

# New and Improved Functions in Blackboard 6 in a Nutshell

## Version 1

This manual is short version of the '*Manual New and Improved Functions in Blackboard 6*'

When comparing Blackboard 5.5 to Blackboard 6 you will find that a number of functions have been changed and improved. Below are, in a nutshell, the most important changes and additions.

### 1 Adjusting the Course Menu

- ***Increasing the size of the screen available for display of content***  
You can hide the *Course Menu* creating more space on screen for the course content.
- ***Navigation buttons or navigation text***  
You can choose for separate navigation buttons or for textlinks in *Course Menu*
- ***Renaming the Navigation buttons/navigation text***  
You can adjust the standard text on the navigation buttons/text links yourself, to make the text conform with your course. For example you could change the text on a button *Announcements* to *News*.

### 2 Adjusting course content

- ***Content can be placed anywhere***  
All course content including *Folders, Items, Assessments, Surveys* and internal *Course Links* can be placed in every *Content Area* of a course in Blackboard 6.
- ***Direct-edit of the course content***  
You can now edit course content directly in the content areas: *Course Information, Staff Information, Course Documents, Assignments* and *External Links* by clicking on the option *Edit View*. It is no longer necessary to go via the *Control Panel* to course content.
- ***Extra possibilities with Announcements***  
As an Instructor you can now add a link to certain course content when you make announcements. This is very helpful for students.
- ***An easy method to write course material***  
Especially when you are using *Internet Explorer* you have extended possibilities to enhance your text. With *I.E.* it is also very simple to add Multimedia files to your course content. When you use *Netscape Navigator* there are also some possibilities to enhance your text but this is a relatively complex operation because it involves inserting HTML code in the text. In *Netscape Navigator* you can only add Multimedia items as separate files.
- ***Copying and moving Items, Folders a/s within your course***  
You can copy or move course content (items, folders, a/s) between any of the following content areas: *Course Information, Staff Information, Course Documents, Assignments* or *External Links*. For example, you could copy an item from the content area *Course Information* to (a folder in) the content area *Assignments*.
- ***Copying and moving Items, Folders a/s between your courses***  
You can copy or move certain course content and information to another course in which you have a role as Instructor.
- ***Inserting Internal Course Links into your Course***  
Internal *Course Links* can point to course content or course options in a (folder within) one of the other *Content Areas*. *Course Links* make navigation through your course easier and faster for your students.

- **Checking External Course Links**  
With this tool you can check if the external links in your course are (still) valid.
- **Adding equations**  
There is a formula editor available in Blackboard 6 with which you can easily add formulas to your documents. You can add formulas to *Items, Folders, Tests, Surveys* etc
- **Notification Manager**  
Your students, yourself and everyone else who is enrolled in the course can, in the *content area Tools*, indicate if they want to receive a notification when changes or additions to the course have been made. Everyone can indicate for which *content areas (Announcements, Content Assessments, Calendar Events, Discussion Board Postings)* they want to receive a *Notification*

### 3. Communication

- **Virtual Classroom and Lightweight chat**  
There are 2 methods you can use to chat with your students in Blackboard 6: *Lightweight chat* and *Virtual Classroom*. The *Lightweight Chat* is a tool with which you can hold simple chat sessions for groups of users. The sessions are based on exchanging text messages only. The *Virtual Classroom* is much more extensive than *Lightweight Chat*. It has the following possibilities:
  - Instructors and Students can respond to questions from participants
  - Course material, for example Power Point Presentations, can be examined under *White Board*
  - you can use formulas and scientific notations on the *White Board*
  - *Snapshots* can be made and saved of the *White Board*
  - more than one chat session can be active at one time
- **The Advanced Group Management is expanded**  
In Blackboard 6 you get a more extensive view of all existing groups within a course. It is also easier to add groups. *Advanced Group Management* is structured much better than the previous *Group Management* option:

### 4. Assignments and Assessments

- **Extended Assignment possibilities**  
Blackboard 6 has a new system for Instructors to offer *Assignments* to students. You can make an *Assignment* and place it in one of the content area's (usually *Assignments*). The students can be invited to make the *Assignment* and Upload the result to the Instructor. The results of the *Assignment (Test)* you can retrieve from the *Gradebook* under the name of the student. You can grade the *Assignment*, correct it or provide another form of feedback and return the result to the student.  
By using the *Assignment Manager* the use of e-mail, discussion forum or *Digital Dropbox* is no longer necessary.
- **Downloading Assignments**  
When your students have submitted their assignments, it will show up in the *Gradebook* and you can download them from there. You can choose to download all of them at one time.
- **Downloading the gradebook**  
It is possible to download the *Assignments* from all students at once and insert grades on a conveniently arranged list instead of having to add the grades to Blackboard one by one.
- **Extended Test- and Survey Manager**  
An *Assessment (Test or Survey)* can now be made or adjusted inside any *Content Area (Course Information, Staff Information, Course Documents, Assignments or External Links)*. It is no longer necessary to go to the *Control Panel*.