Content Building

Formatting Your Learning Content

Bb Blackboard

Issues and Answers

Issue: I want to place documents in the visual text editor but there are tables I need to keep.

Answer: Follow the steps in the HTML section under Documents. Once you have the entire document in the editor, go back to your original document. Select just the table you want to use and copy it to the clipboard (Ctrl-C). Now in the visual editor select the text that represents the table data and paste (Ctrl-V). You can repeat this for additional tables.

Issue: What if my video is at a site online?

Answer: If it is a site like YouTube, look for the EMBED code. Copy the embed code and then in the visual editor select the **<>** button for HTML mode and choose paste (Ctrl-V). Simply link to the video if embed code is not available.

Blackboard offers several ways to bring your materials into the learning environment. Any file type can be attached and there is a powerful Visual Textbox Editor included as shown below.

Not recommended.
WCC has other options to handle audio and video files
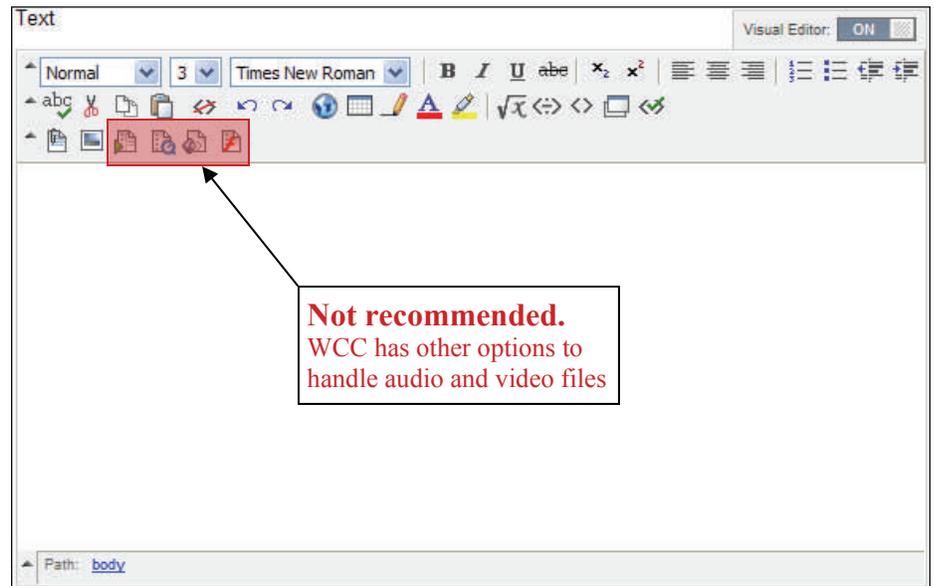
This editor provides easy to use tools to control your text, hyperlinks, images, and more. The bottom row has options to link to files as well as add images. It is recommended to use an alternative to the built in video and audio options shown above. Waubonsee has a Flash-based player that handles audio and video that is more versatile than the built in Blackboard buttons above. See the **Audio/Video Content Embedding** job aid for more details.

Here are some general guidelines to follow when building content in your course.

<u>**Documents:**</u> This would be anything that is mainly text-based.

Best Choice

HTML: If the document is no more than 2-3 pages long, the best way to display it is by using the visual text editor. This format can be viewed by any student without plugins or special software. Here's how:

1. Open document in Word and copy the text to the clipboard (Ctrl-A then Ctrl-C)

2. Open Notepad (Start—All Programs—Accessories—Notepad) then paste the clipboard contents (Ctrl-V). To clear the Microsoft Word formatting, copy again (Ctrl-A then Ctrl-C).

3. In the Blackboard Visual Text Editor, you will now paste (Ctrl-V) the text. You can now use the buttons in the visual text editor to create any custom styles or formatting you prefer.

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Tips and Tricks

Tip: Keep the students in mind with content and what their needs may be. The extra steps of creating a Web friendly piece of content is helpful to the students and may eliminate technical or software issues.

Tip: The very nature of digital content lends itself to presenting material in multiple ways to support learning objectives. Everyone has their preferred learning style.

Tip: Supplement standard text with audio or video options. First explore options available to avoid reinventing the wheel. Second, consider adding audio to Powerpoints to deliver the same impact a standard lecture in class would receive or creating short video overviews of the content or material that is harder to grasp.

Second Option

PDF: You can open the document in Word and use the SAVE AS option then select PDF. This is the best choice for longer documents

Other: You can save the document in its original form. This should really only be used in cases that it is necessary such as Word forms. It is best to choose an option above to make your content accessible and easy to read as possible to your students.

Presentations (PowerPoint):

Note: *Consider the idea that in your classroom you would normally be providing a lecture with your Powerpoint. For the online version, it would make your presentations more engaging to record your lecture within your Powerpoint. Contact the CTLT to explore audio options at ext. 2858.*

Impatica Conversion: This provides a Web friendly way of viewing Powerpoints. Powerpoints would be sent to the CTLT for conversion with the converted presentation sent to you for uploading into your course.

PDF: You can open the presentation in Powerpoint and use the SAVE AS option then select PDF. You can choose from various options for the slide layout.

Other: You can save the presentation in its original form. This should really only be used in limited cases. It is best to choose an option above to make your content accessible and easy to read as possible to your students.

Other Formats (Web sites or other formats like multimedia files):

ZIP: For complex files such as a Web site that includes image files and CSS files with the HTML files, you are advised to compress those files into a Zip file. You can easily attach a zip file in Blackboard then choose the special option of Unpackage this file. You pick the file they should open and it functions as you would expect.

Audio: Contact the CTLT at ext. 2982 **before** uploading audio files. Files will be converted if necessary to MP3 format and stored on our streaming server. Code exists to have audio play easily and conveniently with a Web-based Flash player.

Video: Contact the CTLT at ext. 2982 **before** uploading video files. Files will be converted if necessary to FLV format and stored on our streaming server. Code exists to have video play easily and conveniently with a Web-based Flash player with controls to allow full screen viewing.

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