

Adding a Link to a Website

There's a wealth of information and resources available to you and your students on the internet. You may wish to share a particular website with your students, such as an online academic journal, or a web app your students will use to complete an assignment. Websites can be added using "Web Links" within your Blackboard course, in any of the following places: in a Content Area, on the Course Menu, or simply in a text field.

Let's start by adding a Web Link to the Course Menu. While you'll likely group related resources in Content Areas, there may be one or two key resources you'd like your students to have quick and easy access to the whole semester. One resource you may find important enough to place in the Course Menu would be the "For Students" section of the "Teaching with Blackboard" help website. Let's add a link to a resource so our students know where to find information on using Blackboard.

With the Edit Mode set to "On," place your mouse cursor over the plus sign icon at the top of the Course Menu. From the dropdown menu, click "Web Link," making a popup box appear. Type the name of the Web Link in the "Name" field. Let's name ours "Blackboard Help." Next, in the "URL" field, type in or copy and paste the web address for the website you want to link to. If you type in the address, make sure you include the "http://" portion as well. However, you may want to copy and paste URLs rather than typing them, to reduce the chance for errors. To do so, open a new browser tab or window, and navigate to the webpage you would like to link to. Place your mouse cursor in the URL bar at the top of your browser, then select the whole web address with your mouse (if it wasn't automatically highlighted for you). Finally, hold down the "control" key on your keyboard (or the "command" key on a Mac) while you tap the "C" key. Hitting the Ctrl+C (or Cmd+C) key combination will copy the selected URL. Returning to Blackboard, place your mouse cursor in the URL field. Similarly to how we copied the URL, hold down the Ctrl (or Cmd) key, but this time tap the "V" key. That will paste in the recently-copied URL. Next, decide whether to make the link "Available to Users" by clicking its checkbox, then click the Submit button. Your new link will appear at the bottom of the Course Menu, and you can reorder the menu using either the drag and drop arrows for the link, or the Course Menu's keyboard-accessible reordering window.

Next, let's add a Web Link to a Content Area. As mentioned, Content Areas are where you place your course content. In this example, let's add a link to the University Libraries, which our students may need for their projects. From the Course Menu, click the Content Area labeled "Information." On the action bar, place your mouse cursor over the "Build Content" tab, then select "Web Link" from its drop-down menu. At the top of the Create Web Link page, you'll be asked to provide a Name and URL for the link. Once again, type a name your students will find meaningful, such as "NIU Library." Then add the URL. Below the name and URL is the "Description" field, allowing you to describe the web resource, or add instructions for your students if necessary. After Description is the "Attachments" area, where you can add files for your students to download and use with the website. Next is "Web Link Options," which by default is set to "Open in New Window." Changing this option from "Yes" to "No" forces the web resource to open within Blackboard. Finally, at the bottom of the page are the "Standard Options." As with all other content, you can decide whether to make this link available with "Permit Users to View this Content," to "Track [its] Number of Views," and even "Select Date and Time Restrictions" if you

want to control when the link becomes available, and for how long. When you are finished, click the Submit button. The Web Link should now appear as the last piece of content on the Information page, and, if necessary, you can reorder your new content using either its drag and drop arrows or the Content Area's reordering menu. Lastly, test your new Web Link by clicking on it, to make sure it correctly opens the intended website.

This tutorial demonstrated different ways to add a Web Link to your Blackboard course.