



# FEATURE COMPARISON

This guide compares the features of WebCT with the eLearning system (Blackboard's Vista 4), allowing for further understanding of eLearning capabilities. The guide includes a general list of eLearning improvements and a side-by-side comparison of selected features in WebCT and eLearning.

## ELEARNING IMPROVEMENTS:

- **Real Student View:**
  - Complete assessments, assignments, and other class activities exactly as a student does
  - Student View is updated automatically
- **Navigation:**
  - Add descriptions to any link or discussion topic to help students know how to use course materials and activities
  - All tools used in the class can be listed in the Course Tools menu on the left
- **File management:**
  - Upload multiple (up to 15) files at once
  - Drag and drop from your computer to eLearning File Manager
- **Communication:**
  - Use the Announcement tool to create Announcements available to students on the Announcements page or as optional popups
  - In the Chat Tool, use the integrated whiteboard and hand-raising features, as well as unlimited chat rooms, private chats, and scheduled chat room visibility.
  - Automatically create a calendar entry when making assignments and assessments.
- **Grading:**
  - Grade discussions easily. You can view all posts from a student, compare individual participation to class average, and assign alpha or numeric grades on one screen.
  - Grade assessments by question.
  - In the Grade Book, freeze name columns while scrolling. Also, rows are highlighted when rolled over.

**Note:** Throughout the implementation of eLearning at the University of Alabama, available features and functions may change.

## SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON: WEBCT AND ELEARNING

The following pages contain a comparison of the capabilities of WebCT with those of eLearning. This is not an all-inclusive examination of the eLearning system, but instead focuses on features with changes that alter functionality. For further information about a particular eLearning function, contact the eLearning team at [elearning@ua.edu](mailto:elearning@ua.edu) or 348-ELEARN (3532).

WEBCT	ELEARNING
<b>Content Creation and Management</b>	
<p><b>Manage Files</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upload one file at a time</li> <li>• Sorted alphabetically by file and folder names</li> <li>• WebDAV functionality must be set up on your computer</li> </ul>	<p><b>File Manager</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upload multiple files at a time (15)</li> <li>• Sort by file/folder name, type, last modified date, or size</li> <li>• Filter content by file type (ex. view only .doc files)</li> <li>• Built-in WebDAV functionality for easier file management (Dependent upon computer capabilities)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Content Module</b></p> <p>An area primarily for course content files where you can add headings and create links to individual files and quizzes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can use upper/lower textblocks</li> <li>• Numbering option uses numbers only</li> <li>• Table of contents truncated if shown along with the content pages</li> </ul>	<p><b>Learning Module</b></p> <p>An integrated learning environment that can be used to direct a student's path through course content. You can create links to individual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Files</li> <li>• Assessments (Quizzes)</li> <li>• Self-assessments</li> <li>• Discussion Topics</li> <li>• Chat/Whiteboard Rooms</li> <li>• Assignments</li> <li>• Web links</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students can create a printable view of a learning module from within the module</li> <li>• Table of Contents not truncated when shown along with module pages</li> <li>• Can show/hide elements of table of contents</li> <li>• Can use the selective release function in action menu for elements of table of contents</li> <li>• Can choose a numbering style for table of contents</li> <li>• Upper/lower textblocks not available</li> </ul>
<p><b>URLs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add links (URLs) to organizer pages</li> </ul>	<p><b>Web Links</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Web links added to your course are automatically added to a comprehensive <b>Web Links</b> page, offering a central place for course members to access and review links associated with the course</li> <li>• Descriptions can be added to web links</li> </ul>

WEBCT	ELEARNING
<b>Class Communications</b>	
<i>Not available</i>	<p><b>Announcements</b></p> <p>The Announcements tool creates and sends course-wide notices to students, with optional start/stop dates and popup messages</p>
<p><b>Syllabus</b></p> <p>Import a full document or build it with Syllabus tool which creates a static, framed document</p>	<p><b>Syllabus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Import a document or build it with the Syllabus tool</li> <li>• Using the tool, a new section called <b>Lesson Items</b> allows you to create corresponding entries in the <b>Calendar</b></li> <li>• Syllabus sections can be released to certain students or on certain dates</li> <li>• Syllabus sections can be shown/hidden and expanded/collapsed</li> <li>• Students can create a printable view of the syllabus</li> </ul>
<p><b>Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organized by topic and thread</li> <li>• View by thread or date</li> <li>• Expand/collapse individual threads</li> <li>• Can move threads to a different topic</li> </ul>	<p><b>Discussions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topics can be organized topics by category, collapsed/expanded, moved</li> <li>• Descriptions can be added to categories and topics</li> <li>• Threaded, blog, and journal discussion types</li> <li>• Peer review option with rating scale or grading form</li> <li>• View all posts by a student, compare student’s participation to class average, and assign numeric or alpha grade on a single screen</li> <li>• Can give students editing options</li> <li>• Can release topic based on date, student or assessment grade (using selective release in action menu)</li> <li>• Your postings can automatically appear with a status of “read”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Chat</b></p> <p>Four modifiable chat rooms plus two general rooms</p> <p><b>Whiteboard</b></p> <p>Can draw, load or paste images</p>	<p><b>Chat/Whiteboard</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show whiteboard separately or along with chat tool</li> <li>• Create unlimited rooms with custom titles and descriptions, optional privacy, and controlled number of participants</li> <li>• Allow customized participant names</li> <li>• Create a slideshow of images that have been loaded or pasted into Whiteboard (for future viewing)</li> <li>• Use Handraise mode to “call on” students waiting in queue to speak</li> <li>• Release room based on date, student or assessment grade (using selective release in action menu)</li> </ul>

WEBCT	ELEARNING
<b>Class Communications</b>	
<p><b>Calendar</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal links to Content Module pages only</li> <li>• Default monthly view</li> </ul>	<p><b>Calendar</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal links to learning activities available in Learning Module (discussion topics, quizzes, assignments, etc)</li> <li>• Set preferred view (month, week, or day) and which day week begins on</li> <li>• Add recurring and multi-day events</li> <li>• Automatically create calendar listings when creating an assignment or assessment (quiz)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mail</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All designers share one identity</li> <li>• Messages sent to multiple recipients result in multiple messages saved in Outbox</li> </ul>	<p><b>Mail</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each instructor/designer has own identity</li> <li>• Send messages to individual students, groups, or whole class</li> <li>• Use CC and BCC</li> <li>• Messages sent to multiple recipients result in single message saved in Outbox</li> <li>• Update listing is automatic</li> </ul>
<p><i>Not Available</i></p>	<p><b>Who's Online</b></p> <p>View a list of class members logged in to eLearning, determine your visibility to others, and participate in chat sessions.</p>
<b>Managing Student Work</b>	
<p><b>Assignments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students must turn in files</li> <li>• Assignments must be released to whole class</li> <li>• Only individual assignments</li> <li>• Only numeric grades</li> </ul>	<p><b>Assignments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students can turn in written submission (no attachment required) with or without file(s)</li> <li>• Assignments can be released to whole class, groups, or individuals with individualized instructions</li> <li>• Numeric or alpha grades</li> <li>• Can return to students for revision before grading</li> <li>• Work can be published by student or instructor</li> <li>• Can be adapted to allow for posting of student homepages</li> </ul>

WEBCT	ELEARNING
<b>Managing Student Work</b>	
<p><b>Student Presentations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students can be placed in a group</li> <li>• Group can be given a private discussion topic</li> <li>• Group members can upload documents to shared file space</li> <li>• In order for group documents to be viewed must be web pages with the initial page named "index.htm(l)"</li> </ul>	<p><b>Group Manager</b></p> <p>Using the <b>Group Manager</b>, groups can be formed for the submission of collaborative work and for other class purposes. An assignment can be designated for a group and one student can submit (and publish) the collaborative work; all students will receive the grade in the Assignment tool and Grade Book</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group sign-up sheets allow students to sign up for groups or projects</li> <li>• Send mail to all members of a group</li> <li>• Create discussion topics and chat rooms for groups to facilitate communication</li> </ul>
<p><b>Quizzes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple choice</li> <li>• Matching</li> <li>• Calculated</li> <li>• Short answer</li> <li>• Paragraph</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Grading must be triggered by the student or instructor</li> <li>• Self test can have only multiple choice questions</li> </ul>	<p><b>Assessments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automatically create corresponding calendar entries</li> <li>• Previous questions types plus new question types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combination</li> <li>• Fill in the blank</li> <li>• Jumbled sentence</li> <li>• True / False</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Grade by question option</li> <li>• Grade anonymously option</li> <li>• Quizzes are automatically graded upon submission</li> <li>• Self test questions can come directly from question database</li> <li>• Instructors can determine if students have taken self-tests</li> </ul>
<p><b>Manage Students</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade book column types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alphanumeric</li> <li>• Numeric</li> <li>• Calculated</li> <li>• Letter grade</li> <li>• Text</li> <li>• Selection list</li> <li>• Quiz</li> <li>• Assignment</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Enter grades by student or by column</li> </ul>	<p><b>Grade Book</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same Column types</li> <li>• Freeze last name and first name columns for ease of viewing</li> <li>• Highlight an individual student row for ease of viewing</li> <li>• Click on an individual grade to change or enter or enter whole column (scores for all students)</li> <li>• Enter an audit history for grade changes</li> </ul>

WEBCT	ELEARNING
<b>Managing Your Course</b>	
<b>Homepage/Organizer Pages</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link icons and titles only</li> </ul>	<b>Course Content/ Course Home Page/Folders</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link descriptions and layout options</li> </ul>
<b>Access</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only one name associated with course as instructor; multiple faculty do not have message autonomy</li> <li>• Minimal student view of course components</li> </ul>	<b>Access</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can have multiple faculty all with message and name autonomy</li> <li>• Student View Tab is an actual student view; Test assessments, assignments, grade book and content as a student</li> </ul>
<i>Not Available</i>	<b>People Links</b> Access student performance statistics or e-mail a student by clicking on a student's name
<b>Tracking</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student tracking: first access, last access, number of hits, discussions read/posted, content pages visited (date and time)</li> <li>• Page tracking: Number of hits and time/hit for all content module pages</li> </ul>	<b>Report &amp; Tracking</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section tracking reports:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary of activity (number and length of student sessions, most/least active day and hour)</li> <li>• Tool usage (number of times each tool accessed, average time spent)</li> <li>• Course item usage (number of times pages are viewed, average time, percentage compared to total usage)</li> <li>• Entry page or tool</li> <li>• Exit page or tool</li> <li>• File usage (overview of files viewed most frequently)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<i>not available</i>	<b>Selective Release Map</b> View list containing all elements of the course that are affected by selective release.

For further opportunities to learn about eLearning, contact the eLearning Team at 348-ELEARN (3532) or [elearning@ua.edu](mailto:elearning@ua.edu) and visit the Faculty Resource Center at <http://frc.ua.edu>.

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