

## Technical Issues

**Q:** What if I have trouble logging on and cannot get past the initial logon page?

**A:** Some of the possible causes of this type of problem are:

- Older version of browser (no Java or JavaScript support available)
  - Upgrade to a version that supports Java and JavaScript
- Newer version of browser without Java support
  - Install Sun Java or Windows Virtual Machine
- Ad blocking software installed
  - Reduce security level to enable JavaScript and pop-ups
- “Common Name” program installed (This program maybe installed unintentionally)
  - Remove program
- Cookies not enabled
  - Enable cookies
  - Reduce level of “privacy control”
- Firewall installed
  - Allow access to server
  - Reduce level of “privacy protection”

**Q:** Sometimes after I logon I cannot add a message to a discussion board or upload a file, what is the problem?

**A:** Depending on the type of Internet connection used to access Blackboard, these problems can be caused by a variety of issues.

- Connection Type:
  - DSL or Cable Modem
    - A session can be established, but user is unable to submit
      - A condition exists that requires adjustment of the MTU (Maximum Transmission Unit)
  - Solution
    - Tools are available for this from <http://broadbandreports.com>
    - This problem can affect different versions of Windows and the Mac OS. Tools are available for both Mac OS and Windows
    - If a broadband router is used, it may be necessary to adjust the MTU setting for the router
  - AOL and other Custom Browsers
    - AOL and other ISPs provide customized version of browsers.
      - It is recommended that these browsers not be used
      - Problems with submitting can arise if these “custom” browsers are used
  - Solution
    - Download a “standard” version of either Internet Explorer 5.5 or higher
    - AOL users should start AOL to create a connection.
      - The AOL window should be “minimized.”
      - The “standard” version of the browser should be started and used for the Blackboard session.
- Use of proxy for broadband connection
  - Some broadband ISPs recommend the use of their proxy for Internet access.
    - Use of proxies can cause problems when submitting forms
  - Solution
    - Turn off the proxy when using Blackboard

**Q:** I use Hotmail (or other email providers or ISPs) and my email is not getting sent through Blackboard. What's wrong?

**A:** Hotmail assumes that email without anything in the "To:" field is junk mail. Blackboard puts email addresses in the "BCC:" (blind carbon copy) field, not the "To:" field, in order to protect the privacy of e-mail addresses. So Hotmail thinks that all email sent from the Blackboard system is junk mail.

Hotmail and other ISPs may filter for junk mail and either place the messages into a folder called "Junk Mail" or delete it immediately.

The email recipient needs to reconfigure Hotmail to turn off junk mail filtering and delay the deletion of junk mail. Turning off junk mail filtering means that all mail will be delivered to your Inbox. You will receive email from the Blackboard system and be able to manually delete the real junk mail that appears.

Delaying the deletion of junk mail means that anything placed in the "Junk Mail" folder will remain there for 14 days before being automatically deleted. Setting this to "Delayed" if filtering is turned off is not needed. If filtering is turned off, nothing will be going into the "Junk Mail" folder.

**Q:** I am having difficulty viewing or opening files or documents my instructor has placed in Blackboard, what do I need to do?

**A:** In order to open or view documents, you must have the appropriate viewer or application for the document. It is also possible that you may need to update your software to a recent version to view a file or document.

There may be issues related to specific products.

- Microsoft Issues
  - Microsoft releases Service Packs and Updates for both the Windows operating system and Office applications. These updates usually help with compatibility across platforms and browsers. It is recommended that they be applied. Microsoft has changed the way Office files have been viewed in Internet Explorer several times.
- Microsoft PowerPoint
  - Uploading and Viewing
    - PowerPoint files can be uploaded in many forms. In its native file format, a student will be required to have the application or viewer (Viewer may be downloaded from Microsoft).
    - PowerPoint files can be converted to HTML so that any user with a browser can view the document.
    - PowerPoint files can be converted to Adobe Acrobat files (PDF), so that the free Adobe Acrobat reader can be used to view the files.
    - Some special features such as multimedia and animations are lost when converting PowerPoint files.
- Microsoft Office All Applications

Recent versions of Internet Explorer will attempt to open a file within Blackboard's frame, rather than opening the file in a new window that shows the program's own menu

choices. This can prevent a user from working with the file or saving it. Solutions to this problem include:

- If Internet Explorer is being used, Internet Explorer will attempt to open a file within Blackboard's frame, rather than opening the file in a new window that shows the program's own menu choices.
  - Force the file to open in a new window by right clicking on the link to the file (Mac users: click and hold over the link), and then choosing "Open in new window" from the small box of options.
  - Save the file onto your computer by right clicking on the link to the file (Mac users: click and hold), and then choosing "Save target...". Once the file is saved on your computer, open it, as you would normally do.

**Q:** What is required to listen to or watch multimedia files, such as audio and video?

**A:** Each media type may require a separate player to view multimedia content. Sometimes these players will compete with each to be the "default" player for a certain type of media format. This may require that the native player application be reinstalled in order to play media properly.

Three common types of media are:

- QuickTime
  - Download player from:
    - <http://www.apple.com/quicktime>
- Real
  - Download player from:
    - <http://www.real.com/>
- Windows Media
  - Built into Windows OS
  - To upgrade or download:
    - <http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=fh;en-us;wmp>

**Q:** Why don't I receive the files that are sent to me through the Digital Drop Box?

**Q:** I don't seem to be able to send a file with the Digital Drop Box, what am I doing wrong?

**A:** Some of the causes of these problems are:

- One reason why you would not receive these files is because the students might be sending them incorrectly. Make sure that the students are aware of the requirement that to correctly send something through the Digital Drop Box, they MUST click on the "Send File" button. The primary reason of why files are not transferred to the instructor is because students click on "Add File" instead of "Send File." It is very important to make this clear to your students. They should understand this feature before requiring them to use the Digital Drop Box.
- Long directory paths
- One common problem with using uploaded files is the naming of your document. An attachment must contain ONLY alphanumeric characters and cannot contain spaces or symbols. You may use underscores, but no spaces or symbols (i.e. #, ?, /, etc...).
  - *NOTE: This is different from how you can name your files in Windows or Macintosh applications.*
- Appending extensions

- If you are using a Macintosh, please be sure to “force” an extension in the name of the document (i.e. “.doc”, “.rtf” etc...) so that all computers will recognize the file type.
- Trying to upload a file that is still open in another application (ie, Word) will result in an error when trying to view the document in Blackboard.

**Q:** I get an error relating to JAVA and am unable to access parts of my Blackboard course, what is wrong?

**A.** Some components of a course (Virtual Chat) may require that JAVA be installed and enabled. This is a separate software installation for some systems. It is best to update the version installed on your system to alleviate any problems. It is available from Apple for the Macintosh system and from Sun for Windows.

Mac OS: <http://www.info.apple.com/>

Windows: <http://java.sun.com/getjava/download.html>

Some versions of Windows have Java built-in or may have had it installed with a Microsoft Service Pack.

If you still experience problems, make sure that Java is enabled.

For Microsoft Internet Explorer:

1. Click on "Tools".
2. Select "Internet Options".
3. Click on the "Security" tab.
4. Select "Internet".
5. Select "Custom Level". Scroll down to "Microsoft VM", and ensure that "Java permissions" is set to either "Medium safety" or "High safety" (not disabled).
6. If "Java permissions" is set to "Disable Java", click on the "Advanced" tab, and select all Java options under "Microsoft VM".

Enabling Java in Netscape

1. Click on "Edit" and then "Preferences".
2. Then click on "Advanced".
3. Make sure that everything that says "Java" is checked.

**Q:** My students are having trouble completing my quizzes, what should they do?

**A:** Online assessments have several potential problem areas.

Blackboard asks the question, "Are you sure you want to take this quiz now?" dialog, the expectation is that the student will complete the quiz at that time. If they leave the quiz or log off, they will not be able to come back and finish it.

Certain browser actions can cause the student to unintentionally exit the quiz.

**Students taking quizzes should *not*:**

- Click the Back, Forward, Home, or Refresh/Reload buttons in their browser
- Enter new URLs in the Address or Location fields of the browser
- Select any pages from their Favorites/Bookmarks list in the assessment's browser window.
- Students should also not attempt to print the assessment while using Internet Explorer.
- Screen savers, pop-up messengers and other memory resident programs should be turned off.

## Internet Connection Issues

Students are required to be online to begin and to submit a Blackboard assessment. If the student loses an Internet connection while taking a Blackboard assessment, this can prevent the successful submission of a Blackboard assessment.

Reasons that a student's connection may be interrupted might include:

- The student's ISP timing their connection out after a certain amount of inactivity.
  - Because filling in forms does not generate traffic back and forth across the Internet connection, it is not viewed as "activity" for the purpose of automatic time-outs.
- Blackboard timing their connection out after three hours of inactivity.
  - After three hours, Blackboard will end the user's session automatically.
- Modem problems or interruptions (such as call waiting).
- Power failures
- System crashes

To minimize the risk of connection interruption, instructors should break a single long assessments into multiple, shorter assessments

To minimize the risk of connection interruption, students can:

- Disable call-waiting or other services that may cause interruption.
- Open a second browser window and use it to generate some traffic every few minutes to keep the connection active.

If the connection is terminated, a student should not close the assessment browser window, if possible, an attempt to re-connect should be made immediately, if a connection can be re-established, the student may be able to successfully submit the quiz.