

Adding Content

In Blackboard, course content can include text (like introductions to modules), media (audio, video, or images), web links, tests and other assessments, and can be arranged using folders and subfolders.

Content is added to a “Content Area”, and three Content Areas exist in the Course Menu by default—“Information”, “Content”, and “Assessments” —but you can create additional content areas if necessary.

First, let’s look at the kinds of content we can add. Begin from the Course Menu. Click on the menu item labeled "Information." From the Action Bar, place your mouse cursor over the "Build Content" tab. The drop-down menu reveals a number of options to create or add content. These options include Item (which allows you to add some text to the page, and/or attach any number files in a concise list), File (which allows the addition of a single file, making it stand out on the page), Audio, Image, and Video files, Web Link (which is a shortcut to a web page or web-based resource), Learning Module, Lesson Plan, Syllabus (which is a premade template used to include information such as course goals, instructor contact information, assignments, and class meetings), Course Link, and a Content Package (used to load some publishers’ materials into your Blackboard course).

You can also add a Content Folder (for further organizing your content) or Blank Page (for adding a whole page of text), or a Mashup (such as a Flickr Photo, YouTube or MEDIAL video, the latter of which is NIU's video streaming solution, which is more secure for NIU users).

Now, let’s add our first piece of content, by creating an "Item." From the Build Content tab, click on "Item." At the top of the Create Item page, you’ll be asked to give it a name. Since the “Name” is required, let’s type that in, and pretend we are adding our Syllabus.

After that, we can add some “Text” to the page using the textbox editor. This is useful for adding an overview of the content at the top of a module, or describing any files we may attach to this Item. You may notice that the textbox editor includes numerous features, covering basic formatting options, such as: bold, italics, and underline, or font type and size. You also have the ability to add or embed lists, tables, various types of media, specialized math equations, and mashups (such as YouTube or MEDIAL videos).

Scroll down to the second area, "Attachments." Here, you can upload any number of files for your students. You can retrieve a file from its current location by clicking on the "Browse My Computer" button if it is on your computer, or the "Browse Content Collection" button, if you previously uploaded it to Blackboard. For now, I am going to attach a file from my computer.

Next, scroll down to the third area, "Standard Options." Here, you can set whether or not students can see this Item, through the “Permit Users to View this Content” radio buttons, and you can further customize when they see it using the "Select Date and Time Restrictions" options. Note that you may also enable "Track Number of Views" to later see who viewed this Item. When done, click the Submit button. The Item should now appear in the “Information” content area.

Rather than simply adding all of your content in one long list, you can and should consider how you will structure your course. You can do this by customizing the course menu and/or using Content Folders. An effective practice is to structure your course so its organization, logic, and flow is clear to your students.

You can learn more about these in the lessons on the Course Menu and Organizing Your Course.