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# PUSHING VISTABLACKBOARD BEYOND ITS CLOSED WORLD

### A BIT ABOUT ME

- **×** Engineer First, then Architect
  - + Practiced 9 years with own firm
- At Drexel 20 years
  - + Head of Architectural Engineering (AE) Program
  - + Teach AE Design
  - + Focus is on education NOT online
    - × I'm halfway between Jean-Claude Bradley & Traditional
    - × I believe that something important happens face-to-face
  - + Tech-enthusiast
    - But it has to be useful not just cool
  - + Regular VistaBlackboard User

#### WHAT WE'LL DO

- VistaBlackboard (VBB)"closed"
  - + Why that's good
  - + What are the limitations
- How can one extend VBB 3 ways
- \* Three courses in which I extend VBB
- Tools that allow me to extend VBB
- **×** Conclusions

#### **HOW VISTABB IS CLOSED**

- The primary model for VBB is a "course"
  - + It has (usually) a duration
    - There are techniques to extend it but sacrifices in doing so
  - + It always has an enrollment
- × VBB requires a login
  - + Only those who are registered may see the material
- Material created (or submitted) within VBB is locked within the system

#### WHY A CLOSED SYSTEM GOOD

#### × Control

+ Requiring logon and ID allows "permissions" and control of what and when can be seen.

#### Privacy

- + There is much sensitive material in VBB
  - × Student submissions
  - × Grades
  - × Instructor comments

#### THE LIMITATIONS OF A CLOSED SYSTEM

- Material produced by students and instructors in course does not carry over
  - + It's also not visible to those outside the course
- If one uses an outside tool (e.g. Google Docs) one has to leave the VBB world

#### WHAT I DO WITH VISTABB

- + Use it as it's intended happily
  - × Courses
  - New Faculty Community
- + Use workarounds to address the limitations
  - × How to carry over material
    - \* External database + submit Info in VistaBB
  - × How to incorporate external tool
    - ★ Blog via RSSInclude

#### SOME COURSES I TEACH

- × AE-Design AE-390, 391 for Juniors
- New Faculty Community 2009-10
- Intelligent Buildings AE-510 Juniors & Seniors

#### Edit Formula for: Grade

## AE DESIGN - AE-390, 3

To create a formula for a calculated column, use the functions, n within your formula, use parentheses. As you create your formula When you have finished creating your formula, click Save.

((([A1]+[A2]+[A6]+[A1aTwk]+[A2 tm]+[A3 Tm]+[A4 Tm]+[A5 Tm])\*1)+([A3]+[A4]+[A5])\*2)/9.25

- **×** Dissemination
  - + Detailed syllabus and assignments
- Grading
  - + Gradebook
    - × Spreadsheet to make updating cumulative grade easy
    - Download to calculate final grade
  - + Return detailed comments via attachment
- Use <u>external Database</u> for sharing URLs
  - + Have students look at past work for guidance
    - × Change requirements somewhat each time

#### **NEW FACULTY COMMUNITY 2009-10**

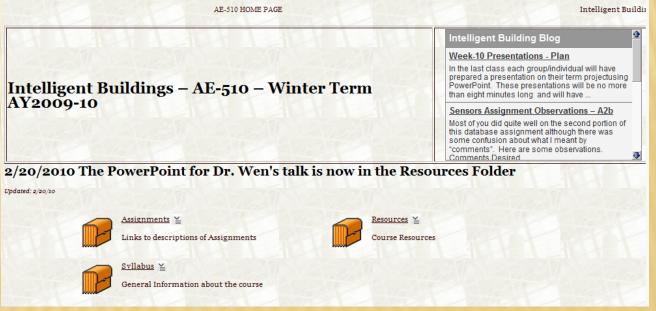
- × Discussions
- Blog via Blogger



- Sad Realities
  - Faculty were generally "too busy" to use VistaBB
  - Faculty don't subscribe to Blog
  - Change to Listserv worked better
    - Despite my opinion that Listserv is archaic

#### **INTELLIGENT BUILDING - AE-510**

- Dissemination & Grading
- Graded Discussion Highly successful
  - + Use Grading Forms splendid device
- Blog via Blogger



# **MATRIX OF TOOLS**

Tool	Learning Time	Time to use	Prime benefit	Where I Use
External Database	<ul><li>•5 min for students</li><li>•30 min for me</li></ul>	•1 min students •1 min grader	•Carry over student work	•Student projects
Blog	<ul><li>•5 min for students</li><li>•1 hour for me</li></ul>	•1 min students •Writing time for me	<ul><li>Extended comments</li><li>Viewable by wider world</li></ul>	•General feedback •To make easier to follow
<u>RSSInclude</u>	<ul><li>1 min for students</li><li>15 min for me</li></ul>	•1 min students •0 min for me	•See blog in VistaBB	•Increasing use in all courses
Google Forms – (Not directly VBB extension)	1 min for students ½ hour for me	•<5min (goal in design) •½ hour/form – typical	<ul><li>Rapid</li><li>feedback</li><li>Link from blog</li></ul>	•Classes for formative assessment

#### **EDUCATIONAL GOALS**

- Continuity
  - + Learn from colleagues in course (competition)
  - Learn from predecessors (scaffolding)
- \* Feedback
  - + Extended comments addressing widespread issues
  - + Share with colleagues

#### **TOOLS**

\* Let's look at these tools in detail

### **BLOG**

- \* Extended text that is:
  - + Formatted well
  - + Ordered
    - × Time newest first
  - + Searchable
    - × Tags
    - × Text
  - + Subscribable via "reader"

#### **RSS INCLUDE**

- Service that creates "code" that will put blog in a box on any web page
- Easy & Free
- Use "Header" on VBB home page



#### **ONLINE DB**

- Use it like any website
  - + Students submit URL and description
  - + Students also submit URL as assignment in VBB
- Update it via secure administration
- Creating the DB took effort
  - + Initially I created it myself
  - Drexel then decided to take it over took several months

#### **GOOGLE DOCS**

- I'm pushing the limits to include it as a VBB expansion
  - + It's really separate
  - + I incorporate it by link from blog or home page
- × How I use it
  - + Shared spreadsheet during class periods, edited by students from their computers
  - + Quick Surveys primarily for formative info

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#### CONCLUSIONS

- \* Most of us can use these with minimal effort
  - + Database definitely takes longer
- Opens up VBB
  - + Material can carry over
  - + Material can be shared beyond a specific class
- × It's fun