all course wikis.

It is also possible to add your wiki to a specific Content Area (e.g., "Course Information" or "Assignments") using the **Add Interactive Tool** option.
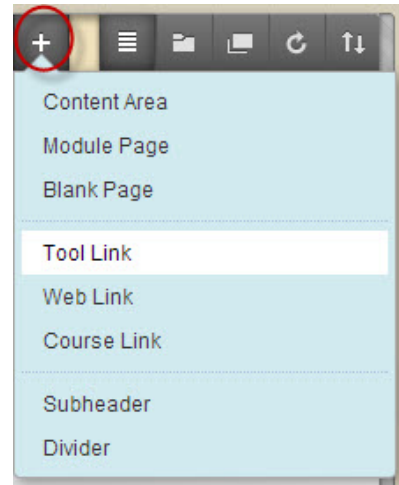
Click the + sign in the upper left corner > Tool Link

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 and Staff needing support with Blackboard or other instructional technologies, should contact FCLD.
Phone: (860) 768-4661   **Email:** fcld@hartford.edu
Website: http://www.hartford.edu/fcld

Student Blackboard Support
The following is student support for Blackboard only. All other support technical support issues need to be addressed to the Office of Technology Services (below).
Phone: (860) 768-4636   **Email:** bbsupport@hartford.edu
FAQ/Submit a Ticket: http://www.hartford.edu/studentbbsupport

Information Technology Services (ITS) Help Desk
For general computer and Internet/network support questions (not directly related to the classroom but rather passwords, Internet/email problems, Banner/Self-Service, campus Facebook).
Phone: (860) 768-4357   **Email:** helpdesk@hartford.edu
Website: http://hartford.edu/ots

Media Technology Services (MTS)
Faculty should contact MTS for assistance scheduling or implementing classroom technology (2-Way interactive video classrooms, Smart Podiums, laptops, etc.), for setting up WebEx accounts, or for scheduling and instruction for a wide variety of media equipment and resources like LCD data projectors, CD/cassette players, TVs and VCRs, digital video, and more.
Phone: (860) 768-4357   **Website:** http://www.hartford.edu/mts