Article No 1: posted by Instructor on Fri, Nov. 7, 1997, 16:43
Subject: How often does Banner registration need to be uploaded?

In the first meeting it was brought to our attention by Laura Lamb that registration can change daily even as late as the day before grades are due (drops & adds). This creates a question of how often WebCT must be updated so that only currently registered students have access to library resources. One suggestion was that registration information be updated each Friday. However, this may create an access barrier for students who are added or moved midweek from one class roster to another. It was suggested that in these cases, additions may have to be made manually by the receiving professor in order for the student to have access to section specific information. Will this suffice?

Article No 3: posted by Instructor on Fri, Nov. 7, 1997, 17:00
Subject: What will be the minimum Internet access requirements for students & faculty?

What are the overall minimum requirements to perform WebCT functions without problem (hardware, software, browser, etc.)? How will we inform students of these requirements before registration? How soon can we get all faculty computer resources up to speed? Who will be responsible for doing so?

Article No 4: posted by Instructor on Fri, Nov. 7, 1997, 17:24
Subject: Who will publicize the changes we propose?

So far, we have agreed that since it is the library's proposal to use WebCT as the vehicle through which all online databases may be delivered securely (and thereby meet the criteria demanded by certain licensing agreements) it will be the library's responsibility to publicize this change. The distinction between classes on campus being supplemented by this online resource, and classes which actually conduct themselves one or more times online, must be made clear. Professors who wish to take part in the latter must be made aware of the proper procedures for doing so (filling out course proposal) and why these procedures are so crucial (monitoring of success for grant $, faculty & teacher support, etc.). We agreed there must be a concerted effort by all parties to stress the distinction and need for collaboration. The Distance Learning Department and the Computer Center have agreed to collaborate in the coordination, support, and publicity of these "truly" online courses.

Will the department chairs and deans help
disseminate information, in order to avoid any confusion or misunderstanding concerning this proposal? Will the registrar's office, Graduate School, and Admissions help disseminate correct information as well?

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Article No 5: posted by Instructor on Fri, Nov. 7, 1997, 17:33
Subject: Who will provide training & support?

It was agreed that the library would provide training and support to their staff, as well as faculty and students requesting help accessing library resources (just as they do with GALILEO, etc. now). The Distance Learning department will provide training and support for faculty wishing to use WebCT to conduct one or more class meetings online or utilize additional supplemental tools. The Computer Center has agreed to help in all respects. <p> Should staff members in the Registrar's office, the Graduate Office, and Admissions be trained?

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Article No 6: posted by Instructor on Sat, Nov. 8, 1997, 10:52
Subject: How is the computer "script" for our proposal progressing?

In the first meeting, Kathy & Nawaf explained that they have been working closely with WebCT representatives on developing the necessary computer "script" for our proposal. What are the details? How far has this progressed? What are some of the questions, concerns, or barriers that must be addressed?

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Article No 7: [Branch from no. 3]
posted by Nawaf Muallem on Sun, Nov. 9, 1997, 17:45
Subject: re: What will be the minimum Internet access requirements for students & faculty?
The minimum requirements for WebCT:

1) computer (minimum --> 486 with 16MB ram)
2) modem (minimum --> 14.4kb)
3) internet connection: this can be obtained form MCI, mindspring, AT&T, BellSouth, etc. etc.
4) netscape 3.0 or higher. webct does NOT work very well with internet explorer, or the AOL browser.

There needs to be some kind of a mass advertising (flyers??), announcements in classes by faculty, word of mouth ....

Each tech area in every college should be responsible in upgrading their faculty to an acceptble PC/Mac/browser.

How soon? Good question! Whenever each tech person grows TWO extra pairs of hands and feet!

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Article No 8: [Branch from no. 1]
posted by Carol Goodson on Sun, Nov. 9, 1997, 17:53
Subject: re: How often does Banner registration need to be uploaded?

I think it depends on how hard it would be for the instructor to do it... if they teach off-campus (for example), but have to wait to make the change until they can access BANNER in their on-campus office--to which they may not return for a day or two anyway--I think this procedure would not work very well. I am clinging to the hope that daily updating of information will be a possibility. /cfg

Article No 9: [Branch from no. 5]
posted by Nawaf Muallem on Sun, Nov. 9, 1997, 17:53
Subject: re: Who will provide training & support?

We, Computer Center, will help but we should be the secondary point of contact and not first. The library needs to train ALL of its staff on WebCT and they will turn around and "help" students. Once we know that this is going to work, we (distance learning/computer cetner/library) can schedule 45 minute training seminars to faculty in a lab somewhere on campus on how to use webct. Its going to be tough for one person or dept. to do this so all of us have to pitch in.

Article No 10: [Branch from no. 6]
posted by Nawaf Muallem on Sun, Nov. 9, 1997, 17:59
Subject: re: How is the computer "script" for our proposal progressing?

Kathy is communicating with the webct people so please correct me if I am wrong. There are going to be TWO scripts. The FIRST one will be run ONCE at the beginning of the quarter which will create all the courses down to every section. The SECOND script will be run DAILY (we think because the class roster is so dynamic; we will have to experiment here) and this will populate the students and faculty member into the correct section of the course. The user id is the social security number and the password is whatever the students pin number is on banner.

Article No 11: [Branch from no. 10]
posted by Kathy Kral on Mon, Nov. 10, 1997, 08:16
Subject: re: How is the computer "script" for our proposal progressing?

Nawaf is correct, there will be 2 scripts. We have a test file of student data to send to webct so they can create the script that loads students into the courses, now all I need is a test file of courses. I should have that today.

One problem with a daily re-load will be if a faculty member has started to add grades and then we re-load the data. What will happen to the grades s/he has already entered? Can webct just add a new student and drop those that are no longer enrolled, rather than wiping everything out and starting fresh? I have asked Salari at webct about this.
What about those students that don't really enroll until the day before grades are run? Will they just not have access?

Article No 12: posted by Kathy Kral on Wed, Nov. 12, 1997, 11:47
Subject: webct scripts

Salari from webct emailed me yesterday with a potential problem - if we use a student's social security number as their login, on the email screen there is a list of logins and names. This means we would have a list of SSN associated with a name - a potential security problem. He suggested we switch to using first letter of first name plus first letter of middle name plus last name as the login. I told him that was OK. If there is a duplicate login within one class he will make a separate file and we will have to deal with these exceptions manually. The password would remain the students PIN in Banner.

Salari now has both of the files he needs to write the scripts.

Article No 13: [Branch from no. 9]
posted by Instructor on Wed, Nov. 12, 1997, 20:19
Subject: re: Who will provide training & support?

At this time, the distance learning office is in the process of trying to train faculty who will be using WebCT for Distance courses (at least one meeting off-campus). We are usually spending about 2 hours training 2 faculty at a time. Some catch on right away; others will need more guidance. As Nawaf said, training EVERYONE if the library proposal works out will indeed require a collaborative and structured effort.

Article No 14: [Branch from no. 8]
posted by Laura Lamb on Thu, Nov. 13, 1997, 09:16
Subject: re: How often does Banner registration need to be uploaded?

Faculty do not have access to be able to make changes to a student's schedule throughout the quarter. That is done in the Registrar's Office based on the information we receive from the rolls. Another factor that I did not mention in the meeting is withdrawals. Students may withdraw from a course or from school beginning the day after drop/add. We do numerous withdrawals each day, working up to several hundred course withdrawals per day the last few days before the midpoint of the quarter. Many students withdraw after the midpoint, even knowing that they will receive "WF" grades. I assume that a student who has withdrawn would not be given access to the course information. I would recommend that the upload be done at least once a week, but preferably on a daily basis if that proves to be
Faculty do not enter grades. Those are turned in to the Registrar's Office at the end of the quarter and we enter those. Occasionally, we get grades early, particularly in the summer when there are several sessions and for the few courses that meet at odd times, i.e., all day for a week before the quarter officially starts. We would not want to enter those early grades, however, and then have them wiped out.

Another potential problem is uploading one course file at the beginning of the quarter. If I understand what you are saying, there will be a file created of all sections at the beginning of the quarter. Unfortunately, many courses are divided into several sections several weeks into the quarter (again based on class rosters). The original section may have 60 students, but then be divided into two different sections with different professors. One student teaching section may be divided into five or six sections based on who is supervising which students. It is also not unusual for us to be told about a contract course that we knew nothing about four or five weeks into the quarter. This file will probably need to be updated periodically as well.

Well, our two weeks are almost up (can you believe?) Do we know whether or not this will work yet? Or do we need more time for Salari? If so, are we still looking toward getting this going for Winter, or later?

I have logged-in to our Lib101 course as designer from my office and our refdesk computers. My login and password remain effective all day (at least) and even clearing the Netscape cache (memory/disk) and history does not remove them.

In short, if students login to a course on WebCT from any public computer, anyone else will be able to use the history, back buttons, or just traverse the WebCT directory, and WebCT doesn't ask for a password.

This could be a slight problem:-) chris
I have started playing with techniques for accessing resources that require authentication by using WebCT login as the authentication. Here's what I got so far:

- Created a CGI on pebbles called libaccess.cgi that uses the HTTP_REFERER environment variable to test whether the user is accessing from a student or designer subdirectory of our webct server. Here's the important part of the Perl code that does that: --START OF CODE--

```perl
$servertxt = "http://www.westga.edu:8900/SCRIPT/"; $studenttxt = "/scripts/student/"; $designertxt = "/scripts/designer/";

if (($ENV{'HTTP_REFERER'} =~ /$servertxt.*$studenttxt/) || ($ENV{'HTTP_REFERER'} =~ /$servertxt.*$designertxt/)) {

print "Location: /library/test/resourceaccess.html", "\n\n";

} else { --END OF CODE--

If the user IS accessing this CGI from a webct directory, they are given a web page that discloses passwords for library research resources and, where possible, provides automated login.

If the user IS NOT accessing this CGI from a webct directory, they get a handy little message that points back to the root of the webct server (so they can try again). I'll replace this with instructions for how to login to your webct class.

Some possible problems: In an attempt to make the library research resources page secure from prying eyes, I put it in a directory under //pebbles/www/library that has permissions set to 711 so that only execute is set for all users. That way, hopefully, only I can actually get at the file by name, while other users cannot. (actually, other users CAN get at it by name IF they know the name). I don't know how secure this is.

I did test by trying to use our campus web search engine to get the file. It did not get retrieved.

The other problem is that of WebCT/Browsers caching login/passwords so that multiuser computers may not be all that darn secure.

comments appreciated -- try to hack this if you can:
http://www.westga.edu/cgi-bin/libaccess.cgi

later, chris
Salari from webct emailed me late yesterday and said he would have the scripts ready for us to test by the end of today.

Salari emailed me the scripts on Wed. I will be out of town all this week, but Nawaf is going to try to start a separate webct server and set up separate directories and test these scripts.

Salari also provided me with the new license code, and I installed that, so we are using our new unlimited license.

After much searching of the webct-users listserv archive, I found this post from Salari concerning the logging in/logging out problem that Chris mentioned:

From the June 1997 webct-users listserv archive:

The problem is that it's not possible for us at the server end to force the browser to forget the username and password that you entered. If that becomes an option, we will gladly consider a "Logout" button. In the meantime, the only way to force the browser to forget a password is to either: a) quit netscape b) access a protected area (such as a different course) to which you don't have access. When you are prompted for a new password, and enter a bogus password, your original password is forgotten by the browser.

I had a problem with netscape caching the cgi results that usually caused it to err on the side of failure, even if the
user accessed from the proper http_referrer. So, I found that
the pragma tag prevents some browsers from caching the page.

Here's the added tag:

<HTML> <HEAD> <TITLE>Library Access - DENIED</TITLE> <meta
http-equiv="pragma" content="no-cache"> </HEAD>

I wonder if this wouldn't help with the login/logout problem.

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Article No 23: [Branch from no. 22]
Subject: re: Authenticated Resources

Shoot, WebCT won't display html tags in these messages. Here's
that pragma tag (maybe):

<meta http-equiv="pragma" content="no-cache">

And it goes in the HEAD.

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Article No 24: [Branch from no. 23]
Subject: re: Authenticated Resources

Ok, how about this:

&lt;meta http-equiv="pragma" content="no-cache"&gt;

in the HEAD. I had to use the ampersand lt; and gt; to get this
to display.

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Article No 25: [Branch from no. 17]
posted by Instructor on Tue, Dec. 16, 1997, 17:20
Subject: re: WebCT Caching Login/Password

That is a good point! Hopefully this concern may be eliminated
through a change in scripting??