Using the Blog Tool

A blog is a website that is designed to be updated frequently with new entries. The entries in a blog are usually displayed in reverse-chronological order (most-recent first). Through the Blog Tool, instructors can create a blog to coincide with an online course. The blog can be configured to allow students to post entries as well as write and respond to comments. It can be an excellent feature to include in the course to engage students in collaborative activities and discussion.

SETUP

1. Roll your mouse over the blue plus-button that is located above the course navigation. From the pop-up menu, CLICK on CREATE TOOL LINK.

2. THE ADD TOOL LINK box will appear. Give the tool a logical name. From the drop-down menu of tool types, select CAMPUS PACK BLOG TOOL.

3. To make the Blog Tool Link available to students enrolled in the course, be sure to CHECK the AVAILABLE TO USERS checkbox. Click SUBMIT.

4. The Blog Tool Link button will be added to your course navigation. However, you must first CONFIGURE THE BLOG TOOL to begin making your blog. Otherwise, an error message will appear on screen.
Scroll down to the **CONTROL PANEL** and click on **COURSE TOOLS**. Select **CONFIGURE CAMPUS PACK BLOG TOOL**.

5. The **CONFIGURE COURSE BLOG TOOL** page will appear. Select which options you would like to apply to your blog. If you would like to limit the blog’s availability by date and time, check the “Allow Edits After”, “Allow Edits Until”, “Display After”, and “Display Until” checkboxes and enter your times and dates using the scheduling tools. Click **SUBMIT** when done.
6. A confirmation message will appear on the screen. Click OK to continue. Now you will be able to access the Blog Tool by clicking on the Blog Tool Link button in your course navigation.

CREATING ENTRIES

1. To create your first entry, click on the **NEW ENTRY** link located in the blog’s navigation (under ACTIONS) towards the right of the page.

2. A **NEW BLOG ENTRY** page will appear.

   Give your new blog entry a title in the “Blog Entry Title” text-box (by default it will be set to the current day) and add your content in the text-editor. In the text-editor, in addition to adding text, you can insert pictures, upload documents, provide links to websites, and embed videos in the blog post.

When you are done, click **SAVE**.
3. The blog entry will now be posted and added to the ARCHIVE and RECENT POSTS areas in the blog’s navigation as well as link to the calendar tool (a link to the date the entry was created and posted will now appear in the calendar).

BLOG MANAGEMENT

Notice that at the top of the blog entry, there is a series of links for managing your blog entry.

EDIT – To edit this blog entry, click on EDIT and you will be taken to a page where you can add, change, or remove content from your blog entry through a text-editor.

DELETE – To delete this blog entry, click DELETE. A confirmation page will appear to confirm that this is what you want to do.

HISTORY – Click history to view the history of this blog entry to track changes that have been made to it.

PERMALINK – Clicking this link will provide you with the URL address of this blog entry, which you may share with your students through e-mail or in a Blackboard announcement.
TO ADD OR VIEW COMMENTS

Scroll to the bottom of your blog post and click on the Comments link.

If there are comments already associated with the link, you will see a number next to the COMMENTS LINK. When clicked, any comments will appear above an Add Comment text editor.

To add a comment, you can enter and format text in the text-editor. Click the ADD COMMENT button when done.

TO DELETE COMMENTS

To delete a comment, click on the DELETE link next to that comment. A confirmation box will appear. Click OK. The comment will be deleted.
TO EXPORT THE BLOG

Blogs can be exported and stored on your computer. This allows you to browse the site offline, back up your material, or post the material to another website.

1. Click on the **EXPORT SITE** link in the **TOOLBOX** section of the blog’s navigation.

2. A **FILE DOWNLOAD** box will appear. Click **SAVE**.

   A **SAVE AS** box will appear, in which you should navigate to the place on your computer where you want to save the exported blog files. Click **SAVE**. The blog will be saved to that location in a zip folder.