eLearning & Distance Education

iDESIGN

Community

Supporting Your Course via a WordPress Site

Whether you teach face-to-face or online, consider using a WordPress site for all or most of your course content. UAF eLearning & Distance Education supports a multisite WordPress installation at community.uaf.edu.

I don't consider my students a captive audience. That's one reason I decided to use Community for my course. Prospective students can see what the course requires before they enroll. Current students can review materials at will. I also consider it easier to use than Blackboard.

WHY WORK IN THE OPEN?

The openness of WordPress is a positive thing for educators who want to be in the open and can be a benefit to their professional reputation.

How do you combat student perception on 'old or outdated' course material? Let them see the wonderful work you do.
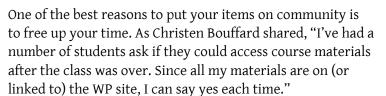
EASY ACCESS TO ASSIGNMENTS

Make your course easy to update by putting due dates in one area of the site, whether it be in a course schedule or in assignment (instructions) on the site. This makes updating setting your course up for the next semester easy.

List assignments on their own pages, separate from course content pages. Once you have, it is easy to create Assignment links as part of the primary navigation.

See a few examples:

- citsf221.community.uaf.edu
- art161.community.uaf.edu/assignments
- ed653-fall2013.community.uaf.edu/assignments
- northernlit.community.uaf.edu

BENEFITS

One of the best reasons to put your items on community is to free up your time. As Christen Bouffard shared, "I've had a number of students ask if they could access course materials after the class was over. Since all my materials are on (or linked to) the WP site, I can say yes each time."

"I've also had numerous prospective students who were interested in taking the course or who were curious what the assignments would be. I pointed them to the site and answered their respective questions as they reviewed the materials. Many have taken the class because of this and a few haven't because they recognized they couldn't handle the workload along with their other responsibilities in the semester."

According to comments from instructional designers, faculty and student, the overall flow for following course material—lectures, readings, videos, and other materials—is very comfortable, friendly, and accessible. Additional comments included:

- It is easy to add materials to your community site
- It is easy for students to find their course materials
- Students and instructors enjoyed the "modern, fresh feel"

GETTING STARTED

See open courses at community.uaf.edu/cat/open-course or browse sites by keyword (CLA, SOE) under the Explore menu.

If you teach at UAF, you can request a space; send your inquiry to vjmcmahan@alaska.edu.

Put everything for your course on community except grades. Please store materials that should be password protected and provide student feedback inside your Blackboard shell.

RESOURCES

- elearning.uaf.edu/go/tt-wp

Contact us at: http://distance.uaf.edu/go/iteachu-contact

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