Tips for Using the Search Tool

Introduction

The Search Content tool provides users with ways to access, group, and save the vast amount of content available to them in the *Blackboard Content System*. It provides an alternative way to access information that is presented in the user's folder tree or shortcut view, as well as information that is shared to a user but not accessible from the Content System menu.

Prerequisites

This document is intended for users who are using the *Blackboard Content System* to search for items. System Administrator settings should allow for users to access the Search Content tool. Before referencing this document, users should be familiar with the Content System interface and be able to complete basic tasks. These include:
- Adding, moving, and removing items
- Managing permissions on a content item

Contents

This document includes information on the following topics:
- Search Overview
- Perform a Basic Search
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Search Overview

Search is a powerful tool to use in two circumstances:

- *Accessing files or folders not displayed in the folder tree*. If Read permission has been granted to a user on a file or folder that is not displayed in a user's folder tree or shortcut view, search criteria, such as the name of the file or folder or the username of a person who created the file, may be used to find the item.

- *Discovery of information*. Use search to find information stored in the *Blackboard Content System* related to a particular topic, written by a specific user, or including particular metadata.

'Smart' Searches
All searches are based on the permission a user has on a file or folder. If Read permission does not exist on an item, it will not be displayed in the Search results, even if it matches the search criteria. If additional permission exists on a file or folder, the permission will apply to that file or folder if it is opened from the search results.

'And' Searches

Entering criteria in multiple search fields creates what is known as an 'AND' search. An item must meet all the criteria entered on the page in order to be returned in the search results. Each criteria entered narrows the search.

Only one field on the page must have criteria entered in it in order to execute a search. It is not possible to return all files and folders by entering no criteria.

Boolean Searches

The following Boolean operators may be used to search: AND, OR, NOT, "-", "+". Boolean operators must be entered in ALL CAPS. Parentheses may be used to group clauses and form sub-queries in searches.

Additional information on Boolean Searches may be found in the *Content System User Manual*.

Case Insensitivity

All searches are case-insensitive. Regardless of whether lower-case or capital letters are typed, the search will ignore this and return the same results.

Perform a Basic Search

Basic Search includes two search fields:

Field	Use
Search for File Contents	- This field searches the contents of files loaded in the *Blackboard Content System* - The file types searched are: .doc, .xls, .ppt, .pdf (excluding encrypted pdf files), .html, .htm, .rtf, .txt - The asterisk (*) symbol may be used to return all files and folders that a user has permission to Read (up to a number set by the System Administrator); this is known as a wildcard search - Partial word searches are NOT allowed (typing part of a word as opposed to the whole word) - A single character wild card search may be performed by using the "*" symbol in the middle or at the end of the search terms. This is used to find a term where one character is debatable, for example, "te*t" - A multiple character wild card search may be performed by using the "*" symbol in the middle or at the end of the search terms. This is used to find a term where multiple characters are debatable, for example, "test*". - Fuzzy searches may be done using the tilde, "~", symbol. For example, to search for a term similar in spelling to "roam", enter "roam~" in the search field. - Users may search for words within a certain proximity to one another using the tilde, "~", symbol. For example to search for "test" and "history" within 10 words of each other in a document use the search: "test history"~10
File or Folder Name	- This field searches the names of files or folders loaded in the *Blackboard Content System* - File extensions may be entered to return all files of a certain document type (for example, .doc) - Partial word searches are allowed (typing part of a word as opposed to the whole word, for example, 'enviro' instead of 'environment') - Select **Contains** to search for all items that contain the criteria entered. Select **Equals** to search for all items that exactly match what you have entered.

Perform an Advanced Search

Advanced Search contains the same two fields as a Basic Search, plus:
- Comment Search
- Additional Search Options and Metadata searches for more granular results
- A Save this Search function that allows a user to save search criteria and re-run the search with one click (from the Saved Searches page)

Comment Search
Underneath the Search File Contents field, a checkbox appears for Search File Comments. If a file has comments on it that meet the search criteria entered in the **Search File Content** field, the file will return in the results. In order to see comments on a file, comments must be Shared (not Private), or Manage permission must exist for the user on the file.

Additional Search Options
Additional search options allow for narrowing search results to more specific criteria. Like all other searches, each field criteria entered narrows the search.

Field	Use
Search From	- Enter a location or browse for a location - Note that the path is case-sensitive, meaning that the file or folder names must look exactly as they do in the *Blackboard Content System* - All the files and folders in that location (to which the user has at least Read permission to) display
Size	- Enter a document size and choose **Less Than** or **More Than** - All the files and folders that meet the size criteria (to which user has at least Read permission to) display - Keep in mind that there are approximately 1,000 bytes in a Kilobyte and approximately 1,000 kilobytes in a Megabyte
Username	- Select either **Created By** or **Last Modified By** and enter a username or click **Browse** to open the User Search and select users - All the files and folders that meet the username criteria (to which the user has at least Read permission to) display
Date	- Select either **Created** or **Last Modified** , **On**, **Before**, or **After** and a date - All the files and folders that meet the date criteria (to which the user has at least Read permission to) display

Metadata
Metadata search fields allow a user to search for Metadata that has been previously entered on a file. There are four categories of Metadata that a System Administrator can make available: General Metadata, IMS Metadata, Dublin Core Metadata and Custom Metadata. Metadata may be added to a file when it is created or modified .

Like all other searches, each Metadata field criteria that is entered narrows the search. Only files that contain all the search criteria entered will be returned.

Bbest Practice: Institutions can use metadata in a coordinated way to make finding content easier. For example, if librarians consistently use metadata to enter subject or username information, then Students can use the Search tool to find topical information, all documents by a certain author, or any other criteria that is entered.

Save this Search
Save search criteria by entering a Search Name in the **Save this Search as** field, then click **Submit**. The search will automatically be saved and accessible from the Saved Searches page.

Search Portfolios

Portfolio Search appears to all users if Portfolio functionality is available to any users on the *Blackboard Content System*, otherwise it is hidden.

If a Portfolio has been shared to a user or user group, Portfolio Search can be used to find it.

Like all other searches, each Portfolio search field further narrows the search. Only files that contain all the search criteria entered will be returned.

Field	Use
Portfolio Usernames	• Enter one or more usernames, or use **Browse** to search for users • Portfolios created by that user(s) that have been shared to you will be displayed
Name or Description	• Enter Portfolio Names or Descriptions • Partial names and descriptions are allowed • If more than one word is entered, all words must appear in the Portfolio Name or Description (does not have to appear in both) in that particular order. • Portfolios matching the search criteria that have been shared to you will be displayed
Learning Objectives	• Enter Learning Objectives • Partial names and descriptions are allowed • If more than one word is entered, all words must appear in the Learning Objectives in that particular order • Portfolios matching the search criteria that have been shared to you will be displayed

Save this Search
Save Portfolio search criteria by entering a search name in the **Save this Search as** field, then click **Submit**. The search will automatically be saved and is accessible from the Saved Searches page.

Using Search Results

Users may work with items from the Search Results page in the same manner as if they were accessed from the folder tree or shortcut view. Users can manage the search results, email items to other users, and Bookmark items for later use.

Permission necessary to work with items
Actions that may be performed on items that appear in Search Results depend on the permission the user has for the item.

When search results are returned, any permission granted to a file or folder still applies.
- If a user has Read permission on the item, it can be opened, downloaded or emailed.
- If a user has Write permission on an item, it can be modified (edited). Write permission on a folder allows the user to add files or folders.
- If a user has Remove permission, it can be deleted.
- If a user has Manage permission, item properties such as metadata and comments may be modified and permission granted.

Metadata on Search Results
If a General Metadata Name and Description have been added to a file, this Metadata will display in the search results under the file name.

Sorting Search Results
If there is a downward pointing triangle at the top of a column in search results (such as over the file name), clicking the arrow will sort the results. Clicking the arrow again will reverse the sort.

Viewing Portfolios from Search Results

From Portfolio Search results, click on the name of the Portfolio to open it.

Save Searches

The Saved Search page lists all searches initiated on any search page for which a search name was entered in the **Save this Search as** field and the search was submitted.

In addition to this, any search can be saved from the Search Results page by clicking **Save Search** in the Search Action Bar.

Bbest Practice: It is beneficial to save a search that will be run regularly, or if it took a lot of time to enter the search criteria.

Re-run Search
Click the name of a saved search to see the search results. This search runs anew every time the name is selected. The search results will change if a new file or folder has been added that meets the criteria, if a file or folder has been removed, or if permission to the file has been changed.

Bbest Practice: If it is important to have continued access to a particular file or folder that appears in the search results (instead of just access to any files or folders that meet all the search criteria), then it is a good practice to Bookmark the file or folder directly from the Search Results page. It can then be accessed from Bookmarks.

Modify the Search
Click **Modify** next to a search to change the criteria for the search. The Search page where the search was initiated will open populated with the existing search criteria. If the saved search was a Basic Search, the criteria will display on the Advanced Search page and can be modified from there. Modify any criteria and click **Submit**.

Delete the Search
Click **Remove** next to a search to delete a saved search.

Quick Search from Tools Menu

The Quick Search field is located in the Tools area of the Content System Menu. Quick Search searches file and folder names for the word, words or partial words entered. This field can be used in the same way as the **Search File or Folder Names** field on the Basic or Advanced Search pages.

Additional Documentation

Additional Blackboard documents can be found on the Behind the Blackboard extranet. Use the following URL to access Behind the Blackboard:

http://www.blackboard.com/products/services/support.htm

A login is required to access Behind the Blackboard. Users may create their own login for roles other than Administrator. Administrators must receive their Behind the Blackboard login from their Blackboard Account Manager.

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