Using Blackboard with the myWPI Portal
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2001/01/09

Background

The Web site for this course is implemented using the Blackboard course authoring system, accessible through the myWPI portal system. This document describes how to use it.

The myWPI portal should be accessible using either Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer. It has been most thoroughly tested with IE.

It is <u>your</u> responsibility to check the course Web site regularly (at least once a day) for important information, including announcements, assignments, and schedule changes.

Help on myWPI, including a list of known problems, is available at http://www.wpi.edu/Admin/MyWPI/Help/ .

Logging In

1) Either:
   - Go to the main WPI Web page (http://www.wpi.edu) and click on the myWPI icon. -OR-
   - Go directly to http://my.wpi.edu .
     If you get an error message (e.g., "The document contained no data."), try again.

2) Enter your username and password, and click the "Login" button. Your username is the same as your WPI Unix username (and therefore, the same as your WPI email name). If you have never used myWPI before, use your default password, the last four digits of your student ID number (which is usually the same as your Social Security Number). Note:
   - If your student ID number and Social Security number are not the same, you might have to try them both.
   - Everyone's password was set to the default when myWPI was set up last fall. This applies even if you have changed your Unix password or if you used CourseInfo last year.

3) You are now at your personal myWPI home page. Describing this page is beyond the scope of this document.

4) If your password is still set to the default, click on the "Personal Information" button, then on the "Change Password" button. Then change your password to something secret. It is recommended that you <u>not</u> use the same password as on your Unix account. [Note: At this writing, a bug in Blackboard prevents you from changing your password this way. Use the "Tools" button described later in this document.]

5) Once you are back to your personal myWPI home page, you should see a list of the courses you are currently enrolled in. Only courses that are hosted on Blackboard will appear here. Click on the course you want to see. Note: When you add or drop a course with the Registrar, it may take up to a day for myWPI to be updated.

The Course Web Site

Here are some features of the course Web site:

Just below the graphic which says "Home – Courses – Services" you will see what is called the navigation line or breadcrumb trail. This tells you where you are within Blackboard. You can quickly move up one or more levels by clicking on the appropriate part of this line.

The "Announcements" button lets you see announcements for this course. Click on the correct tab to view announcements for today or for various periods in the past. The default view only shows announcements posted since midnight of the current day. To avoid missing any announcements, be sure to view previous days.

The "Course Information", "Staff Information", "Course Documents", "Assignments", "Books", and "External Links" buttons should be self-explanatory.

From the "Communication" button you can send email to any or all of the instructors and your fellow students. If the students are assigned to groups, you can also email to a group or groups. You can email to just the teaching assistants, or to "All Instructors", which includes the professor and the TAs. From "Communication" you can also view the class roster and the discussion boards.

The "Tools" button lets you do the following things:

- Access the Blackboard manual (in PDF format).

- Check your grades.

- Click on "Personal Information" to change your password.

- Access the Digital Dropbox. This lets you submit files which the instructors can see. The instructors can also send files back to individual students; these appear in each student's <u>individual</u> dropbox. See more on the Dropbox below.

- Use the "Groups" button to reach your group's area, including the dropbox for your group. This lets group members exchange files, visible only to members of that group (and to the instructors).

The Digital Dropbox

The dropbox lets you exchange files with the instructors. You can upload files to the myWPI server, download files, send files to the instructors, and receive files from them. Each student in a course has an individual dropbox; all the instructors in a course share a single dropbox.

Many users get confused between the two buttons in the dropbox: "Add File" and "Send File". They are used for two very different purposes, and mixing them up will cause problems. Briefly, the "Add File" button is used to upload files to your own dropbox; files there are only visible to you. The "Send File" button lets you put files into the instructors' dropbox; that's what you will usually want to use.

Add File

Here's how to use "Add File":

1) Click the "Add File" button.
2) Type in a descriptive title, such as "Project 1".
3) Click the "Browse" button and select the file you want to upload.
4) Type in comments if desired.
5) Click the "Submit" button.

Once the file is uploaded, you will see an entry for it, marked "Posted". Remember, only you can see these files.

Send File

Here's how to use "Send File":

1) Click the "Send File" button.
2) Type in a descriptive title, such as "Project 1".
3) Click the "Browse" button and select the file you want to upload.
4) Type in comments if desired.
5) Click the "Submit" button.

Once the file is uploaded and put into the instructors' dropbox, you will see an entry for it, marked "Submitted". After the instructors have downloaded it, the entry will be marked "Received".

Send File (Alternative)

Suppose you have already uploaded a file using "Add File" instead of "Send File", and want to send it to the instructors. Here's how to recover:

1) Click the "Send File" button.
2) There is a menu marked "Select File" which lists all the files in <u>your</u> dropbox. Pick the one you want.
3) Click the "Submit" button.

The file gets transferred from your dropbox to the instructors' dropbox, and should now be marked "Submitted".