

Friday, June 30, 2006

## Short Article

Sharing Can be Electronic, Too

Have you ever wanted to create an online course.

I mean a real course. Real Teacher/ Learner Resources

What if you were able to use these resources for your course?

Text Pages

Simple pages written using plain text

You could apply a number of built-in formatting types to turn your plain text into nice-looking Web pages

HTML Pages

Easy to develop Web pages

Each page would be stored in the database, not as a file, so you wouldn't have to keep track of them

Files and Web Pages

You could add live links to active Internet Web pages

You could also upload files and make these files available to participants who are studying your course

These files could include MP3 files (sound recordings), movies, and Flash animations

Your content could be displayed in windows, pop up windows, or frames

Directory

You could display a whole directory (and its subdirectories) of course files. Students could browse and view all those files

Labels

You could create Labels and embed text and images among the other links on the course page

Real Tools (All Built In)

Would your online course make use of these tools if they were built in to the course software?

Built in tools (all structured as re-usable modules) include:

Assignments

You can list learning assignments and learning activities

Chat

Course participants can communicate with each other

Glossary

You can build a running record of specific technical terms and tailor-make the selection of these terms to your course

Forums

Course participants can interact with the course presenter and other participants

Journal

Participants can make use of online journals to keep a learning log or running record of their explorations into your course content

Lessons

You can structure your presentation

Quizzes

Quizzes can be a learning and memory aide, rather than a grade-extracting tool

Surveys

You can set up online questionnaires for participants

Wikis

You can set up a presenter or participant interactive dictionary/ encyclopedia. This is interactive because one or more people can edit or add to the text of the definitions and explanations

Workshops

These are hands-on/ learning lab assignments

All this built-in capacity is available with the Open Source product, Moodle

What does All this Learning Power Cost?

Surprise, you can have all this power at your fingertips for free, or almost/ nearly free.

If you have an old computer that you can use, the cost is free.

If you want to place your course on a course exchange, the cost is free

Here is one Moodle Exchange

Strategic Open Source of Texas Moodle Exchange

If you want to place your course on a dedicated Moodle site, the cost is \$4.95 per month

SiteGround.com Moodle hosting site

Classroom Toolkit is building a tutorial site with a hosting plan that costs \$3.95 per month.

Note: The GoDadd.com hosting does not support Moodle, however PHP and MYSQL are supported, so the installation of Moodle is not that difficult.

Classroom Toolkit Tutorial Site

What Classroom Toolkit Tutorials will do is illustrate the concepts, methods and skills required for teachers to create, edit and adapt our unique materials.

Automated Management

Building online courses is time consuming...labor intensive. Fortunately, Moodle(TM) handles (almost hides) the behind-the-scenes technology/ processes, allowing instructors to focus on course content.

Another advantage to the Moodle software learning and course management system is the entire Web is a learning playground for course participants.

You can pick and choose activities and materials and include these in your course as links. In this way, you support copyright and intellectual property rights of learning resource creators, while augmenting your course with the best that the Web World has to offer.

A Flexible Course Development Process

You can install the Moodle Course Management System on a server, on an old computer, or even on your desktop (or laptop) computer.

Then, you have a "build-as-you-go" course management system

You can develop and post online in a "build as you go" process (such as the Classroom Toolkit Tutorial project, or you can develop the entire course on your desktop computer and export the entire course in one operation.

Courses that are built on one computer can be copied to/ exported to an other computer that runs the Moodle Course Management System.

True computer platform (Windows; Macintosh; or Linux;) independence!

Completely Portable Learning

The Moodle software system contains a "pack and go" capacity.

This means that you can export your entire course, and copy/ send the course to any other Moodle system.

This is how a Moodle Exchange operates.

This is also how school districts can build an in-house collection of courses, because, once the course is imported, it can be customized, added-to or re-designed

An entire course can be used as a template for a more advanced course...or a template for another course.

Online Tutorials and Examples

Online tutorials are available for learning how to install and configure the Moodle Course Management System.

Examples include:

Lots of How-to install and configure Moodle information

Strategic Open Source of Texas Moodle;

More how to configure a Moodle server

Texas Computer Educator's Association (TCEA)

Free Open Source Software Site that focuses upon Moodle;

K12 Open Source - Free Open Source Software Moodle;

Online tutorials also show you how to build and manage the courses themselves.

Examples of these include:

The official Moodle site that shows what a teacher can do with the software

The Moodle Demonstration Site

Extensive instructions on how to build Moodle courses

Melbourne University Moodle; How-to

A how-to guide for developing and managing a Moodle course

Earlham College Moodle; How-To Guide

Tutorials on how to implement the Classroom Toolkit strategy

Classroom Toolkit Tutorials

A Special Note

Search the Internet for "Moodle How-to" and "Moodle courses". When you find course information that looks useful, login as "guest." Many Moodle courses are available for audit, and any guest can look them over without charge.

You will be amazed at what you can learn.

**A Super-Special Offer**

Ken Task, a retired Texas educator, has a special offer for any school district that wants to take him up on it.

Ken will travel to your school district and configure a Moodle server and teach your district's IT staff as he goes along.

The only cost: Ken's travel expenses.

You can contact Ken at:

Mail: Ken Task at K12 Open Source - Free Open Source Software

Mail: Ken Task at Strategic Open Source of Texas

Mail: Ken Task at Educational Service Center, Region 3, Texas

Posted by Classroom Toolkit Newsletter in Short Article at 10:00