






Palomar College Academic Technology

[Tech Topic—About Wimba Voice Tools]

The Tools

There are five Wimba Voice Tools available to Palomar College Blackboard users:

Icon	Name	Function
	Voice Authoring	Place voice recordings in any Blackboard content area. Voice recordings can be up to 20 minutes in length. ¹
	Voice Email	Send voice email to any/all course participants and optionally allow voice replies.
	Voice Board	Set up threaded voice discussion boards, optionally configured so that a) students can/cannot create new threads; and b) students can/cannot hear each other's posts.
	Voice Presenter	Create audio "slide shows" of web-based content, optionally configured to allow additional student comments.
	Wimba Podcaster	Audio files distributed via web-based syndication with simple 1-button subscribe functionality. Once subscribed students automatically download any audio content created by the instructor and can optionally place it on an mp3 device like the iPod.

The tools are simple to use and work with PC or Mac computers that meet very minimal system requirements.

Uses

Adding an audio dimension to language and ESL classes has obvious advantages, but adding audio to any class can be beneficial. It can:

- Enhance the instructor's presence and involvement with course materials
- Add additional, re-usable explanations of complex concepts
- Personalize engagement between instructors and students
- Teach correct pronunciation and provide audible learning cues to students
- Enhance the instructor's ability to reach students who learn best by hearing, and to better address students with visual and print disabilities
- Add energy and interactivity to class discussions

¹ There is also a Voice Announcement tool accessible from the Blackboard Control Panel. We strongly recommend that this tool NOT be used. It contains a bug when used in combination with the Blackboard visual text editor that, under certain circumstances, can cause the loss of ability to edit course announcements.

Ideas

Many of the possible uses of the Voice Tools are obvious, and many others will be unique to certain classes and disciplines, but here are a few that might be less than obvious and apply broadly:

Ideas for using the Voice Authoring Tool.

- Record a Welcome message to students taking your course.
- Talk students through the course syllabus.
- Give students a weekly preview of the materials to be covered and things to do.
- Give students encouraging and motivational messages.
- Provide a weekly summary of what should have been accomplished.
- Provide a vocal explanation of particularly complex or difficult concepts being covered.
- Provide reviews for tests.

Ideas for using the Voice Email Tool

- Send a Welcome email
- Use the Blackboard Performance Dashboard to determine which students have not logged into the course recently, and send them a voice email reminding them of the importance of doing so.
- Give select students feedback on completed assignments or test results.
- Create an “Ask Me” Voice Email link so that students can audibly send voice emails to you asking about course issues and concepts.

Ideas for using the Voice Board Tool

- Beyond the obvious audible discussion of class topic, instructors might create a voice board for assignment feedback, or general course feedback where students can post their comments and suggestions to enhance the course.
- Students can be assigned a reading and be asked to comment on it vocally.
- A privately configured voice board can be used to practice pronunciation by foreign language and ESL students. “Privately configured” means that only the teacher can hear the student’s pronunciations.
- A voice board conducted entirely in a foreign language could be conducted for advanced language students
- A “get acquainted” voice board could be created where students in an online class might introduce themselves
- Allow student creation of voice board threads where students could practice, or actually give, an oral presentation and other students could comment

Ideas for using the Voice Presentation Tool

- Create a web tour of several important web sites, with your commentary on their use.
- Audibly annotate a web-based map, diagram or step-by-step problem solution
- Create a narrated web site “slide show” based on your PowerPoint slides saved as jpg images

Ideas for using the Wimba Podcaster

- Produce a weekly course update podcast so that students can hear the instructor place emphasis on what is most important to the current week's work, along with an explanation of any difficult concepts.
- Provide added lecture material via your class podcast that students can download and review on their drive in to class
- Import pre-recorded explanations of course concepts to the podcast and make them available by subscription.

Limitations

The Wimba Voice Tools are optimized for spoken audio communications. They do not support bandwidths high enough for music samples. If you wish to add music samples to your Blackboard course, contact Palomar College Academic Technology.

Training

The Voice Tools are deployed through Blackboard and are easy to use. We have provided a textual "how-to" description for each tool on the Academic Technology web site, and within the Academic Technology Training Blackboard site. The Academic Technology Training Blackboard site also contains screencast demos on how to use the Voice Tools, and example Voice Tool instances that demonstrate the use of the tool and allow a platform for practice.

Technical Support

If you experience difficulty using the Wimba Voice Tools, or simply want one-on-one training, contact Palomar College Academic Technology for assistance. There are three ways to request technical support from Academic Technology:

- Submit a technical support request ticket by going to: <http://palomaratrc.helpserve.com>
- Send email to onlineclasses@palomar.edu
- Call (760) 744-1150 ext. 2862 between 7AM and 5PM on Monday through Friday.

To arrange one-on-one training, contact Dr. Haydn Davis at (760) 744-1150 ext. 2341.