

# **Tutorial: Moodle: A Simple and Intuitive Open-Source Course Management System**

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In this tutorial we discuss Moodle—a free, open-source course management system (CMS), currently in use at the authors’ department [1]. We will demonstrate main features of Moodle to include learner, instructor and administrator views, as well as provide recommendations on system configuration and installation. Moodle is a recent project that began as part of doctoral dissertation work in constructivist learning pedagogy by the project’s author, Martin Dougiamas [2]. In the past couple of years, Moodle has grown to include a diverse group of participants/users interested in both distance learning and in enhancing traditionally delivered courses using a CMS package. Many of Moodle’s users have worked with other commercial systems, such as WebCT and Blackboard, and became interested in Moodle for its simplicity and intuitiveness, openness to modification and customization, ease of administration and, of course, its price.

Moodle can be used to deliver distance learning courses or to enhance traditional face-to-face courses. Moodle requires a minimal learning curve for learners, instructors, and system administrators. On the learner side, Moodle is intuitive, simple, and uncluttered. This helps remove the confusion and frustration often experienced by learners when using some commercial CMS. This allows learners to focus on the task of learning. On the instructor side, courses can be organized around topics, weeks, or in a discussion-based “social” format. Course content can include threaded discussion forums, resources (uploaded files, external links), assignments (both on-line and off-line submissions are possible), quizzes, as well as some other learning and assessment tools such as workshops (based on peer-grading) and journals. Moodle’s simplicity extends to system administration and maintenance. Hardware needs can vary greatly depending upon the number of users and courses, however, a middle-grade, reasonably modern x86 server running a UNIX or Windows operating systems should be sufficient. System setup and installation on the backend should be straightforward for someone comfortable with basic system administration. Front-end administration of Moodle requires very little experience, and is as simple and intuitive as the instructor side. Moodle’s documentation is brief and well organized. Like other open-sources projects, there is an extensive community-based environment with various discussion topics [2].

References:

- 1) <http://courses.cs.westga.edu/>
- 2) <http://www.moodle.org/>

Filename: acmmidsoutheast2003-p13.doc  
Directory: C:\Inetpub\wwwroot\workdir\New Folder  
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