**CourseSites Q & A**

**What would you say are the main differences between CourseSites and Bb Learn?**

* While CourseSites is powered by Blackboard Learn, it’s designed to be more of a web-consumer product vs. a campus-based LMS implementation.  As such, we’ve allowed Instructor and Student access only, and mainly to Course Delivery functionality.
* We have a number of customizations as a result of this being an open, cloud-based offering. In particular, the following are not available in the core Bb Learn product:
  + **Instructor Home Page**: Each instructor is provided with an instructor home page to display personal information, provide access to courses and general information about the instructor. Schools have been leveraging this as an ‘Institution’ page as they offer open courses. (i.e.[uis.coursesites.com](http://uis.coursesites.com))
  + **Public ‘Course Home Page’**: Links to courses on the Instructor Home Page lead to public course home pages with the course title and description. This is where students also can preview courses (if guest access is active), enroll (by self or by request) or login. Instructors can also publish their courses in Common Cartridge or Bb package formats for sharing with a Common Cartridge Attribution 3.0 license.
  + **Personal Information**: We changed the look and feel of this area and added a few capabilities for instructors, such as the Edit Home Page and Social Settings pages.
  + **Users**: We’ve changed the look and feel here and added capabilities to support the open course use cases like self-enroll.
  + **Roster**: The roster has been enhanced beyond that available in Learn to support more peer-to-peer networking and connections.
  + **MOOC Catalog:**This is a lightweight catalog which we assist clients with the placement of their MOOCs once the course is ready to capture enrolment.
  + **Enrollment Options**: We use the embedded Learn enrollment options but expose them differently as described above.

**If Bb Learn is closed how can CourseSites be open?**

* Bb Learn is only closed as that is how many institutions implement the platform. There are catalog and self-enrollment features available should clients want to run MOOCs on their own platform. As well, the change to our user license and policy two years ago allows for non-revenue generating individuals to use the campus-based implementation should the client choose.
* As noted above, we’ve designed the MOOC catalog and self-enroll capabilities to be somewhat different than Learn based on the specific application to open educational experiences.

**How can core features of Bb - e.g. Bb Collaborate - be free for users of CourseSites?**

* The CourseSites Live feature, which is based off of the Blackboard Collaborate Web Conferencing technology is a limited version. Only the first 50 individuals can attend, there is no recording possible, and telephony integration is not available. Clients must license the full product to obtain these important features.
* While the Blackboard Collaborate Voice and Instant Messaging features are the full versions, it’s important to keep in mind that CourseSites is meant for introductory use of Blackboard technology by individual instructors and their students. The system is not meant, and actually cannot support enterprise-wide use. As such, institutions seeking these capabilities will license the technology to provide it to their full constituents in their own learning environments.

**Is CourseSites designed for the individual or for an institution?**

* As noted above, CourseSites has been designed mainly for individual instructor users. As we’ve supported more and more clients with offering MOOCs, the institution-level use case is becoming more important. Even so, institutions are typically only offering 1-5 MOOCs at any one time, or even within a period of time, such as a year.
* The decision to offer a dedicated MOOC platform, to be launched in early 2014, came about as a direct result of conversing with 100s of clients and supporting the dozens which have offered MOOCs on CourseSites to date.
* We are working on enhancing many of the areas in the new platform which we cannot fully support institutions today on CourseSites – mainly from an administrative and co-branding standpoint.

**What would you say are the main differences between CourseSites and EdX or Coursera?**

* Our new MOOC offer is a free, fully supported (in English-only), cloud-based version of Blackboard technology that allows all Blackboard clients to run MOOCs in an environment separate from their enterprise LMS.
* This gives our clients a flexible, yet robust, MOOC option as it includes the best of our next-generation teaching and learning tools, including a wide range of course management, social learning, student engagement and mobile features.
* The biggest difference is that institutions maintain all current and future revenue associated with their MOOC and they have full control over the form and direction of their courses.
* All of our MOOC client partnerships are conducted in a non-exclusive and non-binding manner. We structure agreements this way because we recognize that schools need more flexible options for experimenting with MOOCs that are able to meet their unique needs.
* Additionally, schools do not have a limit on the number of courses they can offer and they do not have a limit on the number of students they can enroll. Our platform is free to all Blackboard clients, no matter the technology they license and regardless if their MOOC is for-pay or for-credit.
* Technologically, we offer more robust capabilities to support a wider variety of learning outcomes and audiences. Our Blackboard Mobile Learn is a part of the platform where users can access courses to review content, interact with participants and complete assessments on most every mobile device being used.
* MOOC students can easily connect with enrolled students via a seamless social education network, enriching the social learning experience for both groups.