



## Getting Started with WebCT Notes

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## Online Course

- Goals and objectives
  - Student outcomes
  - How? What tools?
- Distance Education Act of 2003
  - Online community
  - Faculty/student interaction

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## Online vs. Classroom

- Communication
- Consistency
- "Chunking"
- Succinct

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## Planning Your Course - Steps

1. Plan
2. Prepare and gather materials
3. Build the course

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## Plan Contents

- Purpose of the course
- Target audience
- Skills, tasks, concepts
- Course outline

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## Plan Checklist

- Introductory message, assignment, how to use course
- Discussion assignments
- Quizzes
- Course structure and navigation
- Page layout (template)

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## Plan Checklist - 2

- Schedule with milestones
- Contact options for students
- E-mail policy--response within 24-48 hours
- Process for notifying students of changes in schedule or assignments
- List of help options

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## WebCT Files -HTML

- Example: myfile.html or myfile.htm
- Loads fast
- View in any browser on any operating system (Windows, Mac OS, Linux)
- Supports images and links

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## WebCT Files - Plain text

- Example: myfile.txt
- Loads fast
- View in any browser on any operating system (Windows, Mac OS, Linux)
- Does **not** support images or links

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## WebCT Files - Rich Text Format

- Example: myfile.rtf
- Must open in a word processor on the local computer (not in a browser)
- Most word processors can display it
- Usable on any operating system (Windows, Mac OS, Linux)
- Supports images and some formatting

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## WebCT Files - Portable Document Format

- Example: myfile.pdf
  - Requires Adobe Acrobat Reader (free download)
  - View on any OS
  - Prints the same on any printer
  - Some contents are not accessible (ADA)
- Do **NOT** use this format as the **only** option for a document.

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## WebCT Graphics

- Use JPG or GIF image file formats
- JPG is best for photos and images with many colors (up to 16 million) and subtle shading
- GIF is best for line drawings and images with 256 colors (or fewer) and large areas of solid color

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## WebCT File Naming

- **NO** spaces in file names
- Use only alphanumeric characters and the underscore character ( \_ )
- Limit file names to 8-10 characters
- Make sure file extensions are included in file names (mypage.html or myphoto.jpg)
- Choose file names for easy recognition

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## Organize WebCT Files

- By content module, chapter, topic
- In folders
- Consider using a common prefix to identify files belonging to a group
  - Example: ch1\_intro.html, ch1\_editing.html or ch1intro.html, ch1editing.html

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## Browser Preparation

- Browser and browser version
- Plug-Ins
- Browser settings

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## Information, Please

- FAQs
- Login Problems
- WebCT HelpDesk
- WebCT Online Help
- Ask Dr. C

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## Timeline

- **Functional** course online *at least* two weeks before the semester starts. Best practice: course is ready 10 weeks before the semester starts.
  - Course designed
  - Files loaded
  - Assignments, quizzes, exams loaded and **tested**

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## Tools

- Expanded Control Panel
- Logically group course components on organizer pages
- Examples:
  - Communications: Mail, Discussion
  - Work: Assignments, Quizzes

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## Control Panel

- Use Expanded Control Panel to build and edit course materials
- Course Settings
- Course Menu
- WYSIWYG HTML editor (Java applet)

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## Homepage

- Entrance to course
- Links to other components
- Only **one** homepage per course

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## Organizer Page

- Same structure as homepage
- Container for two or more elements
- Use to group common elements on one page
- Unlimited number per course

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## Single Page

- Course information
- Syllabus
- Outlines
- HTML pages
- Linked from homepage or organizer page
- Typically, no more than one page long (1 ½ screens maximum)

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## Content Module - Possibilities

- Table of Contents linking content pages
- Sequence of related content pages
- Course notes
- Labs
- Tutorials

**IMPORTANT:** Update Student View after making changes!

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## Content Module

- Divide Content into manageable parts
- Click **Add** or **Update** to save changes
- **IMPORTANT!** **Update Student View** after making changes or additions to Content
- Add **Compile** to allow downloads and printing

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## View, Designer, Student

- **View** simulates what the student sees
- **Designer** mode allows you to create or change
- A “virtual” student login allows you to test components for availability and function

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## URL

- Links to Web site outside WebCT course
  - Use option that opens in a new window
- Multiple URLs on an organizer page

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## WebCT Tools

- Can add to homepage or any organizer page
- Communications functions
- Glossary functions—labor intensive, can be useful to students
- HTML Editor

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## Required Components

- Homepage
- Syllabus
- My Grades
- Discussion
- Mail
- Assignments
- Strongly suggested: Content Module

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## Communication Tools

### Asynchronous

- Discussion-15%-25% of final grade
- Mail
- Informal Discussion (off topic)
- Calendar—global or for private student use

### Synchronous

- Chat
- Whiteboard

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## Communication Functions

- Threaded/Unthreaded
- Search criteria
- Topics and Folders

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## "Elective" Components

Not recommended

- Student Tips – annoying popups
- **Use** Mail or Discussion

Optional:

- Student homepages
- Student presentations

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## Students won't see...

Only you, the Designer sees:

- Control Panel
- Manage Files
- Manage Course

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## Instructions

- Leave the first assignment open longer than usual—about two weeks.
- Be clear, concise and specific.
- Assignments area **only** for things to be submitted for a grade ("deliverables")

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## First assignment

1. Post an intro on the Discussion Board.
2. Respond to 3 or 4 intros.
3. Use course Mail to send the instructor your "regular" e-mail address.
4. Also, submit "regular" e-mail address using assignment Submit tool.

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## Assignments

- Assignment tool provides permanent record
- Use it for all assignments to be graded
- First assignment to demonstrate how to use the tool

Note: If you use rough drafts, there will be multiple submissions.

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## Assignment Notes

- Essay tests may function better as assignments than quizzes.
- No HTML editor icon is available for creating assignment instructions.
- Be consistent. Open and close every assignment at the same time on the same day of the week.

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## Assignment Notes - 2

- Can download *submitted* assignments from the [Submissions] button in the Assignments area to grade.
- *Cannot* enter grades directly in Gradebook (Manage Students) until the assignment deadline has expired.

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## File Management

- All files used in the course must be uploaded to WebCT server
- Zip large files or sets of files before uploading or downloading
- Unzip individual files to edit or update them

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## File Notes

- **Note:** A file compression (zip) utility is built into Windows XP. Other versions of Windows require a utility such as WinZip.
- Ensure file sizes are small enough for students using modem connections to view or download.

File size guideline: 40kb-60kb maximum

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## File Format

- Image or graphic files should be saved as .gif or .jpg files.
- Use .gif for drawings, images with few colors and areas of solid color.
- Use .jpg for photos or images with lots of colors and subtle shading.
- Keep file sizes small
- Recommended graphics editor: Photoshop Elements.

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## Evaluation/Assessment

- Consistent with campus course
- Day and time for open and close same for all assignments and quizzes
- No late logons for tests
- My Grades tool mandatory for accreditation

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## Evaluation/Assessment

- Quizzes and exams are under the same tool; don't separate them.
- Easier to put the questions in a database first, and then create an exam.

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## Evaluation/Assessment - ePack

- Publisher's database not always compatible.
- Edit them if you must use them. Your own questions are better.
- We've found errors and coding errors in ePacks and publisher-supplied materials. **Check them!**

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## Quizzes/Exams

- Create categories by exam: chapter, topic, question difficulty.
- Short answers and paragraphs do not work well for automatic grading in the exam tool. You must grade them manually.
- Use the question as the title as well as the question.

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## Quizzes/Exams - 2

- Using categories facilitates randomized exams.
- The correct answer is a value (%).
- If there is only one correct answer, the value is 100%.
- If you edit a question, save it.
- **Save as new** creates an additional question.

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## Quizzes/Exams - 3

- Quiz score adjustment is possible
- Bar graph of scores
- Can see how students did on each question

Free tools for creating WebCT Quizzes:  
 MakeQuiz, Quiz Parser  
 Campus site license for Respondus:

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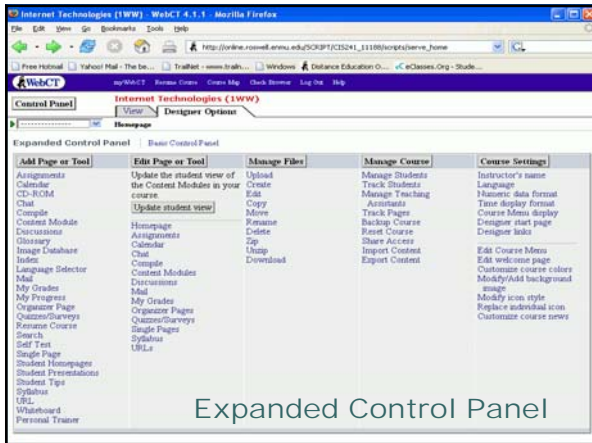
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Expanded Control Panel

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## Manage Course

- Manage Students - Gradebook
- Assignments uploaded automatically add Gradebook column
- Manage columns to add assignments manually
- Quizzes you create automatically add corresponding columns to the Gradebook

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## Gradebook Calculations

- Assignment total
- Exam total
- Grade total
- Formulas—**must** use the Calculation Editor (graphical keyboard using a mouse)

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## Manage Students

- Options: Advanced, Go
- May have to deny access or reinstate
- Attendance records can be mapped to when student accesses course and how often—data is collected on line
- Track Students for “attendance” purposes

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## Grades

- The Maximum Grade on assignments and exams must be a positive number.
- Do many and varied evaluations weekly.
- My Grades is a **required** tool to allow students to view grades.
- Release columns in the Gradebook so students can see grades.

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## Backups

- Back up course—one allowed on server.
- Download to a safe place.
- A backup copy of the backup is a good idea (Put one on a CD.).
- Do not try to open the backup file on your computer (It will corrupt the file.).

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## Restoring Course

- After uploading to a blank shell, choose **Restore**.
- **Replace users**—remove all students from last semester.
- **Update users** keeps current users and adds additional users from the backup.
- **Keep users** keeps current users and ignores users from the backup.
- **Reset course** removes all students; be careful.

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## ePacks

Convenience comes with a price.

- ePacks and publisher content must be **completely** reviewed for errors.
- Frequently contain too much material for a course.
- Have built-in features that make it difficult or impossible to edit contents.

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## WebCT Web Site

- <http://www.webct.com>
- *Getting Started with WebCT 4.1* available for download  
[http://www.webct.com/support/viewpage?name=support\\_doc\\_index\\_campus\\_edition](http://www.webct.com/support/viewpage?name=support_doc_index_campus_edition)

NOTE: This is hard to find on their Web site. You may need this link!

- Exemplary courses:  
<http://www.webct.com/exemplary>

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## Quick References

- A few quick references are available on MOUSpad: <http://www.mouspad.org>
- If you have a suggestion for a quick reference or handout, please tell me!  
[susan.bellomo@roswell.enmu.edu](mailto:susan.bellomo@roswell.enmu.edu)

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