MyPCC Course Tools

Session Objectives
1. Understand the pedagogical basis for using MyPCC Course Tools, especially when compared to other options such as PCC/WebEasy and Blackboard CE.
2. Understand the potential and the most common features of the course tools area.
3. Learn how to access and how to use the basic course tools.
4. Learn how to bypass course tools to link directly to Blackboard CE or other instructional homepage.

What are Course Tools?
Course tools are applications that allow you to interact with your students in a variety of ways via the MyPCC portal. Course tools can be used to foster communication in and out of the classroom through email and discussions, and to share course files, links, photos and homework.

One major benefit of using MyPCC is that all students will automatically have PCC email. Unlike Blackboard CE, the course tools area does not feature quizzes or allow you to keep track of student grades online. Another major difference is that the content of the Course Tools area does not automatically persist from term to term. These tools are normally reset with each new class or CRN. However, there is a way to use course tools so that materials will persist from term to term, explained in this handout under “consolidated courses”.

You can make any or all of the following tools available to your class:
- Homepage
- Announcements
- News
- Photos
- Links
- Files
- Message Board
- Calendar
- E-mail
- Chat

For a more in-depth comparison to other online tools available at PCC, see http://www.pcc.edu/resources/instructional-support/tools/

Tips for Using
1. Set clear expectations for students regarding how often and how much they should participate.
2. Be clear about how often you will be checking the class area.
3. Use course tools to expand the walls of your classroom and increase student interaction, with each other and with the material.
4. Facilitate discussions as needed, but try to let students drive the conversation.
5. Create a positive supportive atmosphere. Reward or at least acknowledge participation.
Support Contacts

More information about MyPCC Course Tools: http://www.pcc.edu/resources/instructional-support/tools/mypcc/
- Telephone support (employee) 977-4400
- Student Helpdesk 977-8200

Course Design, pedagogy, tool use
- Greg Kaminski (gkaminsk@pcc.edu, 977-4570)
- Peter Seaman (peter.seaman@pcc.edu, 977-8220)

Hands-on training & support
- Melany Budiman (melany.budiman@pcc.edu, 977-4459) - SY
- Andre Temkin (andre.temkin@pcc.edu, 788-6130) - SE
- Jim Johnstone (jjohnsto@pcc.edu, 614-7265) - RC
- Clayton Hanson (clayton.hanson@pcc.edu, 978-5198) - CA

How to Access

A special course tools area is an automatic possibility for every PCC class, though the course tools are initially turned off by default. In order to begin using course tools, you need to enable course tools for your course. Once the course tools area is enabled, all registered students automatically have access. You can also turn off individual course tools. (You are encouraged to experiment with the course tools area, but if you decide not to use course tools, be sure to disable the course tools function for your course so that students are not confused.)

1. Login to your MyPCC area, as usual at http://my.pcc.edu
2. Click on the Faculty tab in MyPCC.
3. Find the “Tools” channel, and click on My Courses. You will see a list of courses under “Courses I’m Teaching.” If you don’t see your course, select the term next to Course Schedule for:
4. Click button next to your course name.
5. Click on the Course Tools radio button to enable the MyPCC course tools. (Then be sure to click on Save Changes.)
6. Click on the class name to enter your class area. This will take you to your class homepage (see image in the next page).

Note:
- Blackboard CE Users: If you would rather link to your Blackboard course, click on the Blackboard radio button.
- If you would rather link to a personal web page (e.g. a WebEasy page), select None and type the URL of your site, e.g. http://www.pcc.edu/staff/jdoe.
- If you decide not use any of these tools, select None and leave the URL AS IS, then save your changes.
Specific Tools

Announcements
Students will see your announcements in two places: on your course homepage and in the My Announcements channel on the MyPCC Home tab.
To send an announcement:
1. From your course homepage, click on **Announcements** and then **Send announcement**.

![](image)

2. Fill out the Title and your message in the Announcement text area, and click on **Send**.
   - **Important**: The sender's name is not listed as part of the announcement. To avoid ambiguity, **always list your class and name as part of your announcement**.
   - Announcement only last 7 days. Once it expired, you will have to send a new one.
3. You can delete or edit an announcement by clicking on **Manage Announcements** from the Content Tools area.

**Email**

There is not a separate mailbox for email for each course. Email sent through the link in the Course Tools area is accessed by clicking on the “E-mail & Calendar” icon at the top of any page.

- **Important**: If you want to learn more about MyPCC Email, see [http://intranet.pcc.edu/training/MyPCC/new_mypcc_email.htm](http://intranet.pcc.edu/training/MyPCC/new_mypcc_email.htm)

The main benefit about using the Course Tools Email link is the ability to email any or all students in the class directly.
1. Click **E-mail** in the Course Tools menu.
2. Check the box **Select All** next to Member Name to select all members or check the box next to individual students' name.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member Name</th>
<th>Member Type</th>
<th>Last Visit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andre &amp; Temkin</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>December 17, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew P Freed</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>October 18, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur Schneider</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>August 08, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill Phillips</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>July 19, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donna J Swanson</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>October 04, 2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Click **Send E-Mail**. (Yes, even though you haven’t written anything yet.) For security, the names you selected do not appear in the “To” field. If you would like a copy of the message in your “Sent” folder, be sure to check that box at the bottom. You may also check spelling or attach a file.
4. When ready, click on **Send**.

**Calendar**

Course Tools includes a course specific calendar where you can keep students informed about assignment due dates, quizzes, exams, field trips, make-up classes etc.

**Important:** If you want to learn more about Calendar tool, see http://intranet.pcc.edu/training/MyPCC/new_mypcc_calendar.htm.

You can access this tool by clicking on the **calendar link** under the Course Tools menu, enter your user name and password, and then click **Log In** (user name & password is the same as your MyPCC login and password).

![Calendar interface](image)

You can also access this tool by clicking on the “Email & Calendar” icon at the top of any page.

**Important:** By default, the calendar is your own personal calendar. You will need to change it by clicking on the drop-down arrow under “Current Calendar” and select your course name.

**To add a calendar entry**

1. Be sure that your course calendar is listed in the dropdown box “Current Calendar”.
2. Click on **New Event** or **New Task**.
3. Fill in at least the title, date, and time, and click on the **OK** button at the bottom.
**Message Board**

The Message Board provides a place for *asynchronous online discussions* for your specific class. Messages posted to the Message Board are automatically visible to all students in your class. Typically, the instructor will post initial "Topics" in the Message Board, though students may post topics as well. Topic order is chronological order; with the most recent posting appear at the top. There is no other way to change the order. Two of the most recent Message Board topics also show up on the Course Homepage.

**To post a new topic:**
1. To see a list of your topics, click the **Message Board** link under the Course Tools menu.
2. Click on **Post a Topic**. Topic will acts as a category for all the postings inside it.
3. Enter the topic title and click **Add Topic**. The new topic is shown with a green dot next to it.

Thread messages and Replies are posted inside each topic, and these become a threaded discussion.

**To post a new Thread Message:**
1. Click on the topic name to view the message list for that topic.
2. Click on **Start New Thread**, Fill in the subject and the message, and click on **Add Thread**.
3. After there are a number of threads/replies to a topic, clicking on the first message will reveal the message thread.
4. If you want to reply to that message thread, click on **Reply to this Thread**. Enter your message and click on **Post Reply**.

**To delete a Topic or a Thread Message:**
1. **To delete a Topic**: Go to the Topic List area by clicking on the **Topic List**, and click on the **X** next to the Topic name. Click **OK** to confirm. All the thread messages inside that topic will be deleted.
2. **To delete a Thread Message:** Click on **Topic List**, click on the Topic name or the arrow sign, and click on the **plus** sign next to the thread name to expand replies. Click on the **next to any thread message you would like to delete.** (If you delete the first thread message, all the replies will be deleted.)

### Content Tools – Overview
Instructors may use course tools to complete the following tasks:

- Create and manage the course homepage, including the news, photos, links, files, and announcements available to members.
- Set up the course message board with topics and an overall description, and delete topics, messages, or replies as necessary.
- Create and manage the course calendar.

The "Content Tools" are simply the channel for instructors to manage each of the “Course Tools area”. For example, this area provides the means to post your files, photos, links, announcements, and approve any that are submitted by students. Students may not directly post links, files, photos, or announcements unless they are granted special permission by the course leader (instructor). However, students can submit each of those items for posting, and they are posted after being approved by the instructor.

### Manage Files

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**Important:**
- Files are limited to **5 MB per file**. Each course is limited to **100 MB total** file space.
- All files must be in compliance with PCC’s Copyright Policies ([http://www.pcc.edu/about/policy/copyright/](http://www.pcc.edu/about/policy/copyright/)).

1. Click on **Manage Files** from the Content Tools.
2. You may create subfolders to organize your files. Enter the name of the folder next to “Add new sub-folder” and click on the **Add New Sub-folder** button.
3. If you want to add the file inside the subfolder you just created, select the folder first (indicate by yellow highlight).

To add a file, click on **Browse** next to Add New File, select the file and click on **Open**. Then click on **Add New Files** button next to the Browse button, and the file will be available to students through the **Files** link in the **Course Tools** menu.

**Note:** Students may also submit files to be posted following your approval.
You can rename the file name or replace the current file.

1. Click on button next to the file name you’d like to rename or replace.
2. To rename a file, type the new name in the “New File Name” box and click on Update File button.

**Important:** Do not delete the file extension, e.g. a Word document has .doc file extension.

To replace a file, click on Browse, select the file and click on Open or double-click the file name, then click on Update File button.

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**Manage Links, Photos, and News**

The format of this section is consistent with Manage Photos, Manage News. Manage Links, Photos, and News status are divided into 3:

- **Submitted:** A list of links/photos/news that have been submitted by members (students), but not yet approved. So only the instructor is able to see it.
- **Active:** A list of all active (approved posted) links/photos/news. So all class members are able to see it.
- **Inactive:** A list of all links/photos/news that have been deactivated (can’t be seen by members), but not yet deleted.

**To post a new link:**

1. Click on Manage Links from the Content Tools area, and then click on Post a New Link in the Active Links section.
2. Select Active in the status dropdown box.
3. Enter a title, URL, description, and click on Post.

**To post a new photo:**

1. Click on Manage Photos from the Content Tools area, and then click on Post a New Photo in the Active Photos section.
2. Select Active in the status dropdown box.
3. Click on Browse, select the photo and click on Open.
4. Enter a title and caption, and click on Post.
To post new news:
1. Click on Manage News from the Content Tools area, and then click on Post a new Article in the Active Articles section.
2. Select Active in the status dropdown box.
3. Enter a title/subject, copy and paste the article content, and click on Post.

Manage Homepage

By default, your course homepage will show the 3 most recent announcements, message board posts, featured photo, and featured links. To see other message posts, etc., students need to click on the link to that tool (e.g. click on Message Board). A featured photo, featured link, and “Top 5 Links” can also be made visible on the homepage. To do this:
1. A photo or links must first be added through Manage Photos or Manage Links, and make the status Active.
2. Click on Manage Homepage from the Content Tools area, and click on the desired Edit button.
3. Select the desired photo or links, and click on Set Photo or Set Links to finish. Your selection will now show up on the Homepage.

Important:

You can't delete photo and links that are being featured on the homepage. If you want to remove featured photo or links, click on Edit on either photo or links, check Section Inactive, and click on Set Links.
Configuration Tools – Applications Available
Each of the content tools can be individually disabled.
1. Click on Applications from the Configuration Tools area.
2. Check or uncheck the box next to the tools as desired.
3. Click on Update Settings.

Consolidated Courses
You will want to use this feature if:
- You provide a large number of files, photos, news, etc.) to students via the course homepage, and
- You would like to preserve the format and materials/links available from term to term without recreating the online structure each term, or
- You teach multiple sections of the same course, and you would like additions you make to one class homepage to appear automatically in the other online sections of the same class.

Think of a consolidated course as the “parent” course that automatically feeds everything that is added to the consolidated course’s homepage directly to each “member” course, and it will be preserved the following term. For example, every announcement added to a consolidated course appears to students in all member courses, and it will also appear as an announcement the following term.

In the example below, the heading contains the word “Consolidated”. The “member” courses are listed on the right.
Conversely, an announcement directed only at students in one of the member courses can be added directly inside that member course. Such an announcement will appear to only to students in that class section and it will not be preserved from term to term. The example below is the homepage of one of the “member” courses. (Note the additional announcement, specific to that class. Also, the term “Consolidated” is not used. Specific information about that class is listed on the right.)

At the bottom of the Course Homepage of a member course, you'll find a direct link to the Parent course.

**How to Create a Consolidated Course**

For details on creating, managing, and removing consolidated courses, refers to the handout “Consolidated Courses”, available from the Help tab in MyPCC. Just follow the link to Where do I find the MyPCC Quick Sheets from MyPCC FAQ channel. Before creating a consolidated course, we recommend that you talk to your local Presentation Support Specialist (page 2).