

e-Learning Institute (eLI)



Save as Draft...

could save draft copies of email messages, but never discussion posts. This used to annoy me... If I wanted to think about something I'd written for a while, look something up or simply wait to send it at another time, I had to create a file and save it. Not anymore!

There are a variety of good uses of this feature, but one stands out. Like many of my colleagues, I sometimes struggle with the expectation of immediacy in online learning. We advise instructors that it's good practice to be clear with students at the beginning of the course, informing students about when you will normally answer them (e.g., within 24 hours during the week, between 8 AM - 8 PM). But how do we stick to these rules? Once you've answered an email at 3 AM, expectations can shift! That "Save as Draft" does come in handy! Besides, it's probably not a good idea to send an email at 3 AM anyway... Good luck with the semester, everyone!

- **Michelle Lamberson**, Director, Office of Learning Technology, UBC

Last spring with the first rollout of WebCT Vista, I was one of the "Early Adopters". I'd been waiting to use it for some time so I was excited about the opportunity. Overall, I was really happy with how my students responded to my course (EOSC 311) and the new system. As we begin the new semester, and I begin teaching again, I spent a few minutes reflecting back on what I found most helpful about WebCT Vista. There are all kinds of advances to choose from: gradable discussions, anonymous quiz grading, text assignment type, learning modules.... the list goes on. A funny thing bubbled to the surface... "Save as Draft". In the legacy version of WebCT, I

Instructor Spotlight

Each issue we will spotlight a UBC instructor who is using technology in the classroom in innovative ways. This month we introduce you to Leah Macfadyen with Science Centre for Learning and Teaching (Skylight), Faculty of Science.

"I am not new to online learning. I've seen for myself the ways that online asynchronous discussion and other communication tools in web-based course management systems can support deep reflection, critical thinking and good learning in Arts and Education courses. This year, however, I've had the opportunity to think about how and if online learning can also support good learning in Science - in a subject area that historically has placed heavy emphasis on amassing content knowledge, and less emphasis on discussion and debate. My



background in both biology and science education has allowed me to play a 'bridging' role in a team developing a fully online edition of BIOL200 (Cell Biology), together with Professors from Biology and Instructional Designers from OLT. We have completely redesigned the curriculum of this longstanding, large enrolment, historically lecture-based course. Instead of stepping through factoid-oriented content units, the online course is centred around five new 'global health' case study challenges that we have collaboratively developed. Students will work on case studies in teams; cell biology content materials have become the reference resources for their 'detective work'. Dr Jim Berger and myself will teach sections for this new course starting in January, and we'll begin to find out not only whether case-based learning (CBL) can be effectively implemented online, but also whether CBL can improve student learning and conceptual understanding in biology."

- Leah Macfadyen

eLI Training Schedule

January/February 2008

- Tuesday, January 15, 2008 - 12-1:30pm
WebCT Vista Bootcamp
- Tuesday, January 17, 2008 - 12-1:30pm
Create and Manage Course Content in WebCT Vista
- Tuesday, January 22, 2008 - 12-1:30pm
Social Software
- Thursday, January 24, 2008 - 12-1:30pm
WebCT Vista Bootcamp
- Tuesday, January 29, 2008 - 12-1:30pm
Group & Peer-to-Peer Activities in WebCT Vista
- Tuesday, February 5, 2008 - 12-1:30pm
Creating Assessments in WebCT Vista
- Tuesday, February 12, 2008 - 12-1:30pm
WebCT Vista's File Manager
- February 19-21 (Reading Week)
WebCT Vista Hands-on sessions plus much more!
- Tuesday, February 26, 2008 - 12-1:30pm
Communicating with Students in WebCT Vista
- PLUS** Wednesdays - 12:30-2pm
WebCT Vista Drop in Labs @ Telestudios

IN THIS ISSUE

- Instructor Spotlight - pg 1
- WebCT Vista's Top 8 - pg 2
- WebCT Vista Tool Tip - pg 2
- '08 TLT Series Topics - pg 2

Registration Info



- ➔ To register for eLI sessions & WebCT Vista training, please visit: www.elearning.ubc.ca and click on the training calendar
- ➔ To register for TLT series talks please visit: www.elearning.ubc.ca
- ➔ No appt necessary for drop-in or online labs @ Telestudios



For more info contact:
kele.fleming@ubc.ca or
emily.renoe@ubc.ca at
604.822.0836

WebCT Vista's TOP 8

Below are the **top 8** reasons why someone might experience a **period of slowness** when accessing WebCT Vista (courtesy of University of Connecticut).

1] Toolbars

After running the browser checker, you will notice a Browser Version area which will reveal information about the web browser you are using. Within the Agent part of the Browser Version window you may see evidence of toolbars installed within your browser. Such toolbars include, Yahoo Toolbar, Yahoo Companion, MSN Toolbar, AOL Toolbar, WebSearch Toolbar, Zongo toolbar, etc. These toolbars can slow down your browsing experience and negatively affect elements found in any of our Learning Management Systems (LMS).

2] Java Runtime Environment

After running our browser checker, you will notice a Java Information area which will reveal the version of the Java Runtime Environment you are using. Usually an incompatible version of Java will not prevent a user from logging into a LMS but it could prevent a user from accessing and using functionalities within a LMS. Sometimes having an incompatible version of Java will give the affect of a slow experience with a LMS. An incompatible version of Java can also cause 'freezing' of the browser and may cause the system to 'kick' users out of their accounts.

3] Speed of your internet connection

After running our browser checker, you will notice a Bandwidth Test that is available. Upon running this Speed Test you will be given results for your Download speed and Upload speed.

4] Music Downloads

iTunes, Napster, Kazaa, Bearshare, and Limewire are some of the popular applications that are capable of downloading music onto your computer. Most of these applications by default will share the music on your computer with other users around the world. When these applications are running people can download your entire library of music thus causing your internet connection to slow down depending on how heavy the music download/upload traffic is. A lot of people are unaware that these applications are set to start every time their computers start up.

5] Internet Explorer

Microsoft has recently released the newest version of its popular Internet Explorer web

browser version 7.0. This browser has some new security features that may impact the LMS's. These security features can prevent files from being downloaded and even cause slowness when browsing the web. A new 'phishing' (phishing is the act of attempting to fraudulently acquire sensitive information, such as passwords and credit card details, by masquerading as a trustworthy person or business with a real need for such information in a seemingly official electronic notification or message) feature is enabled by default that will scan every web page before it loads to detect any malicious content. This can noticeably slow the loading of web pages down. We recommend using Internet Explorer 6.0 or Firefox 1.0.x or 1.5.x.

6] Wireless Networks

Many people now have wireless home routers in their house. With a wireless router comes a wireless network, which by default is not secure. Your neighbours or anyone around your home may be able to get onto your home network wirelessly if it has not been secured. These unwanted users can use your internet connection to download files which would slow your connection down.

7] Applications running in the background

A lot of computers (including brand new computers) may contain a large amount of applications running. A majority of these applications can, and usually are, set to start up when the computer is started. This not only causes the computer to take a very long time to start up but will cause the computer to become sluggish while it is running. This can also affect the speed of your internet connection. If your computer is trying to manage many programs running at once it will also have a hard time managing your internet connection.

8] Viruses, Malware, and Adware

Viruses (computer programs that can copy itself and infect a computer without permission or knowledge of the user) along with malware (or malicious software is software designed to infiltrate or damage a computer system without the owner's informed consent) can also cause a computer to become extremely slow and non-functional in certain areas. Adware (or advertising supported software is any software package which automatically plays, displays, or downloads advertising material to a computer after the software is installed on it or while the application is being used) can also slow computers down by constantly popping up ads and using your Internet connection to contact and send information back to servers around the world. You can pick up these three things from downloading games, adult content, free programs (freeware/shareware)

and other software applications. You can also get these from clicking on random ads that pop-up when you browse the internet. Having a good anti-virus application running can prevent most viruses and malware from entering onto your computer.

2008 Teaching and Learning with Technology Series

- **Topic #1: Open Educational Revolution**
Speaker: Richard Baraniuk, Rice University, Houston, Texas
Date: Tuesday, January 15 - 10:00am @ UBC Michael Smith Labs
- **Topic #2: Webbloggers' Salon** (Warm-up to Northern voice 2008)
Speaker: UBC Bloggers TBA
Date: Tuesday, February 5 - Full Day @ UBC Telestudios (University Service Building, 2329 West Mall)
- **Topic #3: Emerging Technologies and Higher Education**
Speaker: W. Gardner Campbell, Mary Washington College, Fredericksburg, Virginia
Date: Wednesday, March 5 - 1:00pm @ UBC Telestudios (University Service Building, 2329 West Mall)

Visit www.elearning.ubc.ca to register for sessions.

[webct vista tool tip]

Instructors, did you know...

you can create **anonymous discussion** topics? - like "**Ask the Instructor**" topic. This is a great idea! It allows students to post questions, contradict or even just ask for an explanation without "looking silly," or if there are any cultural hesitations about questioning or contradicting the instructor. When creating the Discussion, turn on "Authors are anonymous to Students". The student will see a small icon with a question mark indicating this topic is **anonymous**.

