Blogs, Journals, and Wikis in Blackboard

In addition to the Discussion Board, Blackboard has three additional tools for reflective assignments, Blogs, Journals, and Wikis. All work the same way but what differs is who sees, contributes, or edits content. Blogs can be configured to be one author to many readers or many authors to many readers. Authors write the content on the page, readers read and can comment on the content. Journals are one author to the instructor or to the class. Instructors can edit, view, and comment on the postings. If a journal is set up to allow course users to view the journal, then users can read the entries and comments but cannot add their own comments. Wikis are like Blogs except all contributors can edit all posts. The wiki software tracks changes in the wiki and an instructor can monitor who made which changes and when.

Journals

Journals can be created in two ways. First, navigate to a content area and select "Create Journals" from the Tools menu. The Create Link: Journal page (figure 1) opens. This page allows you to create a link either to a specific Journal or to the Journals page. If you link to a specific Journal students see only the name of the specified journal in the content area. If you link to the Journals page, students see a list of all journals in the course.

You can create a new Journal from the Add Link: Journal page. Clicking on the Create New Journal button opens the add Journal page where you enter the name, instructions, and set the visibility for the journal (seen only by the instructor or by other students in the course).

Figure 1: Adding a link to a Journal.
When you click submit, a page opens for information about the link. The name of the journal is entered and there is space for a description (figure 2).

![Figure 2: Link information page showing space for entering text describing the Journal.](image)

Alternatively, journals can be created from the Journals link under Course Tools in the Control Panel. Clicking on the Journals link opens the Journals page. Click on the Create Journal button to add a new Journal. On the Create Journal Page (figure 3) you enter the name of the Journal and instructions on how to use the Journal, what types on entries are expected, and how often to post entries.

![Figure 3: Create Journal page showing entry area for name and instructions and setting for Journal Availability.](image)
Also on the Create Journal page is an area to enter date and time restrictions, and settings (figure 4). Under settings you can choose to have Blackboard index entries by month or by week. You can allow students to edit and delete their entries, allow students to delete comments, and allow other students to view the journal and comments. Click on the appropriate checkboxes to change settings.

![Figure 4: Journal settings.](image)

Click the Submit button when the settings are selected.

**Blogs**

The engine behind blogs is much the same as the Journals. You can create blogs from the content areas or from the Blog link under Course Tools in the control panel. In a content area, select Create Blog Link from the Tools menu. The Add Link: Blog page (figure 5) opens. This page allows you to create a link either to a specific Blog or to the Blogs page. If you link to a specific blog students see only the name of the specified blog in the content area. If you link to the Blogs page, students see a list of all blogs in the course.

You can create a new Blog from the Create Link: Blog page. Clicking on the Create New Blog button opens the add Blog page (figure 6) where you enter the name, instructions, and set the participation for the blog, either individual to all students or all students in the course. You also set the indexing of
entries from this page as well as set the permissions for editing and deleting entries and deleting comments on this page.

1. **Create Link: Blog**

   ![Link to the Blogs page, link to a specific Blog, or create a new Blog.](image)

   **Link to the Blogs page.** Note similarity to **Add Link: Journal page.**

2. **Submit**

   ![Create Blog page. Again, not similarity with create Journal pages](image)

   **Click Next to continue. Click Cancel to quit.**
Wikis
The engine behind wikis is much the same as blogs and journals. You can create wikis from the content areas or from the Wikis link under Course Tools in the control panel. In a content area, select Create Wiki Link from the Tools menu. The Create Link: Wiki page (figure 7) opens. This page allows you to create a link either to a specific Wiki or to the Wikis page. If you link to a specific wiki students see only the name of the specified wiki in the content area. If you link to the Wikis page, students see a list of all wikis in the course.

Create Link: Wiki
Add a Link to the Wiki listing page or a specific Wiki in a Content Area. This creates a place where users interact with each other in the same area where they discover content, existing Wiki or a new Wiki can be created and linked.

1. Create Link: Wiki
   Link to the Wikis page, link to a specific Wiki, or create a new Wiki.
   - Link to the Wikis Page
   - Create New Wiki

2. Next
   Click Next to next. Click Cancel to quit.
You can create a new Wiki from the Create Link: Wiki page. Clicking on the Create New Wiki button opens the CreateWiki page (figure 8) where you enter the name, instructions, and open or close editing for the wiki. You also choose whether the wiki is graded and set the points possible.

![Create Wiki page](image)

Figure 8: Create wiki page.

**Using the tools**

To use the Blogs, Journals, and wikis students navigate to the content area where the blog or journal link is located or using course tools navigate to the Blogs or Journals page. From the blogs or Journals page students click on the link for the blog or journal and click on the add entry button to add content (figure 9).

![Create Blog entry button in Blog](image)

Figure 9: Create Blog entry button in Blog.

On the Blog/Journal entry page (figure 10) students (or instructors) add a title for the entry, add their content (message) and can choose to attach a file to the entry. Once they are done entering information, the student can choose to save the entry as a draft to post later or post the entry immediately.
To view Blog/Journal entries, navigate to the blog and click on the name of a user that is linked (underlined) to entries (figure 11).

Figure 11: Selecting the name of a Blog author to view entries.
To comment on an entry, click on the comment button at the bottom of the entry (figure 12). Remember, on public journals, only the instructor can comment. Students will not see the comment button. Students do have comments buttons for other students blogs.

![Figure 12: Blog entry showing comment button at the bottom of the screen.]

**Using the Wiki Tool**

Wikis are a little different from Blogs and Journals in that each entry/page can be edited by more than one individual. The wiki tool provides tracking to show who made what contributions and changes and when.

When you enter the wiki the first time you will be prompted to create a home page for the wiki.

![Figure 13: Create Wiki Page.]

Blackboard Blogs, Journals and Wikis
Once a page has been created, participants have the option to edit the home page using the Edit Wiki Content button, adding a new wiki page using the Create Wiki Page button or commenting on the page using the Comment button.

Figure 14: Wiki page showing Home Page.

The Participation Summary button provides a link to a summary page showing everyone that has contributed to the wiki and how much they have contributed/modified.

Figure 15: Wiki Participation Summary.
Clicking on the name of any participant will bring up a list of versions of the page that they have contributed to and a link to each version. There will be a link to compare to previous versions so you can see what was added/changed.

![Participant's Contribution: Test account (3) Cooke](image)

**Figure 16: Participant Contribution Page.**

![Page Comparison](image)

**Figure 17: Page Comparison - highlights show changes.**