



Building and teaching online courses can take a considerable upfront investment of time and effort. Preserving the course material generated over the length of the class in order to reuse it and improve upon it is important for the continued development of online teaching and learning. Blackboard has many ways to save course materials and even entire courses so that they can be reused and continue to be developed by instructors.

ISSUES AND ANSWERS

Issue: Content Areas in a course were removed accidentally. Is the only way to get them back rebuilding everything from scratch?

Answer: Restore an archive of the course that was saved before the Content Areas were deleted to restore material that was deleted by mistake. Alternatively, if it is available, copy the deleted Content Areas from a master course template or duplicate course.

Issue: Is it better to copy a course or recycle it so that it can be used again?

Answer: Copying parts of an existing course into a new course in order to use it again is safer than recycling the course because recycling removes parts of the original course that cannot be recovered.

SAVING A COURSE

Archiving • Exporting

A best practice for any development project is to back up work at regular intervals and save it to an external medium such as a local drive, CD, tape or the Content Collection. Use the Archive Course tool located on the Control Panel to periodically save an exact copy of a course while it is being developed. Archived courses can act as a backup and as a way to revert to an older version of the course to undo any undesirable changes. Archives of courses that have been taught can be kept for historical record, then Restored if data needs to be retrieved. Archives are compressed in a zip format that can be saved to an external source.

Use the Export Course function, located on the Control Panel to select parts of a course to package into a zip file that can be saved to a local drive or moved to another Blackboard server. Export does not include user data such as when a user Reviewed an item, or their Gradebook records. Exported course materials need to be Imported back into a course.

REUSING AND RESETTING A COURSE

Copy Course • Recycle Course

Blackboard courses can be duplicated in part or entirely using Copy Course located under Course Options on the Control Panel. It is possible to copy selected material from one course into a new course, into an existing course or make an exact clone of a course including all course users. Copying course material or entire courses is a fast way to create multiple sections of the same course. Often institutions will have master courses containing no student data that are copied for each section and instructor, ensuring some standardization with a pristine set of templates. Using master courses as templates is also a way that changes can be made in one place and copied to the rest of the sections when they are copied again.

Individual courses can be “reset” to remove specific content and data like Staff Information, Messages, Course Statistics and Grade Book entries using Recycle Course located under Course Options on the Control Panel. Recycling a course allows it to be cleaned up before it is reused. Information removed during recycling cannot be recovered.

Function	What it does and when to use it
Archive/Restore	Archive creates a zipped file of a course, and Restore uses that zipped file to create a new course. Course user data can be included or excluded in the Archive and Restore process. Archived courses can be downloaded and saved to an external drive for backup.
Course Copy	Copies all or parts of a course.
Copy Course Materials into a New Course	Select material from an existing course to be copied into a new course. Use to copy materials from one course into a new one without copying the entire course.
Copy Course Materials into an Existing Course	Select material from an existing course to copy into another existing course. Use to copy material from one course to another without copying the entire course.
Copy Course with Users (Exact Copy)	Makes an exact duplicate of an existing course including all users and their data. Use to duplicate a course for backup, or to open another section of the course while retaining the same users.
Export	Select all or parts of an existing course to add to a zipped file. Does not include student data. Zipped files can then be downloaded and saved to an external drive. Use to save course materials as a backup or to move course content to another course.
Import Package	Import Package is used to upload selected course materials from an exported zipped file into a course. The entire zipped file can be uploaded or just selected parts of the zipped file can be uploaded.
Import Course Cartridge	Imports a publisher produced Course Cartridge. Use to establish a Blackboard course based on a publisher’s textbook.
Recycle Course	Select material from an existing course to be deleted from the course and keeps the rest of the course areas for use in the future. Material deleted from a recycled course cannot be recovered. Archive the course, to retain a record before using Recycle.



ISSUES AND ANSWERS

Issue: It is difficult to find items I'd like to use in my course from our large Learning Objects Catalog.
Answer: Use the Search function to help find items for a course from the Learning Objects Catalog. Search on

Issue: Is there a way I can make it easier for others to locate material I want to share in the Content System?

Answer: Adding metadata to material uploaded to the Content System will make it easier to locate by doing a search. Add key words that fit the category the item would fall under, the subject matter it represents, and the author.

Links

Content and File Management Flash Tutorial

<http://www.blackboard.com/corp/objects/images/quicktutorials/contentfilemanagement.swf>

Learning Objects Catalog Flash Tutorial

<http://www.blackboard.com/corp/objects/images/quicktutorials/learningobjectscatalog.swf>

Collaborative File Storage Flash Tutorial

<http://www.blackboard.com/products/quicktutorials/collabfilestorage.swf>

Course Cartridges Flash Tutorial

<http://www.blackboard.com/corp/objects/images/quicktutorials/coursecartridge.swf>

Find a Course Cartridge from the Course Cartridges Catalog
<http://www.blackboard.com/extend/ccart/>

REUSING CONTENT

Content System • Learning Objects Catalog • Course Cartridges

Teaching online, like teaching face-to-face, is an ever-evolving process. As new research is published, new data, models, diagrams, illustrations, papers and books become available and will become incorporated into instruction. Creating and maintaining a repository of materials in the Content System can make the latest educational materials and research available across the institution. Content from courses can be stored in the Content System so it can be accessed and incorporated into other courses.

Content items that have value across courses and departments can be added to a searchable Learning Objects Catalog. Learning Objects can be any form of content item from an interactive Flash game to a page of links with a common theme to an entire course. The institution can elect certain types of users, such as Librarians, researchers and instructional designers to submit to and manage items in the catalog that can then be discovered by instructors looking for new materials. Catalog managers can determine what type of content is appropriate for the institution's definition of a Learning Object.

Major education publishers create pre-packaged content and course materials in the Blackboard Course Cartridge format to supplement their course textbooks. Cartridges may contain multimedia, assessments, test question pools, and more, all of which can be moved, reorganized, edited and enhanced once loaded into a course site. Students will need to purchase a Key Code and enter it in to their course in order to unlock publisher supplied material. Any other material in the course is open to them without a Key Code.

