Blackboard What Is New - 9.1 SP12 and SP13

We will soon be upgrading to the latest version of Blackboard Learn™, Service Pack 13, which will provide a more user friendly and modern experience for you as a daily user of the system.

Many existing features have been improved and some exciting new features added to make your day more efficient. Here is an overview of tools that you can expect to be using soon:

**Test Enhancements** - Tests in Blackboard Learn have been updated, making specific improvements to how tests are designed and deployed. These enhancements will help meet specific scenarios that frequently come up from Instructors who use tests in low- and high-stakes situations. Specifically, tests are being updated to provide more granular feedback control, group and user deployment exceptions, Test "Begin" page user experience enhancements, an improved user interface of the Test Canvas and Create/Edit pages, and improved handling of late submissions.

**Content Editor – WIRIS Update** - WIRIS provides the math formula editing capabilities of the Content Editor introduced in Service Pack 10. In Service Pack 10 the WIRIS plugin came in the form of a Java Applet – this meant that math editing was not available to all platforms as Java virtual machine capabilities were required on the target platform. Service Pack 12 (and later) brings a new WIRIS editor that is based on JavaScript. This removes dependency on Java, and as a result, it enables full math-editing capabilities on platforms that cannot run Java in browsers e.g.: iOS. This extends the functionality of the WIRIS Math Editor to all platforms capable of running a JavaScript enabled browser. Additionally, the move from the non-accessible applet-based editor to a JavaScript-based editor improves accessibility.

**Test Access Log** - A source of frustration for students, instructors, and test proctors is the inability to confirm whether students began a Blackboard Test or ran into problems during a Test. Teachers and proctors had no way to verify student activity or lack of activity during a Test. Students had no way to prove that they did begin a Test and when. If students reported problems occurring during a Test, they were either given the benefit of the doubt and the test was reset, or they were penalized for circumstances beyond their control.

Service Pack 13 addresses this issue by providing detailed information on student Test attempt interactions. Instructors and other users, who are granted permission, can view the Access Log for a Test from the Attempts page of the Test. The access log shows a detailed list of every interaction that students engage in when taking a Test. If a student claims to have started a Test, the log will show the time the Test was started. If a network or Internet disruption occurred during the Test, for example, the log would show an unusual gap in the time.

**Progress Tracker** - When Blackboard Learn is processing large sets of data such as copying a course, the process takes place in the background so that users do not have to wait until it is completed before going on to another task. It is difficult to know when the process is complete without some type of indicator. The Progress Tracker provides a visible indicator for processes that take place in the background. This visual indicator can appear in different forms, but the intention is to let users know a process is taking place and when it is complete.

**Groups Management** – The Groups Management tool has been significantly enhanced to improve the experience of managing large numbers of Groups with large numbers of students in a course. It adds capabilities to the existing workflows for Group creation and management. This feature applies to both Courses and Organizations*. Groups Management improvements provide the ability to:

- Easily see which students are in which Groups, including which students are not in any Groups
- Easily see and modify Group memberships
- Automatically create Grade Center Smart Views that correspond to Groups
- Import and export Groups and Group memberships
- Streamline common actions that previously made Group management cumbersome and time-consuming

**Inline Assignment Grading Update** – One of the most significant enhancements in this version is the screen real estate available for annotating and commenting on converted documents has been increased (expanding to a full screen view), making it easier for instructors to grade and provide feedback.

**Inline Grading Tools Updates** – We have made updates to the following Building Blocks: Blogs and Journal Building Block, Wikis Building Block, and Discussions Building Block. The sidebars for grading in the various tools (Wikis, Blogs, Journals, and Discussions) have been updated to present an experience consistent with the Inline Assignment Grading sidebar.

Additional Information:

Supported Browsers and Operating Systems (9.1 SP13)