

Emerging Technologies: Blackboard 9.1

Best Practices: Course Copy

If not properly handled, copying courses can cause issues with file permissions and the file directory. This document is meant as a guide to help avoid these file permission errors or to correct them if needed.

Attached files are the files that have been uploaded to a course, such as Word documents and PowerPoint presentations. File permissions indicate to Blackboard how much access user roles can have to any given file. In this case we are referring to the lack of an assigned "Read" permission for the "Student" role. A file missing the Student role, especially without Read access, prevents all students from viewing the file.

Best Practice: Avoiding the Errors

For each subject matter and level create a "Master Course." Complete course development in this Master Course, then copy the content into the actual course shells within Blackboard each semester. Develop the Master Course within a test course. Individual users can create test courses on the My Bb Management tab. The main principles of a Master Course are:

1. Never copy content into a Master Course.
2. Never enroll students or create groups within the Master Course.
3. Always verify the content of a Master Course after an upgrade to the Learning Management System (LMS), in this case Blackboard.

To clarify, you can upload files to the Master Course, such as documents and other files, but you should not copy content from a different Blackboard course into the Master Course. You also should not copy from a Word document and paste it into the Master Course. You may copy from a text document, such as Notepad, but not from Word as it contains hidden formatting code that can cause issues when pasted into a web application. These problems can range from invisible content to visible code appearances.

Following these steps will greatly reduce the likelihood of encountering the course copy and file permissions errors described in this document and in the published list of Known Issues.

Minimizing the Errors

If you must copy content from an existing course into a new course shell, please follow these steps to minimize the number of resulting errors in the destination course.

In the source course, i.e. the course that you are copying from, perform the *Move Files to Course Files* operation located under *Packages and Utilities* in the *Control Panel*. Detailed instructions for this process can be found in the Faculty How-To Guides. Make sure that this step completes before continuing.

Proceed with the Course Copy process as normal. When you have confirmed that all content is copied into the destination course, you will need to examine the file permissions.

In the destination course, select *Files* from the *Control Panel*. Click on the course ID to open the *Course Files*, which displays a list of the files attached to the course. At the end of the row for each file and folder, there is a column titled *Permissions*. Click on one of the permissions icons to open



the *Manage Permissions* page for the corresponding file or folder.

In the list of roles and assigned permissions, there **must** be an option for either *All Course Users* or *Students* with *Read* access. If this role and the corresponding permission are not there, students cannot see the file. You will need to check every individual file and folder listed.

Finally, if any of the files are missing the proper permissions in order for students to view the file, you will need to add those permissions. If there are contents within a folder, the folder permissions carry through to the contents within. This means that you only have to correct the folder, not the individual files within that folder.

You can find information about Managing Course Files Permissions in our Faculty How-To Guides.

Correcting the Errors

If you have already copied your course and file permissions errors are occurring, please follow these steps to correct them.

First, in the course that is displaying an issue with the file permissions, use the *Move Files to Course Files* option in *Packages and Utilities* under the *Control Panel*. Make sure this process completes before moving on to the next step. This process is critical; the file permissions cannot be changed if the files do not appear in the *Course Files*.

You can find instructions for the Move Files to Course Files process in our Faculty How-To Guides.

Second, select *Files* from the *Control Panel*. Click on the course ID to open the list of files within the course. At the end of the row for each file and folder, there is a *Permissions* column. Click on the



permissions icon to open the file permissions.

In the list of permissions there **must** be an option for either *All Course Users* or *Students* with *Read* access. If this role and the corresponding permission are not there, students cannot see the file. You will need to check every individual file and folder listed.

Finally, if the files are missing the proper permissions in order for students to view the file, you will need to add those permissions. If there are contents within a folder, the folder permissions carry through to the contents within. This means that you only have to correct the folder, not the individual files within that folder.

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