

Welcome Back! Important Updates at the CTL

In the early parts of the fall semester, we want to update you on a few key changes and developments that affect the CTL's services to the campus, in particular those pertaining to Blackboard.

- Most of you will know that our Coordinator for Learning Technologies, Tony Piña, left NEIU in the summer to assume a Dean's position at Sullivan University, KY
- Anna Brown, who has worked at NEIU in various capacities since 2001, has joined the CTL as the Interim Coordinator for Learning Technologies until a national search identifies a permanent replacement for Tony
- Paul Heydenburg, who has been supporting faculty's use of technology long before the CTL was created, is retiring by the end of this month. You are invited to join us in celebrating his many years of service on Monday, Sep. 29, from 2-5pm at the CTL, Lib. 310
- As for the campus at large, we welcome our new faculty by introducing them in picture and bio under the Personal Announcements on *NEUport*.
- We have added a new Blackboard Policies and Procedures link on the CTL's Blackboard site
- The largest part of this CTL-Bulletin is taken up by a very important description of our current Blackboard server clean-up that will require your involvement. Please read on!

Blackboard Server Clean-Up Process

In previous communications, the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) notified all faculty members using Blackboard (Bb) of the need to clean up the Bb database to improve system performance and make room for new courses. We are adopting the recommended process of archiving courses older than two years (six semesters including summers), after which they will be deleted from the Bb server. This means that any courses taught more than two years ago will no longer be available when logging in to Bb.

The first part of this process has been completed; Bb courses older than two years have been backed-up and stored on a network drive. Before we have Blackboard perform the deletion process, we want to provide faculty with some time to export their own courses as desired. **Faculty members who have Bb courses with content they wish to save should export those courses to their computer (or other storage medium) before October 15, 2008.** The export process does not take much time. Tutorials that introduce the export and import processes can be found on the at: www.neiu.edu/~ctl/blackboard.html. Those who are more familiar with Bb can refer to the steps below.

As a long-term solution, faculty should export their Bb courses onto their computers at the end of each semester. This quick process can be combined with making courses unavailable and can be completed in most cases at the time of grade submission. (Those who have granted a student a grade of incomplete

may wish to wait until that student's work has been submitted.) When needed, the content from the old course can be uploaded into a new Bb course by using the Import Package link in the Control Panel.

Frequently Asked Questions

What if I need content from a course that I taught before Fall 2006?

Now is the time to ensure that you have backed up any courses you might need in the future. It is recommended that you always keep a back-up copy of any individual file you post to Bb (such as a Word, PDF, or PowerPoint document). If you haven't done so in the past, consider downloading any important files separately first. Then be sure to export any Bb courses you might need to your computer. Exported course files can only be accessed and used when imported into a new course shell.

The CTL will also maintain an archive of older courses on a dedicated hard disk. Since this storage space will not be as convenient as your own desktop, and will involve a longer process to retrieve course files, faculty will want to store their courses for their own immediate access. If problems arise, CTL staff will be able to retrieve information from an old course, but there may be a wait of several days to a week for this service.

How do I export a course?

Exporting is a two-step process, but very simple. In the first step, you generate the export folder:

1. Go to the course's Control Panel and click the **Export Course** link.
2. Click **Export** at the top of the page.
3. Select the materials you would like to include in your export package.
4. Click **Submit**.
5. Blackboard will take a few minutes to generate an export.zip folder containing the content. You will receive an e-mail when it is ready for you.

Once you have received the email, you can save the course file to your computer:

1. Return to the course's Control Panel and click Export Course.
2. Click on the link (it will be a long file name) and select OK to download it to your computer. The course file will appear as a ZIP folder. Do not open the ZIP folder when it is on your computer, as that will cause problems when you try to import it.

How do I import a course?

When needed, you can import this course file to a new course shell set up for the next semester you will be teaching the course. To Import the old course content into a new course:

1. Go to the new course's Control Panel and click the Import Package link.
2. Click the Browse button to locate the ZIP folder on your computer.
3. Select the items that you wish to import and click the Submit and OK buttons.

Who do I contact if I have questions about this process?

Call the CTL at x4467 or email Faculty-Blackboard@neu.edu if you have questions or concerns. The best hours for quick response to calls or drop in visits is 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. M-F.