

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS MEETING  
FRIDAY, December 4, 2009

The LMS team met on Friday, December 4 at 10:30 a.m. in room 209 in the Durham Tech/Collins Building.

**Members present** were: Karen McPhaul (presiding), Dave Sorenson, Susan Horton, Janice Stuart, Becky Roehrs, Tracy Mancini, Steve Leadon, Brent McCardle, Charlene West, and Peter Wooldridge. Attending visitors were Tom Murphy and Patrick Coin.

Karen McPhaul provided information about events occurring at **Duke University on December 8 and December 10**, as Duke University has formed an eLearning Roadmap group to explore alternatives to Blackboard, including Moodle, Sakai, and Blackboard version 9. The group's web site is here: <http://blogs-dev.oit.duke.edu/elearning/> These presentations will be given by faculty from other colleges (NCSU, UNC-CH, and Kettering University, respectively) who are using or piloting these products. Non-Duke employees can register and attend, but pre-registration is required. To see dates/times and to register, see: <http://cit.duke.edu/blog/2009/11/25/exploring-alternatives-to-blackboard/>

Karen next gave us the details for the **next LMS meeting on December 11 at 10:30 am** (location to be determined). Blackboard Solutions Engineer Bille Dorsey will present information between 10:45am-12pm (approximately) about Blackboard 9 upgrades that are available for future installation.

**To plan for next semester**, Karen requested that LMS team members send their teaching schedule to Karen, before they left for the holiday break.

Karen opened the floor to **LMS team members who had used Moodle** during the past week. Various members had tried adding a Word and pdf syllabus, external links, PowerPoint presentations (97 and 2007), a jing video, Word tables, tests and discussion boards, and demonstrated the course materials they had created.

LMS team members learned the following that **instructors using Moodle should be aware of:**

- How to attach PowerPoints (or other docs) was not intuitive -- must select *choose*
- Found problems copying images directly into Moodle, had to save the images separately, import the images into Moodle, and the images were smaller in size when displayed, than when the images had been displayed in Blackboard
- When copying content from Bb to Moodle, most links copy, but some do not.
- Found it tricky to link to internal files within Moodle
- Quizzes had to be carefully set up, a category had to be named, quizzes had to be imported into a category
- Time consuming to copy resources and files from Blackboard to Moodle.
- It's not clear if Moodle resources can be copied and/or made available to other instructors or to all of an instructor's courses
- The "blank slate" of an empty Moodle course can be confusing – it isn't clear where to begin. Possible solution: provide a custom shell with a few items as a basic structure.
- Setting up a course in Moodle requires rethinking the course structure

LMS team members found the following **items they liked about Moodle:**

- Simpler structure

- If using Google docs, it was very easy to cut and paste the HTML into Moodle-all external links worked perfectly, including a slide presentation that was embedded
- Copying/pasting pages from Bb works pretty well – all text formatting, bullets, tables, etc. copied over well. Many links copy over well also. (As noted above, images and some links did not copy over well.)
- Can set assignments so they can't be accepted late
- Calendar feature
- Some discussion board features – for example, with Q&A forum type, students can't see classmates' answers until after they have posted their own. Also, after posting students have a time window of 30 minutes to make corrections to post.
- Tests exported from Bb seemed to import well (once you know the trick of adding imported questions into categories first)

Karen shared the following that she had **discovered about Moodle** from other sources:

- Some colleges used the product Respondus to import tests into Moodle
- Karen demonstrated the Book feature, which allows instructors to create an outline with links to each part of the materials
- Some colleges use other tools to replace sending emails within Blackboard, such as a free add-on called QuickMail
- Emails (messaging in Moodle) can take 30 minutes to be sent, but settings can be adjusted so pop-ups can occur immediately

Karen asked the LMS members to use the **LMS evaluation criteria** to evaluate Moodle:

- **Interoperability:** Right now it's not clear what the interoperability of Moodle is with Colleague and portal systems
- **Scalability and sustainability:** Technologically, Moodle is easier to maintain than Blackboard; the support costs are much lower than Blackboard, and training for Moodle is available at a reasonable cost for a limited number of users (if using a Train-the-Trainer type of training model)
- **Usability:** From a student perspective, Moodle looks student friendly. We're still exploring how user friendly Moodle is for faculty
- **Content conversion and creation:** LMS team members agreed it was important to develop web vs text content, to retain document formatting (fonts, colors, etc). Moodle is different, and does offer options for instructors to post content in a variety of contents. The NCCCS has started providing VLC materials in Moodle format, but we're not sure if the publisher cartridges that our instructors use are available for Moodle.
- **Interactivity and assessment:** Moodle provides collaborative learning tools, but they have not been tested by the team at this point. The LMS team still needs to evaluate how to use Moodle to monitor student progress, share grades, and provide student feedback via assignments and tests.

The next LMS meeting will be on December 11 at 10:30 am, to explore Blackboard version 9 features.

Submitted 12/7/09 by Becky Roehrs, scribe.