



Academic Systems Overview

Prepared for the UW System Board of Regents

March 5, 2015

Academic Systems is comprised of a suite of software and web-based tools that provides essential services to support teaching and learning, as well as achievement of the academic mission of UW System institutions. There are also a significant number of administrative uses of academic system technologies to support university business, such as Human Resources training, support of continuing education programs, and general business operations. The integrated portfolio of tools includes the Desire2Learn (D2L) “Brightspace” Learning Environment, Kaltura media management system, and Blackboard Collaborate (BbC) web conferencing service. Technical integration among these services allows for an efficient experience for both instructors and students.

The learning technology landscape within UW System is based on the philosophy of shared governance with an emphasis on leveraging the power of a common systems approach. The UW System Director of Learning Technology Development provides leadership in ensuring collaboration and communication regarding learning technology are achieved among the UW institutions and UW System Administration. The following councils and governance groups are in place to manage the academic systems portfolio of services:

- **Common Systems Review Group (CSRG)** ^[1] was created in 1998 to provide oversight and leadership for the acquisition and management of large information technology systems used by most institutions in the University of Wisconsin System. Each UW institution financially contributes to the CSRG Fund and has a representative on CSRG, either a Chief Academic Officer, a Chief Business Officer or a Chief Information Officer. CSRG funds are used to support centralized systems and services used by campuses.
- The **Learn@UW Executive Committee** ^[2] is charged with overseeing technologies that support instruction. In the current higher education technology climate, the mission of the committee is to provide vision, strategic direction and oversight for software and online-based tools that support teaching and learning across UW System. Specific responsibilities include planning, budgeting, advocating, fostering collaboration, and resolving differences in priorities. Learn@UW Executive Committee Chair and Director of Learning Technology Development are responsible for bringing forth requests for CSRG funding.
- The **Learning Technology Development Council (LTDC)** ^[3] is a group comprised of Provost-appointed campus LTDC Representatives. Active participants in the group also include UW System campus learning technologists, instructional designers and faculty technology support professionals. The LTDC provides campuses with a structure to support collaboration across UW System, share best practices of technology integration using existing common systems (such as D2L), and explore/pilot emerging learning technologies with the goal of improving student outcomes and faculty efficiency. The Chair of the LTDC is also a member of the Learn@UW Executive Committee and provides a campus “learning technology” perspective to the Learn@UW Executive Committee.

¹ CSRG Website: <https://www.wisconsin.edu/systemwide-it/councils/csrg/>

² Learn@UW Executive Committee Website: <https://www.wisconsin.edu/systemwide-it/councils/luw-exec/>

³ LTDC Website: <https://www.wisconsin.edu/systemwide-it/councils/ltdc/>

D2L Usage (Academic Year 2014)

D2L is an online learning environment that is used by all UW campuses to provide a means for delivery and management of course content, facilitate online quizzing and discussions, and manage a gradebook. D2L is used in all course formats (e.g., face-to-face, online, blended/hybrid, etc.). Anyone affiliated with UWS campuses can use D2L at no cost. The traditional usage of D2L has been to host courses, but D2L can also be used for other purposes such as departmental meeting repositories, advisory sites, ad-hoc or project committees for discussion, etc.

Over 70% of UW System instructors are satisfied with D2L⁴

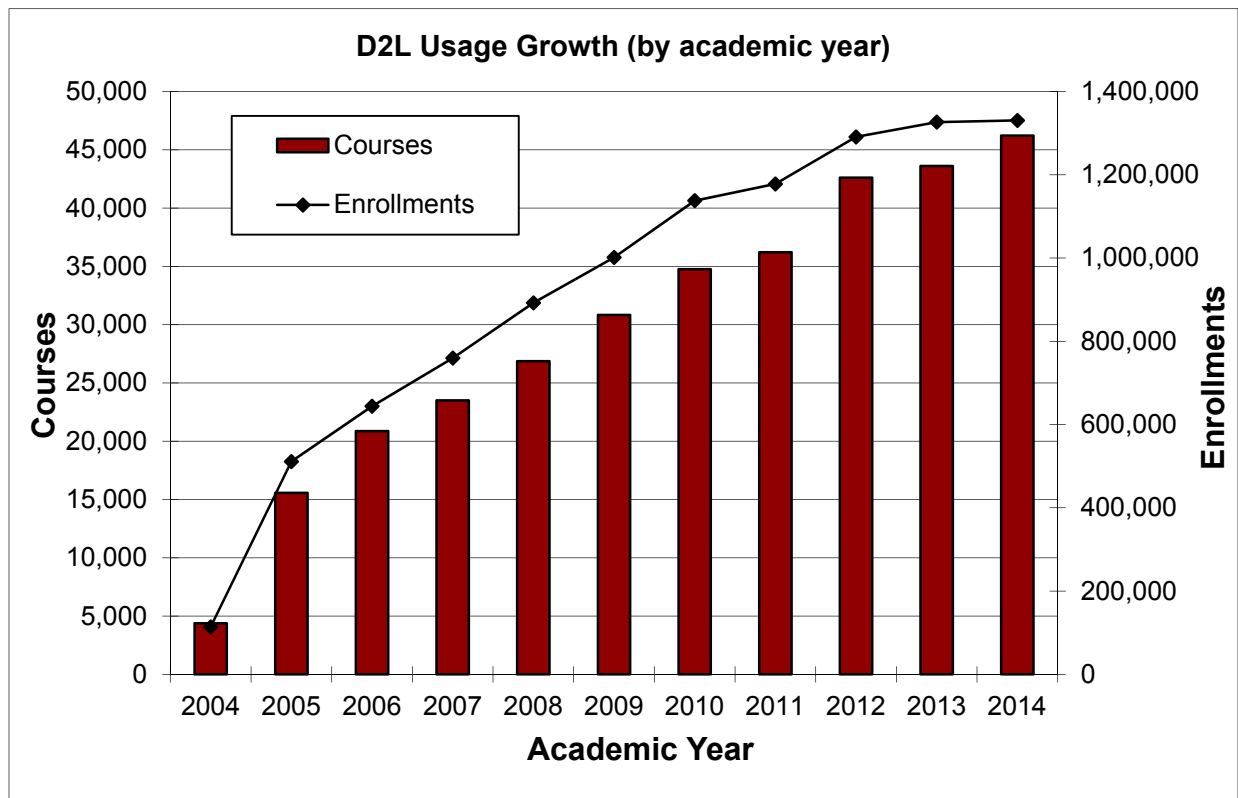
66% of UW System instructors have used D2L for more than 7 semesters⁴

~40,000,000 student generated files are stored in D2L courses

65TB of data stored in D2L courses (as of June 2014)

46,213 courses were created in D2L by UW System campuses in 2014

The following chart illustrates the steady growth of D2L usage, in terms of number of courses using the platform, and enrollments in terms of the number of student course seat filled (as a student may be enrolled in more than one course during a semester):



⁴UW System Faculty Survey on Online Teaching, Learning & Support: <https://www.wisconsin.edu/systemwide-it/projects/fac-survey/>

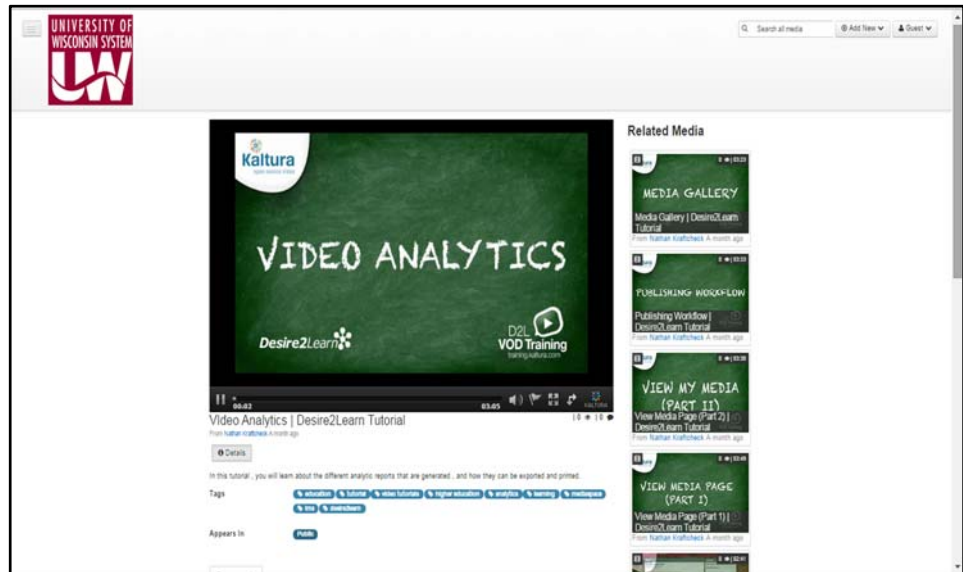
Kaltura Media Management Service

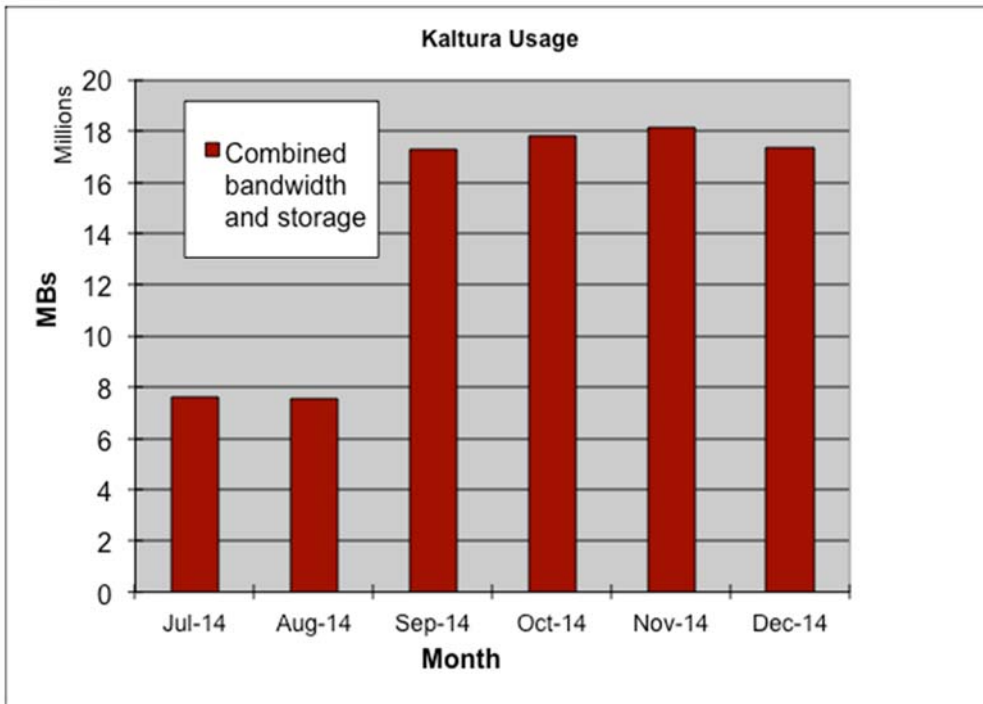
UW faculty, staff, and students use Kaltura to record, store and securely manage their media files. Transcribing and closed captioning services are also available. Examples of instructional use of Kaltura, what some refer to as a “YouTube-like” system, include:

- recording video of mock sales meetings
- the creation of student reflections/commentary videos to be used in their ePortfolio
- video delivery of faculty mini-lectures to enhance content
- recording student presentations for viewing in an online course

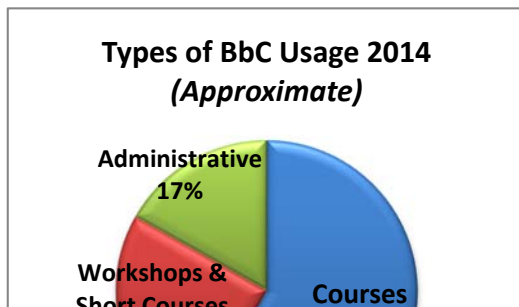
Kaltura is accessed through a variety of methods including the D2L learning environment, a campus-branded online video portal (Kaltura MediaSpace™ shown in the image to the right), and stores media files generated by lecture capture systems (e.g. Camtasia, NCast).

Kaltura is a recent addition to the suite of common systems learning technology tools. The graph below shows the monthly Kaltura usage during its first six months of contracted service:





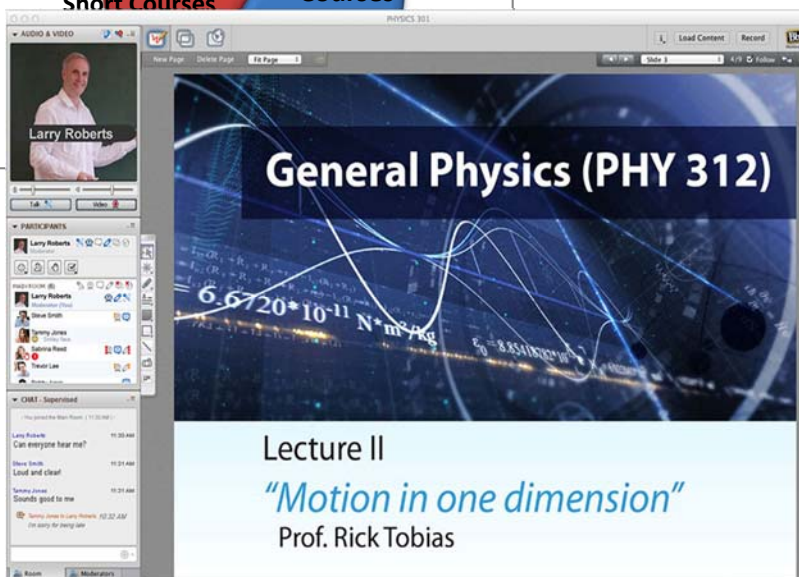
Blackboard Collaborate Web Conferencing Service



Blackboard Collaborate (BbC) provides the UW user community with a virtual environment to collaborate at a distance using real-time voice, video, chat, screen and whiteboard sharing, and presentation slides.

The service can be accessed through a variety of means, including the D2L learning environment and the “My UW” portal.

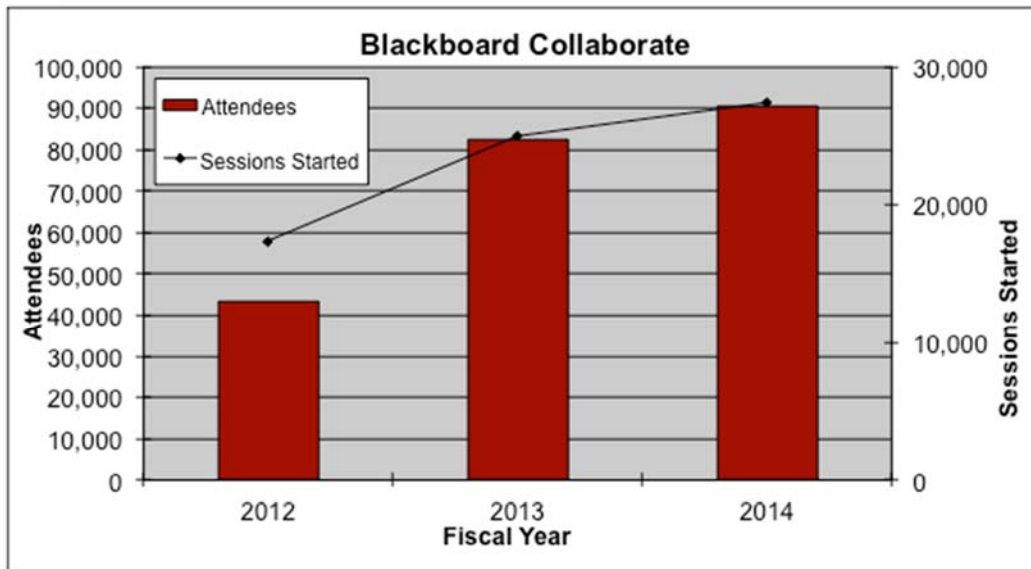
As shown in the pie chart above, BbC is used to not only facilitate instruction, but also to support administrative activities such as training and meetings, as well as non-credit workshops and coursework.



The screen image to the right shows an example of a BbC session held to support a physics course. BbC has the ability to display slides, while the professor uses video to “live lecture”. The lower left box displays a “chat” showing comments and questions among students, instructors and teaching assistants.”

(Source: blackboard.com)

The following chart depicts the growth in the use of the web conferencing service since contracted in 2012:



Recent Academic System Initiatives



2014 Academic Roadmap for the Future (visit:

<https://www.wisconsin.edu/systemwide-it/projects/academic-roadmap/>)

Sponsored by the Learn@UW Executive Committee

With the rapidly changing instructional environment and technology offerings, an academic roadmap is needed to guide the Learn@UW Executive Committee in making key decisions in planning and budgeting exercises, specifically:

- Prioritize financial support for system wide instructional applications
- Build capacity and responsiveness for future needs
- Develop an understanding of the learning ecosystem within the system



2014 Faculty Survey on Online Teaching, Learning & Support (visit:

<https://www.wisconsin.edu/systemwide-it/projects/fac-survey/>)

Sponsored by the Learn@UW Executive Committee

The Learn@UW Executive Committee periodically gathers feedback from faculty and instructional staff on their satisfaction and needs in using the Learning Management System (D2L or others) and other instructional technologies by periodically conducting system wide surveys. Such surveys were conducted in 2005, 2007, 2010 and 2014. The results of the 2014 survey informed the committee and UW System on the current needs of instructional technology as they work with vendors to improve their products, complete central budget planning and make decisions on adoption and support of emerging technologies.



2015 Learning Environment Needs Analysis Project (visit: <https://www.wisconsin.edu/systemwide-it/projects/lms-rfp-2015/>)

Sponsored by the Learn@UW Executive Committee

The UW System currently supports a common and centrally hosted D2L Learning Management System (LMS). More than 85% of the courses offered within the UW System make use of this online learning environment for supporting face-to-face, blended/hybrid, and fully-online courses. While the existing contract with D2L ends in July 2016, with the option to renew in two, one-year intervals, the higher education learning technology landscape is fast changing.

Based on the findings of Learn@UW Executive Committee initiatives, including the Roadmap and survey efforts, the Committee has recommended that we proceed with a formal, needs analysis process and, based on those findings, create an RFP for a Learning Environment (expanding from the traditional LMS product) as the market has evolved to include non-traditional learning management systems made up of multiple, interoperable products. The needs analysis project is expected to conclude at the end of the Fall 2015 semester.

Recent Academic System Initiatives (cont'd)



LTDC Virtual Showcase (visit: <https://www.wisconsin.edu/learning-tech/events-conf/vc2015/>)

The LTDC Virtual Showcase is a conference held entirely online. The showcase will be held “online” via web conference on April 9 and 10, 2015. Two keynotes will be featured: Curtis Bonk will present “Today anyone can learn anything from anyone else at any time” and Sarah Horton will address the topic of “Improve quality of life through good design.”



Instructure Canvas Pilot II (2015) (visit: <https://www.wisconsin.edu/systemwide-it/projects/canvas-ii/>)

Sponsored by the Learn@UW Executive Committee

The objective of Canvas Pilot II is to explore and learn more about the technical “back end” of the product with particular focus on the integration, interoperability, and ease of content export/import with UWS supported third-party systems (e.g., ePortfolio, Kaltura, Turnitin, Respondus Suite, and others), as well as Canvas’s ability to meet discipline/course specific needs for teaching and learning. Canvas Pilot II is not being conducted to seek an LMS to replace Desire2Learn (D2L).



2015 LTDC Accessibility Grant Project (launching soon!)

The Learning Technology Development Council (LTDC) has received project funding to strategically address universal design and accessibility for persons with disabilities in relation to learning technology. The following objectives guide this project:

1. Develop best practices for UW System institutions to guide the creation of accessible course content.
2. Create documentation that describes a common understanding of Section 508 and other legislation that informs the creation of accessible content
3. Explore strategies and gather best practices that will improve efficiency and accuracy making content accessible.



Learning Technology Portal (under development: <https://www.wisconsin.edu/learning-tech/>)

The purpose of this website “portal” is to provide easy, one-stop access to resources and event information for the myriad of learning technology professionals, instructional designers, faculty developers, and instructors from UW System institutions. Through collaborative efforts among UW System campuses, the portal will be populated with content that is developed at both the local campus and system level, primarily through the guidance of the Learning Technology Development Council (LTDC). The portal will bring efficiencies to the production and dissemination of learning technology support materials and best practices ultimately focused on improving both student retention and student learning outcomes.