What technology can I use to support academic continuity during emergencies?

Several tools are available to support teaching and learning when classes cannot meet – for example, snow days, conferences, illnesses, etc.

Blackboard Learn

Blackboard Learn is the University’s learning management system. It is hosted by Blackboard to ensure a stable and reliable environment 24/7. The Blackboard system offers three core platforms: content management; communication, collaboration & engagement; and assessment & grade management.

**CONTENT MANAGEMENT**

- Upload syllabus, course materials & handouts
- Post presentations
- Share links & resources
- Embed YouTube videos
- Record with webcam to embed video announcements or promote increased student engagement with video prompts/responses

**COMMUNICATION, COLLABORATION & ENGAGEMENT**

- Facilitate & continue course discussions
- Send email & messages
- Post announcements
- Manage small group activities
- Support blogs, wikis & journals

**ASSESSMENT & GRADE MANAGEMENT**

- Distribute & collect assignments
- Grade electronically
- Embed feedback
- Post grades
- Maintain digital gradebook
- Deliver tests
- Score with rubrics

Blackboard Mobile Apps

Both faculty and students can access their courses using the corresponding role-based mobile app for iOS and Android. Faculty can upload media such as images or video, add documents from Google Drive, and create content by simply typing on the touch interface on the mobile device. Users can maintain communication on the go or out of town. For example, instructors can post announcements while students can check their grades. Instructors and students can both follow and participate in discussions. UMBC is pleased to offer the Blackboard's mobile apps at no cost to UMBC faculty and students for our Blackboard site.

Blackboard Collaborate

Bb Collaborate supports live, real-time lectures, presentations, and conversations with a wide range of tools such as 2-way audio; interactive whiteboard and desktop sharing; breakout rooms; video feeds; and session recording. Use Collaborate to deliver live lectures or study sessions, host virtual office hours (VOH), demonstrate software such as SPSS or Photoshop, host guest speakers, and more. Import PowerPoint or images with easy to use tools. You can later convert your recordings to MP4 to upload to YouTube, or leave the recordings in place for students to stream from their desktop or mobile device. Broadband internet is strongly recommended to enhance the Collaborate experience as well as a microphone and/or headset. However, both faculty and students can access a live Collaborate session with the corresponding role-based mobile app via wifi or through their cellular plan.

Blackboard Instant Messenger (IM)

With Blackboard IM, students and instructors can easily see who’s online and available so they can instantly communicate with peers, colleagues, and experts. You even launch a Blackboard Collaborate web conferencing session with a single click. BbIM includes desktop video conferencing, screen sharing, queued chat, and a whiteboard with built-in learning objects and templates. BbIM supports quick, efficient communication via one-to-one or small groups.
TechSmith Relay

Sometimes it's just easier to show than tell. Using TechSmith Relay, faculty can capture and narrate anything they see on their computers, and then publish an online "screencast" movie tutorial or mini-lecture for students to watch and replay on their own time. Some other examples of screencasts are the show and tell videos available via the FAQs. You must first request access to the TechSmith Relay Server before you can download the recorders and configure your UMBC Box account to receive the video files. Faculty and staff who would like to upload course-related video to YouTube can also request access to TechSmith Relay services, which will automatically publish to the specified YouTube account.

Respondus Lockdown Browser

Respondus LockDown Browser secures the testing environment within the Blackboard. Students cannot print, copy, visit another website, or use other programs when they are using the secure browser. Once the test starts, students cannot leave until they submit it for a grade. If students try to take a test without the secure browser, they are blocked. DoIT has provided a specific download link for faculty to give to their classes, which is unique to UMBC's license.

Respondus

Respondus is a powerful tool for creating and managing exams that can be printed to paper or exported for use in Blackboard. With Respondus, an instructor can create exams and assessments offline using a Windows interface. The application supports up to 15 question types, including calculated and algorithmic formats, and allows for the import of questions from MS Word. If your publisher participates in the Respondus Test Bank Network, you’ll have fast and easy access to those resources. Respondus can be downloaded through the UMBC software downloads page. NOTE: Since Respondus is a Windows-only application, Mac users can use virtualization software such as VMWare or Parallels.

UMBC Box

Box is an online file sharing system that you can access from multiple devices (computers, smart phones, and tablets). Box also allows you to share your files and folders with others easily. Faculty, staff and students can access UMBC Box through myUMBC -> Apps or through the direct link. UMBC Box is especially useful to distribute or receive very large files from students. Users receive 25 GB of space and files as big as 5 GB can be uploaded.

Google Apps for Education

Google offers a cloud-based solution for email, calendar, video streaming, create/edit documents, spreadsheets and presentations in a collaborative, real-time editing environment. There is no cost to faculty or students to use Google. Users receive unlimited space.

Office 365

Through a partnership with Microsoft, UMBC offers online access to all Microsoft Office products, including Word, PowerPoint and Excel. UMBC students, faculty and staff also have access to 1 terabyte of cloud storage through Microsoft Office 365 and its related OneDrive. Additional tools include Sites, Delve, Sway, and OneNote.

TechSmith End of Life

In May, DoIT announced the discontinuation of TechSmith Relay December 31, 2018.