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THE COLLEGE OF  
SAINT ROSE

## **Optimizing my Blackboard Course Site**

**Information Technology Services**

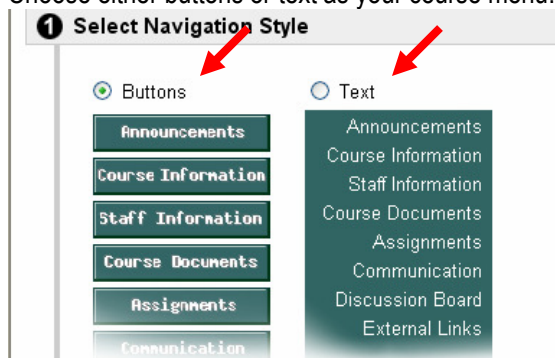
**The College of Saint Rose**

## I. Customizing your Course Menu Buttons

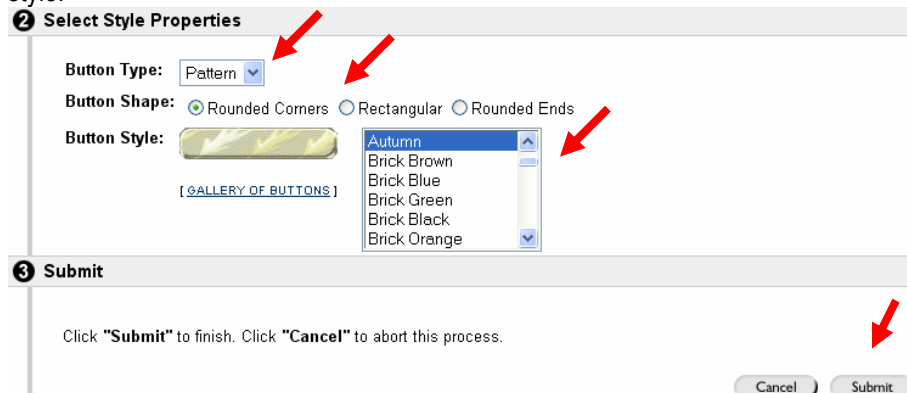
Blackboard allows you to customize your course menu buttons extensively. You can rename, reorder, and change the color of the buttons. You can also add or delete these buttons wherever necessary.

l). To change the design and color of the buttons

1. Go to **Control Panel**.
2. Click **Settings** under Course Options.
3. Scroll down and click **Course Design**.
4. Click **Course Design** again.
5. Choose either buttons or text as your course menu.



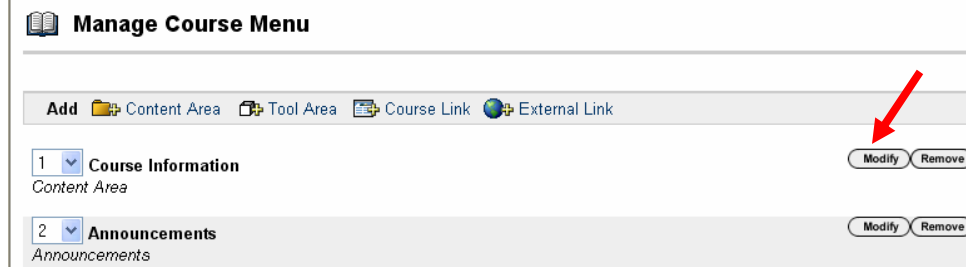
6. If you choose buttons as your navigation style, select your button type, shape and style.



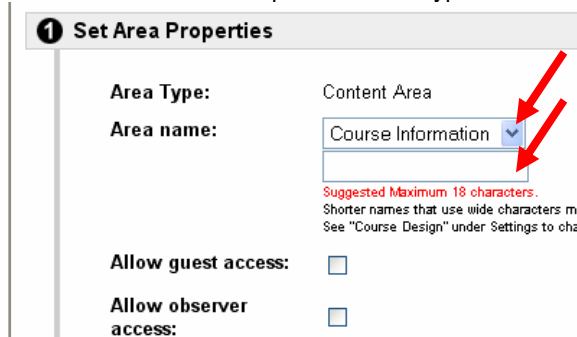
7. Click the **Submit** button.
8. Click OK to go back to Control Panel.

II). To rename your course menu buttons,

1. Go to **Control Panel**.
2. Click **Manage Course Menu** in Course Options section.
3. To rename the course menu button, click on the **Modify** button next to the course menu button you'd like to rename.



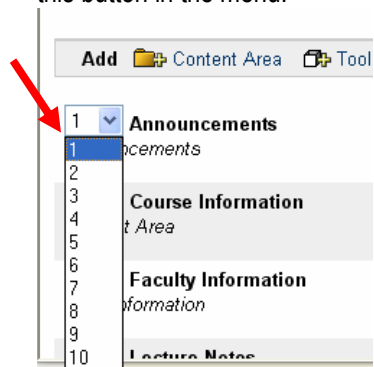
4. Either choose from the drop down list, or type in the name in the *Area Name* box.



5. Click the **Submit** button.
6. Click **OK**. You'll be back to the Manage Course Menu page.

III). To reorder the course menu button,

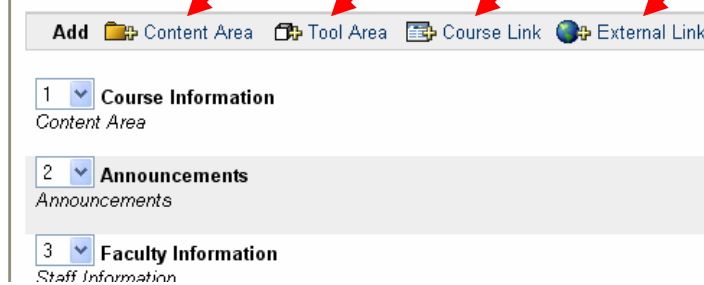
1. Go to **Control Panel**.
2. Click **Manage Course Menu** in Course Options section.
3. Click the drop down arrow before the button and choose the number you'd like to put this button in the menu.



4. You've reordered the Course Menu buttons.

IV). To add a menu button,

1. Go to **Control Panel**.
2. Click **Manage Course Menu** in Course Options section.
3. Select one of the buttons to **Add Content Area, Tool Area, Course Link, or External Link** depending which area you'd like to add a button to.

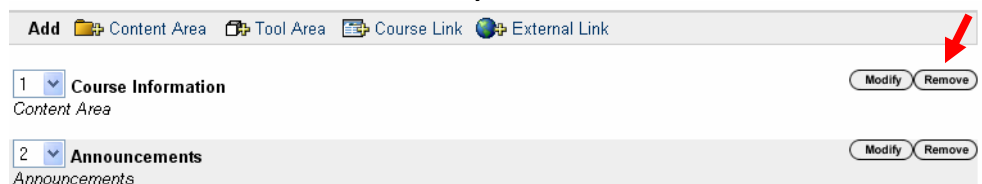


4. Set area properties by filling in the appropriate information for *Area Type, Area Name, etc.*

5. Click the **Submit** button.
6. Click OK. You'll be back to the Manage Course Menu page.

V). To delete a course menu button, (This action will delete all the content under this area)

1. Click the **Remove** button next to the button you'd like to delete.



2. A warning will pop up to remind you that the content under this area will be deleted.
3. If you still decide to remove the button, click **OK**. You'll be back to the Manage Course Menu page.
4. Do not remove the Tools button because you'll remove all the tools and are not able to get them back. Instead you can remove some of the tools you don't need by clicking the Modify button. Then make the tool that you don't need unavailable.

## II. Adding a Banner for your Course

I). Go to the following web site to create your banner, and then save it to your local computer.

<http://www1.flamingtext.com/>  
<http://www.3dtextmaker.com/>

II). Upload the banner you created to your course by the following steps.

1. Go to **Control Panel**.
2. Click **Settings** under Course Options.
3. Scroll down and click **Course Design**.
4. Click **Course Banner**.
5. Click on the **Browse** button.
6. Click on the **Submit** button.
7. Click on the link of your course name. You should see the banner added to your course

## III. Preparing Course Documents of Various Format

I). Please find the attached file types that Blackboard recognizes, as well as hardware configurations, web browsers and ISPs that Blackboard recommends.

II). Compare the file size of different file formats and the time needed to download the file.  
Generally, HTML file is smaller than a word, PPT file. PDF file is smaller than an image File.

III). Convert Word file to html file

1. Open your Word file.
2. Click **File** in the menu bar.
3. Select **Save as Web Page**.
4. Complete the process to save the file.

IV). Convert a PowerPoint file to a word file

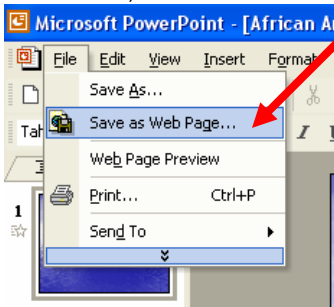
1. Open your PowerPoint file.
2. Click **File** in the menu bar.
3. Select **Send to Microsoft Word**.
4. Choose the format you'd like as a word file.
5. Click **OK**.

IV). Convert PowerPoint file to html file

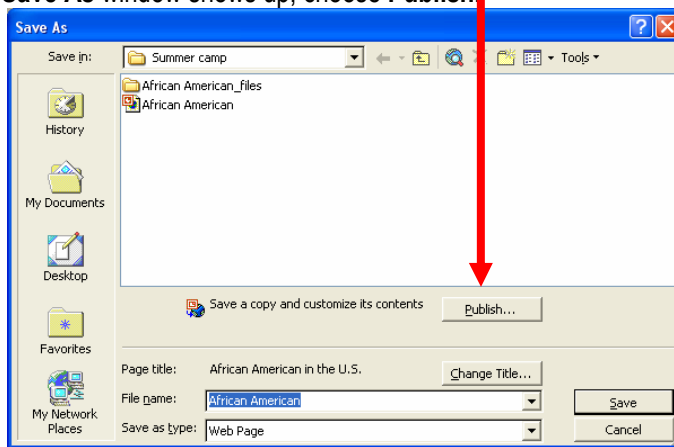
The reasons for converting a Power Point file to HTML file are: 1. When students open a big PowerPoint file, it takes longer time to load the file, while an html file doesn't take that long. 2. In addition, students don't have to have the software to view your Power Point file.

For users of Microsoft Office XP or 2000, follow the steps below to convert your PowerPoint files to HTML files.

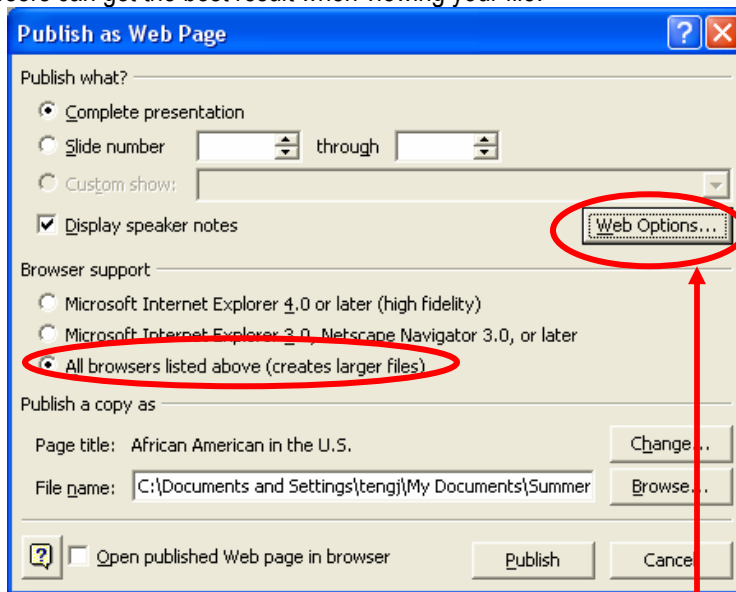
1. Open your PowerPoint file.
2. From the **File** menu, choose **Save as Web Page**.



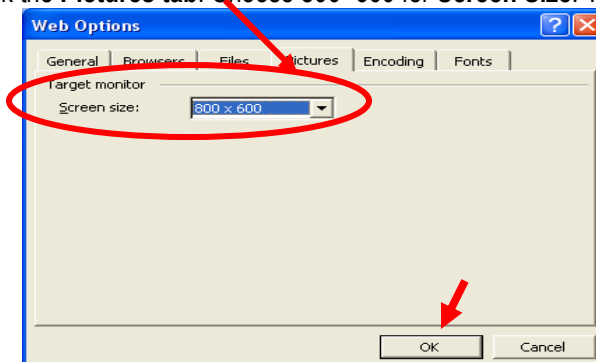
3. The **Save As** window shows up, choose **Publish**.



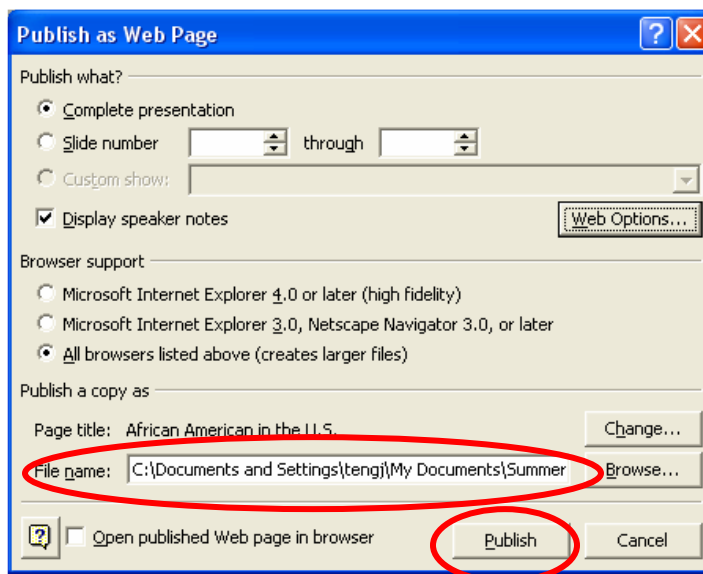
4. Now the **Publish as Web Page** window pops up. Make sure that under **Browser support**, **All browsers listed above** is selected so that students using different browsers can get the best result when viewing your file.



5. Open Web Options window to set up screen size by clicking **Web Options** button.
6. Click the **Pictures** tab. Choose **800×600** for **Screen Size**. Then click **OK**.



7. Now you're back to **Publish as Web Page** window. Choose the folder you want to save this file and the name of your file. Then click **Publish**. You have converted your Power Point file into html file.



8. Now follow the steps for Archiving the Web Site and Importing the Web Site into Blackboard.
9. You can find the instructions on how to import the web sites into Blackboard in Blackboard Training course **Document – Advanced Features --Importing the Web Sites into Blackboard**. Be careful when you zip your file; make sure you zip all the files.

#### IV. Using Easy Navigation

- I). Consistent color code titles
- II). Clear folder organization (no more than 3 layers): add folders to your **Course Documents** folder
- III). Explanation for specific, important document that will take longer to download
- IV). Clear announcements and links – consistent and customized text: add a link between an announcement and a course document.

#### V. Providing Student Guide for the Features You Use

1. Save the guide to your local computer/ follow the instruction in the student guide.
  - a. Go to **Blackboard Training** course.
  - b. Click **Resources**.
  - c. Click **Handouts for Students**.
  - d. Right click on **the link** of the document, then choose **Save Target/ Link as**.
  - e. Save the document in your computer.
  - f. Save all the files in the folder of Student Handout.
2. Add **Student Guide** button → download student handouts → upload to your course
  - a. Go to **Control panel**.
  - b. Go to **Manage Course Menu**
  - c. Click **Add Content Area**
  - d. Type in **Student Guide** in the text box for Name
  - e. Click on the **Submit** button. Then click on **OK**.
  - f. You should be able to see the button if you go to the course.
3. Upload it to your course as you upload other files.
  - a. Go to **Control Panel**
  - b. Click **Student Guide**
  - c. Click **Add Item**.
  - e. Upload all the files of student handout you just saved.
4. You can also find a link to students' FAQs on this site. Add this link to your course site.



## **Web browsers and hardware configurations:**

All users are discouraged from using Netscape, Mozilla or the AOL web browsers to access Blackboard. These web browsers have known issues with Blackboard.

Blackboard recommends not using the AOL browser. Instead, AOL users should log onto AOL, then minimize the AOL window and start up Internet Explorer to access Blackboard.

It is suggested that you follow the guidelines below for your operating system and web browser configurations for Blackboard 7.1.

Windows XP: Internet Explorer 6.0  
Netscape 8.0  
Mozilla Firefox 1.0  
Mac OS 10.3 & 10.4: Mozilla Firefox 1.0

Browsers should be configured to accept cookies and allow for the use of JavaScript. Also, pop-up blockers should not be used as they interfere with the functioning of Blackboard.

Hardware configurations that Blackboard recommends:

Windows  
400 Mhz Intel Pentium III Processor (933 preferred)  
128 MB RAM (256 preferred)  
6 GB Hard Drive  
56.6 Kbps Modem (Cable Modem/DSL preferred)  
Windows 98, 2000, or XP

Macintosh  
400 Mhz Processor (933 preferred)  
128 MB RAM (256 preferred)  
6 GB Hard Drive  
56.6 K Modem (Cable Modem/DSL preferred)  
Macintosh OS 9

## File types that are recognized by Blackboard System

<b>Extension</b>	<b>File Type</b>	<b>Programs associates with the file type</b>
.doc	Text	Microsoft word
.txt	Text	Text or HTML editor, word processor
.pdf	Text	Adobe Acrobat Reader
.ppt, .pps	Slide show	MS PowerPoint, & PowerPoint Player
.xls	Spreadsheet	MS Excel
.htm, .html	Web page	HTML editor or We browser
.gif	Image	Graphics program or Web browser
.jpg, .jpeg	Image	Graphics program or Web browser
.mpg, .mpeg	Video	Windows Media Player or Real Player
.ra, .au	Audio	Real audio Player
.aiff, .wav	Audio	Audio Program
.avi	Video	Video Player (not Macintosh compatible)
.ram	Video	Real Audio Movie
.mov	Movie	QuickTime
.wmv	Video	Windows Media Video

Note: This is not an exhaustive list, but it includes most file formats used. Please make sure that the files you upload are in the format that Blackboard supported, otherwise other users will not be able to open/ view your files on their computer.