



# Managing content during the semester

## Quick guide for designers and instructors

For Blackboard Vista 4.x

For many units, much of the content will have been established before the start of semester, so there may be minimal content management work to do during the semester. However, one of the benefits of online delivery is the ability to make course content more dynamic and the option to build up or change the content as needed.

This is useful when a unit is first delivered online and there is not enough time to complete all content prior to the semester. It also gives you the option to add material as new and relevant resources become available. You may have other good reasons for progressive development as well.

In web-supported or web-dependent units, providing 'just-in-time' online resources that integrate with face-to-face teaching can work well. Students generally appreciate the timely provision of lecture notes/points, pre-readings, workshop questions and tutorial information. This is where online delivery can really add value to face-to-face delivery.

### Issues to be aware of

- When you add content to a learning module, students may not be able to see it at first. To be sure it is visible you will need to check in the **Selective Release** map that content is not hidden, nor subject to any selective release criteria.
- If students are experiencing difficulties with content you may need to provide an alternative format. This can occur with high-end formats such as streaming media and multimedia. It may also occur because students have accessibility issues – see the quick guide: **File formats for the web**.

### Tips to increase student interest and use of content

- Add topical media items, links, case studies etc to learning modules during the semester. This can add context and currency to your content.
- Place minor updates - such as news items and new links in a **Discussions** forum. This helps to keep your unit up to date and relevant. You can then add these to the content the next time the unit is offered.
- If appropriate, ask students to submit interesting content/links that they have found as part of **Discussion** or **Blog** topics.
- If the unit has a significant amount of content, it may be wise to release it in 'chunks' throughout the semester. This can help to reduce student anxiety and a feeling of being overwhelmed.
- Use the tracking tools in **MyLO** to identify which parts of the unit content are being used the most, and used the least. This data may indicate problems with sections of content - from an educational and/or technical point of view.

#### References:

Designer and Instructor Reference: Application Pack 2 for Blackboard Learning System – Vista Enterprise License (Release 4) 2006 Blackboard Inc

Vista 4.2 Online Help (Blackboard Inc.)

Blackboard, Vista and other product names mentioned are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Blackboard Inc.