CIT Monthly News and Events
June 8, 2009

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Upcoming events: June 2009

6/23/2009  Summer Adobe Day @ Duke

Faculty may request a custom workshop for their department on any instructional technology topic by emailing CIT.

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Blackboard’s new Grade Center

Blackboard’s gradebook has become a Grade Center, when Blackboard was upgraded to version 8.0 in early May.

What’s new about the grade center? Instructors can:

- enter grades directly into grade center cells (like a spreadsheet).
- freeze panes and scroll through grades to correlate student names with grades more easily.
- automatically drop lowest quiz score(s).
- display both Score and Percentage in the same column (or Percentage and Letter Grade).
- Smart View can display only those students in a particular section of a multi-section course.
- Smart Views can be used to display students meeting a particular criteria (e.g. “Below C–” or “missed exam”).
- exempt a graded item from the grade calculations.
- easily add a comment to any grade for the student to see.
- email students directly from the Grade Center (e.g. those who have not turned in an assignment).

There’s more! See our help pages, watch a video introduction, or read a brief summary describing the new features.
If you have not used the gradebook in Blackboard before, you might like the upgraded version, the Grade Center.

**Website update! Check out our new Resources section**

We recently made some substantial changes and updates to our website. The biggest change is the addition of a new section called “Resources.” Within the section, you'll find three subsections:

- **Getting Started:** These are resources that anyone thinking about starting an instructional technology project can readily use. We've included pages for faculty new to Duke, pages for help planning projects, and a “Web 2.0 Toolkit” that describes uses of several new web-based tools for teaching and learning.
- **Teaching & Learning:** This section covers the ‘nuts and bolts’ of teaching and learning with technology, including recommendations and guides for managing assignments, large classes, and students groups.
- **Assessment:** Guides and information to help you assess your students, teaching, and projects.

We’d love to get feedback on these changes, and hope you find them useful.

**Blogs, wikis and discussion boards: Which one fits your course?**

A frequent question that comes up from faculty, particularly after the recent May CIT workshop series, is how to decide which tool to use for activities in a course – blogs, wikis, or discussion boards. The tools are similar in some ways, allowing students to post text and other materials, but do operate in ways that make them more useful for some course activities than others.

Most everyone is familiar with discussion boards, which have been used widely on the Web and as a tool in Blackboard for several years. Discussion boards are used to create a “thread” or “topic” where participants in the board can post replies or start threads on new topics.
Most commonly, discussion boards are used in courses as a supplement to in-class activities. An instructor might ask the students to post comments on a reading and use those discussion board posts as a starting point for “in person” class debate. Faculty might also use discussion boards for peer review – students post their work and peers in the course can “reply” to their thread, offering their suggestions and comments.

**Blogs** are relatively new when compared to discussion boards. Blogs or “web logs” originally emerged as a way on the Web for individuals or groups to post a kind of ongoing journal. So, blogs, unlike discussion boards, are more focused on a chronology of information, displaying the most current “posts” first.

Faculty typically use blogs to have students make a record of ongoing research in a course. For example, an instructor might have students pulling original research materials and reporting on what they find in a blog. The most current posts are displayed first, allowing the class to add comments to posts or discuss in class the latest material. Faculty also use blogs as an ongoing course journal for themselves to follow up class discussions with summaries of material or to answer followup questions after class sessions. In some courses, blogs are used by students for personal journals to reflect on assistantships or research work in the community.

Blackboard includes a blog tool or faculty can use non-Duke services such as WordPress or Blogger for public course blogs.

While discussion boards present material thematically and blogs show material chronologically, wikis show student work with any structure you choose. A wiki is a collaborative web space where authors can write web pages together. A wiki starts out with a blank “home” page and subpages can be created and linked to each other.

Wikis are typically used by faculty to have students assembling an online resource, such as a textbook or series of “white papers” on a topic. Students can add comments to wiki pages, but wikis also include the ability to show a history of how and when pages were changed and by which author.
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There is a wiki tool in Blackboard and faculty can use DukeWiki to create pages visible to the public that are edited by Duke authors. If you are collaborating with non-Duke authors, you can sign up with services such as PBWorks and WikiSpaces to create your own wiki.

If you would like more information on options for using blogs and wikis in your course or if you would like to discuss approaches to using other tools in your courses, contact the CIT to speak with a consultant.

Prezi: Making presentations zoom, flip and move

At our recent Instructional Technology Showcase, we created a presentation to celebrate CIT’s ten year anniversary using a new web-based presentation tool called Prezi. Prezi allows users to create a presentation with several levels of magnification – so instead of moving from one slide to the next, you can zoom into areas of the presentation for more info. In contrast to a standard PowerPoint presentation, a Prezi provides opportunities to create a more interactive, contextual and dynamic presentation.

I've embedded a YouTube video of the CIT Prezi below.

You can watch the Prezi in full screen by visiting our presentation here. NOTE: After it loads, click the right pointing arrow to move through the presentation. Holding down the right arrow will open options to automatically move through the slides (if we can truly call each zone of a Prezi a ‘slide’) at intervals of 2, 10 or 20 seconds a slide. To start the presentation over, hold down the left pointing arrow and choose the looping arrow icon.

Creating the CIT 10th Anniversary Prezi

For a quick overview of the process involved with building a Prezi, I'll walk through the steps we went through to create the CIT 10th Anniversary presentation.
1- **Sign up for a Prezi account** ([http://prezi.com/profile/signup/](http://prezi.com/profile/signup/)). Prezi is free as long as you don’t mind your presentations being made public. Private accounts are available for an annual fee.

2- **Prezi works spatially, and not necessarily linearly**, so it helps to come up with an overview map or plan. We created a [Wordle](http://wordle.net) (a word cloud or ‘tag cloud’ generator) of the last CIT Annual Report by copy/pasting the text of the report into Wordle, and tweaking the look of the Wordle a bit. We then saved the Wordle as a PDF file and imported it into Prezi.

3- **Prezi currently has 8 designs/themes.** Whatever you choose cannot be changed later. Text choices are limited to body, header, or bullet-point. This is limiting, but we found the limitation to be liberating in that we didn’t spend time thinking about fonts as much as word size and placement.

4- Prezi allows you to **upload images and video** via the Media control. Pictures can be zoomed into, but be careful – if you zoom too far into certain images, they’ll look blocky and pixelated.

5- After adding text and images, it was time to **plan the Paths**. Prezi’s ‘Paths’ allow you to set up the order of the presentation’s zooming and movement. Unfortunately, if you have several complicated paths, it can be difficult to make changes while you’re working (see picture below). We recommend printing out a copy of your ‘overview’ and planning your ‘path’ first.

6- When creating a path, users can click on individual pictures or chunks of text. Prezi will zoom to and adjust the view to center the text or picture. **If you rotate a picture or text,** Prezi will rotate the entire view to bring the text back into focus. This provides the opportunity to hide small chunks of text by making them really small and flipping them upside down. As long as you connect the Prezi Path to them, Prezi will reorient the view to show them.

7- At times zooming into text or images isn’t enough. What if...
you want to zoom to a few items (text+images in a layout)? Prezi has three different ‘Frames’ (a box, a circle and a set of brackets) that you can use to tell Prezi to reorient the view to whatever is in the frame (see image below). We created frames around words from the Wordle image to reinforce key concepts, or assist with the layout overall. (Here’s a little trick – set up the frames, connect your content by paths, then go back and send each of your visible frames down a layer. This effectively hides the light grey frame graphics from view, while still giving you control over placement.)

Prezi’s can be delivered on the web, embedded into a website (though this is not yet very robust), or downloaded and played from your own computer. Currently, you can choose to have a Prezi automatically move through the presentation at 2, 10 or 20 seconds per point on your path. You can also manually move through a Prezi by clicking on a ‘next’ arrow, or by clicking on a Frame, Image or Text.

Adobe Day @ Duke

Join Adobe at Duke University, where you will learn about Adobe’s tools to help you create, collaborate and connect with students and peers across campus. Participate in person or virtually (via Adobe Connect) in a Summer Adobe Day @ Duke.

Date: Tuesday, June 23, 2009
Location: Duke Law School or Online via Adobe Connect. (Sessions will be recorded).

Morning Sessions (Concurrent): 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Session A: Electronic Document Publishing
Session B: Video Production and Distribution

Afternoon Sessions (Concurrent): 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Session A: Communication and Collaboration
Session B: Web and Application Development

Registration for this event is free; however, seating is limited to the room capacity. All participants must register. If you select that you will be participating via Adobe Connect, you will receive the connection information in an email from Adobe.

Lunch and snacks will not be provided.

Questions?
Contact Christine Vucinich

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