An Educator/Blackboard/WebCT Comparison

This document is an integration of several user-compiled features lists comparing the three LMS platforms. Since the information about WebCT and Blackboard are derived from user institutions, we make no guarantee as to their accuracy. Any platform or feature description is a reflection of how it is used at a particular institution and usage styles may vary. This document only describes features that function differently among the platforms. Common features are not addressed and can be assumed to function the same way across all products.

File Management

Blackboard, Educator and WebCT each reside on its own server. When you post materials, you must upload the files from your workstation onto the server and then create links to them within your course. This is a relatively simple process. The primary difference is that WebCT and Educator give you access to your files after you have uploaded them.

Blackboard 6

You upload files to the Blackboard server as you create links in your Blackboard course.

This is generally a simple, quick process (although if your documents consist of multiple files, you must zip them first using a `zip utility).

Blackboard's file storage space is not accessible by instructors. You keep all your originals on your workstation and make your changes there. Once you have uploaded a file to Blackboard you have no access to those files.

Blackboard text or html files are displayed in their entirety linearly. This takes up a lot of room.

WebCT 4

Each WebCT course has a directory (folder) called *MyFiles*, where you store all the files you will use in your online course. You can access this directory from anywhere. You can download files, make revisions, and re-upload them (you can also make minor revisions inside WebCT). If the WebCT course is passed along to another designer, the files can be passed along with it.

Your students cannot access files stored in your *MyFiles* folder; you must create links to these files from somewhere in your course. Adding content files to WebCT 4 is, therefore, a two-step process: 1) upload the files to your *MyFiles* folder, and 2) create links students can click on to access the files. You can create multiple links to the same file, and if you replace or revise a file, the changes will apply to all instances of that file in your course.

You can upload files as you are creating the course link or do it ahead of time. With drag and-drop, you can drag multiple files and folders from your desktop to your *MyFiles* folder without having to zip them.

Educator

Each Educator course has

a course folder where course files are stored

Educator stamps each file with an Object ID number, creating a tag that can be copied and pasted anywhere in the course to provide a link to the material within any other course area including chatrooms, glossaries, exams, and discussion board or email messages. Students can only access course folders if the instructor unlocks it.

a common folder where files that can be shared among courses are stored.

On common folder files, Educator generates an HTML tag that can be copied and pasted anywhere—even outside the course environment—to provide a link to the document.

Text and HTML documents can be revised or created within Educator. The EDIT link is always available when viewing a document. The VIEW link is available when editing.

Any Educator object (test, glossary, assignment, etc.) can be uploaded as a text file by following rules of syntax.

Select third party content from publishers, WebCT or Blackboard can be imported into Educator.

Uploaded filenames are displayed in a list—not as linearly displayed documents as in Blackboard.

All Educator content (exams, assignments, etc) can be edited right within a Packet (lesson).

Entire Packets can be transferred between instructor accounts. Educator also allows multiple uploads and uploads via zip files (with automatic packet creation when unzipped).

Files may be manipulated by drag-n-drop utilities.

All course files can be passed along to another instructor.

The entire course can be downloaded to a user's desktop allowing offline editing

Uploaded files are automatically virus-scanned.

Content Delivery

Blackboard
To post a content file in your Blackboard course, you create a *Content Item* and add the file as an attachment. The *Content Item* tool also includes settings for availability.
You can organize Content Items in folders. A specialized folder called a *Learning Unit* allows you to enforce sequential viewing of files. It also allows you to upload files that are *not* attached to Content Items (the exception is multiple, zipped files, which must be attached to Content Items before they can be uploaded to a Learning Unit).
Blackboard has an HTML editor with special editors such as MathML and WebEQ

WebCT
You can post a single content file on the Course Menu, an Organizer Page, or in a Content Module.
A Content Module is a special tool for grouping documents relating to a particular unit of study. A Content Module:

- Automatically generates a table of contents
- Includes optional study tools, such as easy to- create self-tests.
- Allows (but does not require) your students to view files sequentially.
- Allows students to compile selected html or PDF files into a single file for printing.

Educator
Content files can be uploaded or created on-screen using an html/text editor.
Uploaded files can be selected to form Packets which are sequential lessons made up of any course component including text/html files, word processor documents, PowerPoint type slideshows, sound or video files, exams, quizzes, practice tests, assignments, worksheets or discussion activities. A packet can be presented as a slideshow or in textbook format that displays a table of contents.
Any content object except email messages can be linked to any other content object (although email messages can contain links).
All content input areas have spell-checkers.
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Announcements

Blackboard, Educator and WebCT allow you to post announcements or reminders (about readings, due dates, changes in schedule, etc.)

Blackboard
You can use Blackboard's announcement tool to post reminders on the Blackboard entry page (the page that lists all of the student's Blackboard courses). Students can also view these announcements by clicking the Announcements link.
You can also post announcements on the course *Calendar*.

You can post announcements on the homepage (in an "upper textblock") and on the course *Calendar*.
You can also post announcements or special instructions on Organizer Pages or on the main page of a Content Module.

Educator
Announcements are viewed upon login. They can be created in advance and scheduled to post automatically when a Packet or document is activated.
Announcements can also be automatically emailed to students at a scheduled time.
Announcements can be created as text or HTML files and can be archived.

External Links

Blackboard, Educator and WebCT allow you to post URLs to course-related web sites (for department, libraries, software downloads, etc.).

Blackboard
Blackboard has a special area called External Links where you post all your URLs. You can also post URLs in the Description area of any Content Item by entering the full URL, beginning with http://, and clicking **Smart Text.**

WebCT
In WebCT, you can use the *URL* tool to place links in any of the following locations:
The "Links" page (included on the Quickstart Template)
The Course Menu
The home page or a sub-homepage (Organizer page) You can also associate a web site link with an individual file in a Content Module.

Educator
URLs can be integrated into the navigation column.
URLs can be placed in any area content area of Educator either manually or using the Link Builder tool which allows you to make the display a popup, new window or link.
Educator has a specified External Links area where you can post URL libraries. In addition, there is a Flash Utility that allows the instructor to control what students view on their screens with audio narration or text messaging capabilities.

Student Biography

WebCT, Blackboard and Educator include tools that make posting this information relatively easy. The bio posting tools include student email links so students can easily contact a classmate after reading his or her bio. Educator includes a privacy option to show bio information to everyone, just to the instructor or not at all.

Student document Sharing

All platforms provide various ways for students to share files. The Email tools in both systems allow students to attach documents to messages. The Discussions tool in both also allows attachments and gives the class an opportunity to discuss attached documents online.

Blackboard
The *Drop Box* tool allows students to send files to the instructor or TA (but not to other students). The instructor, in turn, can use the Drop Box to distribute student files to other class members.
The *Group Pages* tool (see below) allows group members to exchange files with group members only.

WebCT
The *Student Presentations* tool (see below) allows students to share documents with group members or with the entire class. It also allows group members to work on the same copy of a document.
Private *Discussions* groups allow group members to share documents with group members only.

Educator
Each student has an individual folder in Educator, which normally cannot be viewed by other students. The instructor can choose to make contents visible to other students, however, by unlocking them.
Students (or instructors) can place a checkmark in front of files within locked student folders that they wish to share with select students or the entire class.
Discussion groups can access any file made public by any group member. Because files are stamped with object IDs, these can be pasted into any area (including email, chat, discussion boards, etc. and will appear as a link to the original document.

Group collaboration

Both Blackboard and WebCT allow you to provide online space for project group members to communicate and share documents.

Blackboard
Blackboard's *Group Pages* tool allows group members to send each other email, exchange documents, post to a private group discussion board, or chat in a private virtual classroom.

WebCT
WebCT's *Student Presentation* tool provides space for students to work together on a web site or other presentation and provides web space (inside your WebCT course) for them to display the presentation to other class members. All members of the group can potentially access and edit the same copy of a document. The *Student Presentations* tool also includes a link to a private discussions area, as well as email links for group members.

Educator
There is currently no feature in Educator that allows simultaneous editing of a single document.

Instructor-student interaction

All platforms provide standard interaction methods outside of a learning event via email, and within a learning event via discussion boards and chat.

Blackboard

WebCT

Educator
Worksheets allow embedded graded or ungraded exercises in the middle of text lectures that require students to answer questions, give examples, or otherwise demonstrate understanding of the material being taught. Essay answers as well as traditional objective questions can automatically distribute points upon completion. The Whiteboard allows one-on-one tutoring sessions that other students cannot interrupt.
The *Who's Online* feature provides private instant chat or public (within a single class) broadcast opportunities. Grades and comments can be emailed to students immediately.

Email

Instructors and students can send email to all or selected class members and attach documents, if desired.

Blackboard
Class members can receive mail in their outside email accounts only.

WebCT
Class members can receive mail inside WebCT *or* in their external accounts (they state their preference in the *Mail* tool).
Instructors can search the student database and send mail to students who meet particular criteria (e.g., score below 70 on a quiz).
Students can search email subject lines.

Educator
Educator Email can be limited to the class or institution or opened to the Internet community at large.
The email function is built into grading areas so that grades and feedback can be emailed to students upon posting. Students can be tracked according to progress or score and emails can be blind copied to the entire group. Students can receive email notification of new postings, assignments, exams, grading or various other activities as they occur or at set times of the day/week.
All course activities can be scheduled to activate at a preset time/date and email can be generated as the action occurs. Email reminders can be set to go out at a specific time/date.
The system can generate email reminder messages and pages to wireless devices.
All email is virus-checked

Asynchronous Discussions

All platforms allow you and your students to participate in asynchronous online discussions and attach documents to messages. All systems allow the instructor to create different forums for different discussion topics.

Blackboard
Private discussions are available only from within the *Groups* tool.

WebCT
You can create private discussion groups in the regular *Discussion* area.

Educator
Private discussion boards can be created in the regular discussion area by instructors, or if desired, students.
Ability to post can be turned off for students so that the discussion board functions strictly as a bulletin board.
Discussion messages may be viewed in linear, (chronological) threaded (split screen) or roundtable (alphabetical) form.
In roundtable format, non-participated is explicitly noted.
Discussion messages can be graded.
Drag-and-drop students into groups.
Each group gets its own chatroom accessible from discussion board area
Discussion messages can be searched.
There is a discussion board solely for staff use
Discussions can be scheduled to activate automatically.

Synchronous Messaging

All platforms allow class members to chat, send private messages, and display external web sites during chat sessions. All systems also allow for collaborative drawing on a whiteboard.

Blackboard
Blackboard offers two kinds of chat sessions. The *Light Chat* is used primarily for chatting and sending private messages. *The Virtual Classroom* is an expanded chat tool that can be used for presentations. It includes a smaller chat window plus an additional window in which you can draw, display web sites, or display content files posted elsewhere in your Blackboard course.
As the instructor, you can control a chat session by designating who has the floor at any given time.
You can allow private group chats though the *Group Pages* tool
Students can access archives of previous chats.

WebCT.
Each WebCT course has a *General Chat* room plus four additional chat rooms that you can rename. You can allocate these four rooms for different topics and change the room names anytime.
You can view chat archives, but your students cannot. (You could copy and paste chat logs into a *Mail* or *Discussion* message for students to view.)
A separate Whiteboard tool allows for drawing in real time. It includes a text tool for labeling drawings, thereby allowing for limited communications about the drawings.

Educator
Each Educator course has a General chat room plus unlimited private or group chats that can be created by the instructor or students. Each discussion board group also has a private chat room.
Any file stored within Educator can be posted in the general chat room, including audio and image files. Images are directly displayed; other files are displayed as links.
There is a moderated chat feature that allows the instructor/moderator to control what postings are made visible to students.
Chat logs from general chats can be viewed by all.
Students can be suspended from chatrooms.
A separate whiteboard tool allows drawing, the upload of images, text input (including a mathematical notation library) and chatting.
Whiteboard screens can be saved and re-uploaded.
The whiteboard can be used one-on-one for tutoring or one-on-many for classroom use. Several separate sessions can be conducted simultaneously.
The External Links area has a text and audio feature that can be activated when reviewing URLs.
Instructors have control of what students view on their screens.
The "Who's Online?" feature allows you to see who is currently online. You may make yourself invisible so users cannot see you. You may use this feature to request a one-on-one chat with anyone currently online, or broadcast a message to everyone currently in your course.

Assignments

All platforms have an A*ssignment* tool that lets you post assignments and related files, collect student submissions, and enter your grades and comments online. All automatically create a column in the gradebook and record assignment grades.

Blackboard

You can group assignments in the *Assignments* Content Area or post individual assignments in any other Content Area (e.g., Course Documents).

The Assignments *tool*—not to be confused with the Assignments Content *Area*—can be found in the pulldown menu at right in every Content Area.

You post assignments with the Assignments tool, but you view, download and grade assignments through the Gradebook tool.

If no papers are to be exchanged (e.g., you just want to know how students are coming on their oral presentations), you may prefer to use the *Task* tool. This tool lets you post a brief description and set the priority as *low*, *normal*, or *high*. You then monitor student progress as students update their status from *not started* to *in progress* to *completed*. The Task tool does not allow you to attach files or post URLs.

WebCT

You can allow students to submit an assignment multiple times up to the due date.

Assignments created with the Assignments tool are grouped together in a single area, which students access through the *Assignments* link (this link can appear on the Course Menu, the homepage, or an Organizer Page).

You post, view, download, and grade assignments all from within the *Assignments* tool.

Educator

Instructors dictate the number of times an assignment can be submitted.

Assignments created with the *Assignments* tool are grouped. They can be added to packets allowing the elimination of the *Assignments* link for students.

Students can submit drafts or submit for grading.

The Workload feature shows students assignments that still need to be submitted. It shows instructors student submissions that need to be graded.

Ungraded assignments that need no deliverables on the student's part can be posted via tasksheets, which allow attachments, images and links to other documents or URLs.

Short assignments requiring student input into textboxes can be created using the Worksheet tools. Worksheets can be automatically graded.

Assignments and worksheets can be edited, activated and graded from within a packet or from within the assignments tool.

Assignment grades and comments can be automatically emailed to students upon submission of grade.

Outcomes can be set for assignment worksheets that dictate where the student will go upon submission of an assignment based on the score achieved.

Quizzes and Exams

All systems allow you to create and administer quizzes and exams online, automatically grading objective questions. All do some item analysis.

Create and administer quizzes

All platform assessment tools let you:
Create and maintain a bank of questions that can be reused (All systems offer multiple-choice, true/false, matching, fill-in-the-blank, short answer/essay.
Randomize question order in a quiz.
Display scores and other feedback to students, either immediately or at a later time.
Reset quizzes for students who had problems taking them (e.g., due to illness or computer failure).
All systems also automatically create a column in the gradebook and record scores.
You can either create questions as you are putting together a quiz or create questions from within the questions database and link or import them to a quiz at a later time.

Blackboard
Ordered question format.
With Blackboard, adding questions to the questions database is optional.
You can create assessments inside any Content Area or use the default Content area called *Assessments*.
You enter settings for duration, availability, feedback, etc., from within the Content Area.

WebCT
Calculated question format.
WebCT offers greater flexibility in randomizing questions. In addition to randomizing question order, WebCT will also randomly select questions from a larger set. Example: for #1 on a quiz, you might provide three or four questions that cover the same concept or content area and ask WebCT to select one.
WebCT also lets you randomize the ordering of answer choices for multiple-choice questions.
WebCT allows selective release of a quiz. This can be based on a previous quiz, an assignment, or another score or average.
WebCT automatically stores all questions in a Questions database for possible reuse.
A quiz is made up of links to questions in the database.
All WebCT quizzes can be accessed through the Quiz tool link. Also, specific WebCT quizzes can be linked to individual content files in a Content Module.

Educator
Yes/No / Not applicable question format.
Practice Tests are scored but not calculated into a student's total grade.
The auto-grading Quiz instrument allows objective questions only and does not allow timed tests.
The Exam instrument allows self-grading objective questions as well as instructor graded essays.
Exams can be scrambled from question groups, timed, proctored, set to allow retakes, set to penalize for late submissions, set to not accept late submissions and set to not accept tests with unanswered questions.
Changes in questions or answers after a test is taken simply result in the recalculation of the scores.
Fill-in-the-blank math can accept designated tolerances. Fill-in-the-blank text will accept a set number of consecutive letters.
A manual score can exceed the exam score.
Exams can be edited, activated, scheduled (to activate automatically) or graded from within a packet, allowing the elimination of a QUIZ or EXAM link. Students can access individual exams or quizzes through their gradebook.
A generic tag can be embedded into any content area that brings up the exam/quiz listing.
Essay questions can be graded all at once or from within each individual exam

Test result analysis

All platforms offer some analyses of test results for individual students and for individual questions so you can identify poorly worded questions or concepts that need further instruction.
All systems allow you to view individual student quiz submissions so you can modify points and grade essay questions.

Blackboard
Blackboard provides the following data:
For each *quiz*, view:
The class average, standard deviation, variance, and high and low scores.
For each *objective question*, view:
The percentage of students who chose each answer alternative.
For each *student*, view:
The score and the date the quiz was last attempted.

WebCT
WebCT provides *extensive* analyses of quiz items:
For each quiz, view:
The class average and standard deviation.
For each *objective question*, view:
A listing of the answers entered by the class
A graph depicting the frequency with which each alternative response was selected
A chart listing frequency and discrimination data for each response alternative, as well as the percent correct in the whole group, upper 25%, and lower 25%
A chart listing the percentage of students who chose each response alternative for multiple-choice questions
For each *student*, view:
The score, length of time spent taking the quiz, when the quiz was submitted, and when each answer was saved.
A chart showing how that student's performance on each objective question compares with the performance of the group as a whole (mean, standard deviation, and discrimination).

Educator
Scores or progress can be tracked and students can be blind copy emailed or forced to a specific document upon submission.
Educator tracks the scores, length of time spent taking the exam, time of entry and submission.
A table lists percentage of right and wrong answers per questions and how many students received each question. Email can be sent to students from within a student's question/answer.
Individual answers can provide feedback that can be set to display upon submission, after due date or never. Feedback can contain text, images or links.
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Record, calculate, and display grades

All automatically score quizzes and exam objective questions.
All allow you to weigh and average grades and display them as raw scores, percentages, or letter grades.
All allow students to look up their own grades.
All allow you to hide selected grades from students.
All allow you to export grade book data in a text file for archiving or for use in Excel or other programs and then re-import the grades.
All allow you to modify the look of your gradebook—that is, to hide or display selected columns, display selected students or groups.

Blackboard
You record scores other than those administered with the quiz or assignments tools manually.
Allows students to look up the mean scores or statistics for the class as a whole (they cannot see other individuals' grades).
You can include only one averaging column for the entire course. When computing this average, you can assign different weights to columns or to categories (example: you could count all quizzes as 25% of the final grade).
You can easily change the way a grade is displayed (e.g., change raw scores to percentages). You can enter your own ranges of scores for letter grades.
For the class *as a whole*, you can view statistics on a gradebook column, including the average score, standard deviation, variance, and high and low scores.
At present, the only scores you can import into the gradebook are those exported from a Blackboard course. You may also be able to import Evaluation and Examination Service scores in the near future.

WebCT
You record scores other than those administered with the quiz or assignments tools manually.
Allows students to look up the mean scores or statistics for the class as a whole (they cannot see other individuals' grades).
You can average scores by entering a formula. This offers greater flexibility than you have with Blackboard. For example, you could drop the lowest score in a group of scores. You can compute averages individually for different column groups (e.g., display an average for all quiz scores, for all assignments scores, etc.).
Can convert number grades to letter grades using your own ranges of scores (e.g. 93-100 = A).
For the class as a whole, you can view statistics on a gradebook column, including high, low, median, and mean, and frequency of scores. (Extensive item analysis data for quizzes is available through the Quiz tool).
You can search the student database using various criteria (for example, you might look for students who scored below 70 on a quiz and extract their addresses for an email message).
You can import Examination Services grades into your WebCT course. You can import columns created in Excel.

Educator
Does NOT allow students to look up the mean scores or statistics for the class as a whole
Students cannot see other individuals' grades.
Can shade instances of incomplete (or complete) work in the gradebook.
Can record scores typed in instantly (without saving)
Can display letter grades based on percent or points.
Can export letter gradebook from course to course (or to multiple courses simultaneously).
Can search the student database using various criteria. For example, you might look for students who scored above or below a certain score and send them a blind-copied email message or force them to remedial/advanced work upon their next login.
You can import and export gradebooks using Excel.

Student Usage Tracking

Blackboard, Educator and WebCT allow you to track when—and by whom—different areas of your online course have been viewed

Blackboard

Blackboard's tracking function tells you:
How many times each broad content area (e.g., Course Documents) has been accessed. You can also see how many times—and when—an individual student has accessed a content area (*not* individual files in that content area, however).

- Overall class access of individual content files
- Course access by days of the week and by hours of the day (e.g., you might see that most hits occur around noon and late evening).

WebCT

WebCT's tracking function tells you:
When each student first or most recently accessed your course
How many times each student visited the homepage, another Organizer Page, or individual content files in your Content Modules.
How many Discussions messages each student has read or posted.
How many times—and when—class members or selected groups have accessed individual files in a content module or posted Discussions messages. The Quiz tool (described above) tells you when a student began and ended a quiz and at what time the student saved each answer.

Educator

Educator will allow you to track when a student:

- first enrolled in the course
- last entered the course
- last logged off
- accessed a given file
- last posted (worksheets, exams, etc)

The Discussion group area also tracks the number of student postings by thread and overall.
The notification center allows instructors or students to be notified whenever actions occur in a course, such as new postings on the discussion boards, new submissions of assignments, quizzes, exams or worksheets, and new email messages.
Individual students can also be tracked by assignment or activity.

Other Feature Comparisons

SCORM Tools/Standards

Blackboard

Blackboard supports the following standards: SCORM 1.2, IMS Metadata 1.2.1, IMS Content Packaging 1.1.2 and Microsoft LRN 3.0. The system includes tools to facilitate the migration of course content between different versions of the software.

WebCT

WebCT can import and export course content using the IMS Content Packaging standard. The software supports the IMS Content Packaging 2.0 standard. The product provider will work with the institution to migrate existing courses into the system.

Educator

Educator supports all of the following the following standards: SCORM 1.2, IMS Metadata 1.2.1, IMS Content Packaging 1.1.2 and Microsoft LRN 3.0. The system includes tools to facilitate the migration of course content between different versions of the software. Instructors can import third-party resources as zipped files and convert them into SCORM compliant packages.

Wireless Technologies

Blackboard

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WebCT

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Educator

Wireless Educator is a version of Educator that has been optimized for small screens. This allows content, communication and evaluation capabilities of Educator to be delivered to wireless devices such as PalmOS and Windows CE handhelds.

Glossaries

Blackboard
Blackboard glossary is reference-only

WebCT
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Educator
You can create as many glossaries as you like: by chapter, by course, by discipline, etc.
Glossary terms can be linked to text so that the definition pops up when the term is clicked. If more than ten terms are present in a glossary, Educator will automatically create a hangman and matching game.

Customization

Blackboard
Blackboard provides ways to change font color and button colors within a specific design. The buttons are always in the left navigation column, although they can be re-ordered and removed.
Student and Instructor button styles are uniform in looks once selected, even though functionality differs.

WebCT
WebCT uses Icons instead of a navigation column.

Educator
Educator can take on a variety of looks through the 'skin' function where colors, fonts and even images are set. Each course, department or grade level can have a different skin.
The navigation column can be set to the left or right of the content area, and the width varied.
Images can be uploaded to serve as 'buttons' including mouse-on, mouse-off and active images.
Instructor course views can have different skins than student course views.
The head or top image can be an image map.
Skins can be saved and exchanged among courses.
Navigation links can link to URLs or internal course areas

Surveys

Blackboard
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WebCT
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Educator
There are two survey instruments in Educator. One is in the course and the other is in the administration module and can survey all courses.
The course survey can be made anonymous or public. If it is made public, it can gather information from users that are not members of that course.
Survey questions can be multiple-choice or open ended.
Surveys are not directly graded.

Versions

Blackboard
New versions are released periodically requiring additional training and conversion procedures. Several levels of Blackboard are offered at increasing cost.

WebCT
New versions are released periodically requiring additional training and conversion procedures.

Educator
Educator does not run on a version release system but on a continuous improvement schedule with accompanying documentation integrated into the help centers and training courses. There are no separate levels. All licensees receive the same product although licensees can contract for custom features.

Course Copying

Blackboard
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WebCT
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Educator
Instructors can be given the ability to
- copy their course materials to a new course shell. (make a duplicate course with no student records)
- download content from the course to their desktop (create a zip file)
- copy content from a course shell to another course
- Clone the course to a common folder (where other instructors may import it to their account and reuse it)

Administrators can copy courses from one instructor account to another (with no student records).

Costs

Blackboard
Blackboard's licensing is based on the total number of FTE, making it a more expensive option. Normally appears cheaper when going with the basic license with an FTE of 2500 or more. This license does not include many of the needed features, such as spell-check, equation editor, etc.

WebCT
WebCT's licensing is based on the total number of FTE, making it a more expensive option. Normally appears cheaper when going with the basic license with an FTE of 2500 or more. This license does not include all features.

Educator
Educator's licensing is based on the number of course developers/facilitators using the system, making it a more reasonably priced option.

Hosting

Blackboard
Blackboard offers a hosted system that includes managed software installation, redundant Internet connections, redundant and conditioned power, 24x7 monitoring, nightly tape backups, and a secure facility. Hosting is also available from Embanet, which provides daily and offsite tape backups, system clustering, managed bandwidth usage, and multiple Internet service providers to provide redundant fail-over capabilities.

WebCT
WebCT offers a hosted system for both standard and premium licenses. Hosting is also available from Embanet, which provides daily and offsite tape backups, system clustering, managed bandwidth usage, and multiple Internet service providers to provide redundant fail-over capabilities.
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Educator
Hosting is offered at a reasonable price, often making it more efficient than housing the server at the institution. Educator offers a hosted system that provides 24x7x365 monitoring, UNIX (FreeBSD) servers, a secure facility with environmental control, a direct T3 connection, a second redundant T3 connection, and a modern alarm/security system

Help Desk

Blackboard

Instructors can access the online help manual, context sensitive help, and numerous instructor support communities to share information in a number of discipline-specific or general interest forums. Instructors can subscribe to an instructor mailing list. The system includes a simulation-based online course to help instructors learn how to use the system. Instructors can take online courses about instructional design strategies for online courses and how to use the product.

WebCT

Instructors can access an online instructor manual, product knowledge base, and reference center, and contact the technical support helpdesk if their organization purchased technical support.

Educator

Instructors can access an online product user group discussion, email listserver, and the help center, which is keyword searchable as well as customizable. Context-sensitive links appear on each course page to help instructors and students with tasks they are trying to accomplish. Instructors can contact the technical support helpdesk using a toll-free phone number or using live text chat if their organization purchased this level of technical support. Instructors can share experiences with instructors in their organization, using discussion forums and chat rooms, and can share learning objects. Instructors can submit a helpdesk trouble report through an online form and track its resolution on the web.
Online self-paced, but moderated training courses for instructors and administrators are offered free of charge.