

Managing Files and Folders in the Content System

Before adding content to your courses and personal folders in the Blackboard Content System¹, it is important to plan an organizational scheme. Planning an organizational scheme will make it much easier for you to find, manage, and use your content as it grows.

Nested Tree Structure

Blackboard uses files and folders in a nested tree structure. The highest level folders, called Content Areas (e.g. Users, Courses, Institution, and Library) are folders stored under the root level. Each folder may contain sub-folders and files. Files and folders at the same level may not have the same name. In this document, and within Blackboard, the term “item” refers to folders or files.

Public and Private Folders



We recommend you begin by creating a Public folder and a Private folder under your personal root folder. Creating separate folders for personal content and folders that are available to other users is very helpful. This method allows the user to have certain folders available only to them, where they can store personal content. For example, one personal folder may contain papers and projects that are in progress, while another contains professional content that is not ready to be shared, such as resumes and cover letters for jobs. Additional permissions for these personal folders are not granted to anyone else.

When a document is ready to be shared, it may be copied or moved to a public folder. For example, if an Instructor is working on a course document he or she can create the draft in a personal folder, and then move it to a shared folder when it is complete. The shared folder is shared with all users enrolled in the class (public space that is set to be available to only course members), and allows for collaboration.

Organize Folder Permissions

It is helpful if users organize folders in a way that allows them to manage permissions by folder, rather than by file. For example, create a folder that contains all files used in a group project. This way the entire folder may be shared with the group members, rather than trying to manage permissions on separate items stored in different folders. Only Read permission should be added to a top-level folder, for example the username folder. Anytime a Permission is added or changed on the top-level folder, check any subfolders or files designated as Private and verify that additional permissions have not inadvertently been added that would expose protected information.

Sharing Folders

When adding folders and files to the Blackboard Content System, keep in mind which users and user lists the content will be shared with. Try to create folders in which all items are to be shared with the same users. When items shared with the same users are spread out among different folders, it may become very difficult to manage. For example, if the user plans on creating documents that will be applicable to all users at the institution, they should create a folder that will be shared with All System Users, then add the specific items to this folder.

¹ Much of the information and organizational structure of this document was freely borrowed from Blackboard's *Blackboard Content System Organizing and Managing Content, 2004*.

Sharing files

Files are automatically available to the user that added the file but must be shared if other users are to view the item. Files inherit permissions from the folder they reside in. This means that if a file is added to a folder that already has Read and Write permission for certain users or user lists, the those same users will also have Read and Write permission on the newly added file.

Overwrite Option on Folders

When modifying or adding permissions to a parent folder, the user has the option to force all files and subfolders to inherit these permissions. For example, if the Read and Write permissions are added to the folder, and an item within the folder has Read, Write, and Remove permissions, Remove permissions would be removed from the file. All subfolders and files within the parent folder would be granted Read and Write permissions. If this option is not selected, the files and subfolders are automatically granted any additional permission given to the parent folder, but existing permissions are not removed. For example, if Read, Write and Manage permissions are added to the folder, and an item within the folder has Read, Write, and Remove permissions, the permissions for the file would remain Read, Write and Remove, and Manage would be added. After modifying permissions on a folder, the user may modify the permissions on an item, but these will be overwritten the next time permissions on the parent folder are modified. This is one reason storing items with the same purpose and audience in a single folder makes managing permissions much easier.

Related Content:

[Tools for Sharing and Finding Content \(link to be established\)](#)

[Organize Course Folders \(link to be established\)](#)