

Voice Board Creation

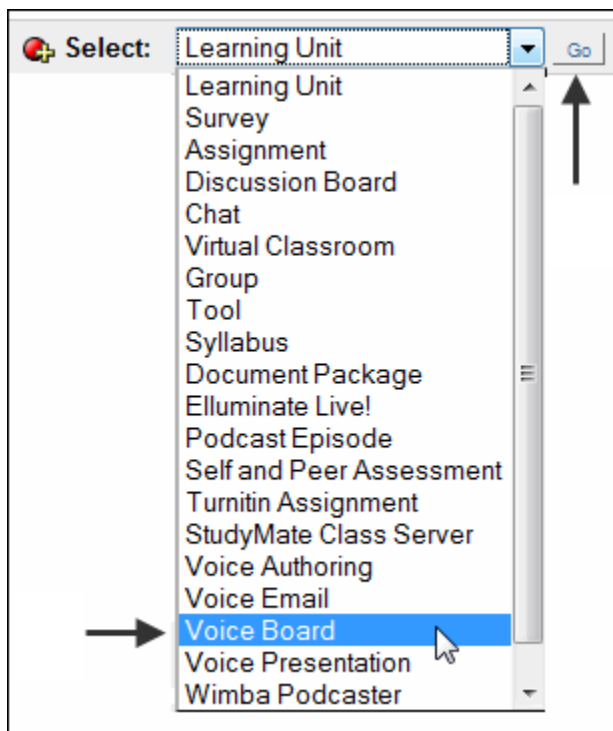
The Wimba Voice Board is an asynchronous, audio discussion area.

As with Voice Emails, there are two methods for creating Voice Boards, one through the Select drop-down in Edit View where the intention is to place a voice board in a Blackboard content area; and one through the Communications Tool area. We will discuss method 1 first, and almost everything we say will be applicable to voice boards created via method 2. The only real difference is that method 1 boards remain located in a specific course content area, where method 2 voice boards are visible to the student through the course communication area.



Method 1 (recommended)

1. Login to Blackboard and enter the course content area where you wish to place a voice board. This can be any area except the course Announcements area.
2. Click “Edit View” in the upper right of the content area screen;
3. Click the “Select” drop-down;
4. Choose “Voice Board”;
5. Click “Go”.



The first time you select this, you may be prompted to install a Java plug-in from Sun Microsystems. This will install quickly on the fly. You may be warned by your computer about trusting "the signed applet distributed by 'Wimba'." Select "Always" to always trust Wimba applets. You may already have gone through these steps, in which case you may not see these messages.

In any event, after the applet is installed you will see the "Add Voice Board" Blackboard screen:

Add Voice Board

1 Information

Title:
80 characters maximum

Color:

Description:

2 Settings

Audio quality:

Max message length:

Display short message titles:

Display messages in chronological order:

Allow students to forward messages:

Allow students to start a new thread:

Make discussion threads private:

3 Options

Make the content available: Yes No

Open in new window: Yes No

Track number of views: Yes No

Choose date and time restrictions: Display After Display Until

4 Submit

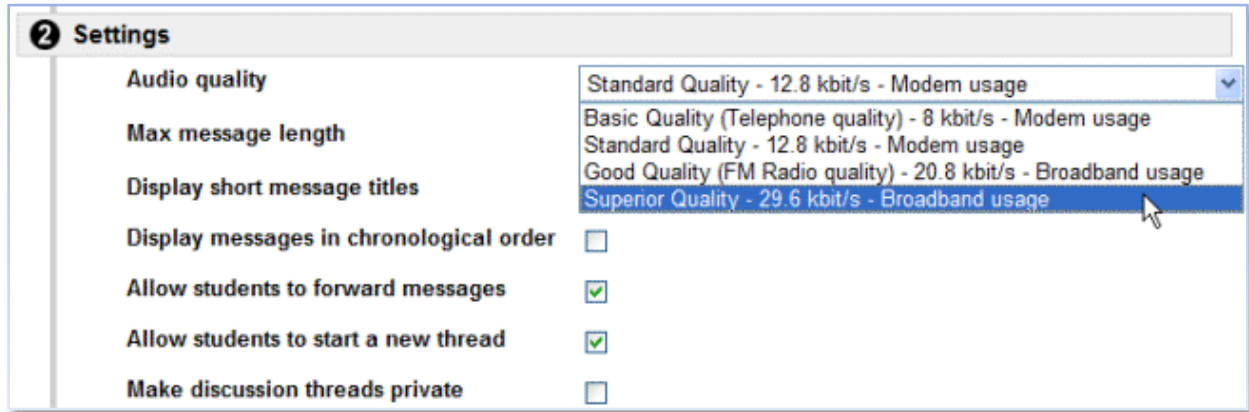
Click **Submit** to finish. Click **Cancel** to quit.

1. Voice Board Information

Begin by naming the board and providing any textual instructions you wish in the Information section.

2. Voice Board Settings

Next, configure your voice board settings:



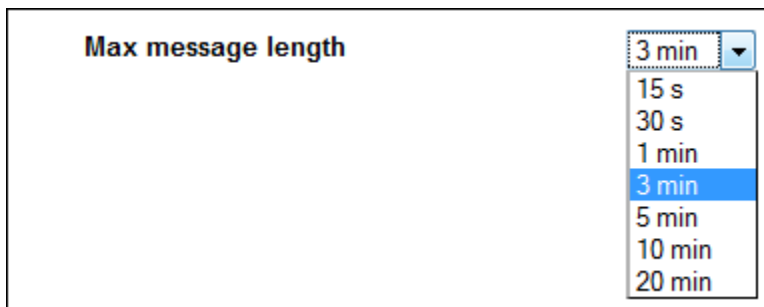
In setting up your voice board, the following choices can be configured:

- **Audio Quality**

The higher the bandwidth setting, the clearer and more natural the voice recordings will sound. The highest setting, "Superior Quality -29.6 Kbit/s" is still manageable on a 56K modem. This is the setting we recommend.

- **Max audio message length**

You may also adjust the maximum duration for which someone may speak. This may be useful if you plan to use the Voice Board as a timed assessment tool. Your choices are from among several presets: 15 seconds, 30 seconds, 1 minute, 3 minutes, 5 minutes, 10 minutes or 20 minutes.



Be aware that this setting will control all future postings to this board.

- **Display short message titles**

By default, message titles contain a wealth of information:

- Subject line
- Name of individual who posted the message
- Length of recording (if audio is associated with the message)
- Posting date

If you select to view short message titles, only the subject line and the name of the individual who posted the message will be displayed.

- **Display messages in chronological order**

By default, messages are displayed in the order in which they were posted to the Voice Board, with the newest messages at the top of the Board. If you select to view messages in chronological order, the oldest messages will appear at the top of the Board, and the newest at the bottom. This may be helpful to track student progress over time, reviewing their first posts at the top of the Board.

- **Allow users to start a new thread**

By default, both students and instructors can compose new, top-level threads to a Voice Board. Deselect this setting to restrict this ability for students, allowing them only the ability to reply to messages. It will not limit student-to-student interaction unless you make the Voice Board threads private, which will be discussed below.

- **Allow users to forward a message**

Granting this privilege allows users to send any post to an external email address. The email will contain a link to any audio associated with the post, as well as its text and a note the student can type before sending.

- **Make discussion threads private**

If discussion threads are private, only one-on-one communication between an instructor and a student is allowed. If this option is selected:

- Only instructors can compose new threads
- Students can only view their own replies and replies from their instructor
- Instructors can view all replies

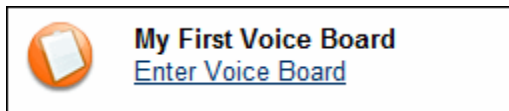
Private threads allow for an instructor-student dialogue that is hidden from the other students. With the Voice Board configured in this way the instructor can interact with each student individually. This feature might be very useful in an ESL or foreign language class where the instructor could monitor and comment on individual student pronunciations.

3. Blackboard Options

In section 3 of the Add Voice Board page apply any Blackboard availability and tracking features you wish.

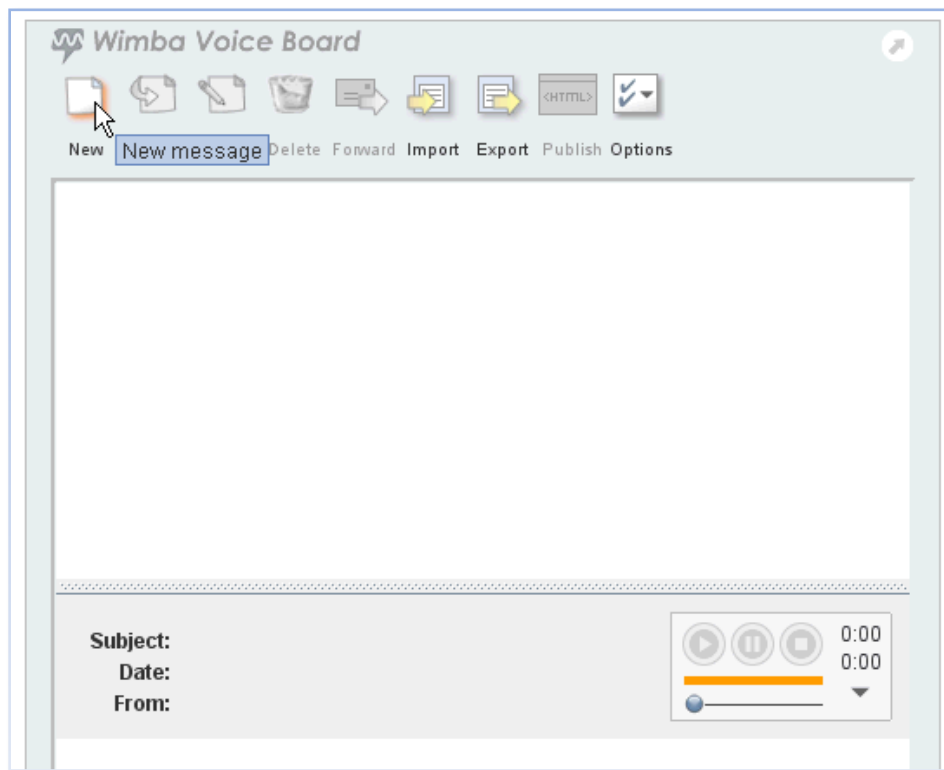
4. Submit

Click Submit to create the Voice Board. A Voice Board link will appear in your Blackboard content area.



Using Voice Boards

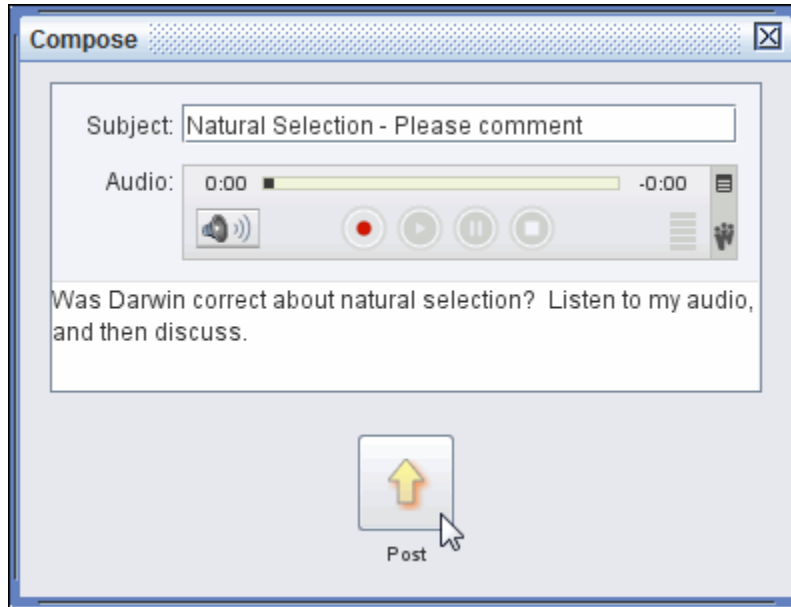
Once a Voice Board is created it is ready for immediate use, unless you have restricted its availability. When you click on the Voice Board link, you will see the voice board form in your course content area:



Click "New" to start a thread. This button is always available for instructors, but will only be available to students under the following conditions:

- Users are allowed to start new threads
- Discussion threads have not been made private

The Compose window will appear:



■ **Recording a message**

1. Click the red *Record* button (circle) and speak into a microphone or headset connected to your computer to record your message. You will see the volume meter fluctuate as you are recording. Ideally, you want your recording level to be high, but not too high, that is, not displaying the red bar at the top of the volume meter.
2. Click *Pause* (two bars) to pause recording; click this button again to resume recording your message.
3. Click *Stop* (square) when you have completed your message.
4. Click *Play* (triangle) to listen to your message. If you are not satisfied, click *Record* to record the message again. If you record again, your original message will be overwritten.

If you reach the maximum audio message length (configured when the Voice Board was first set up), recording will cease. All audio you have recorded up to that point will be preserved.

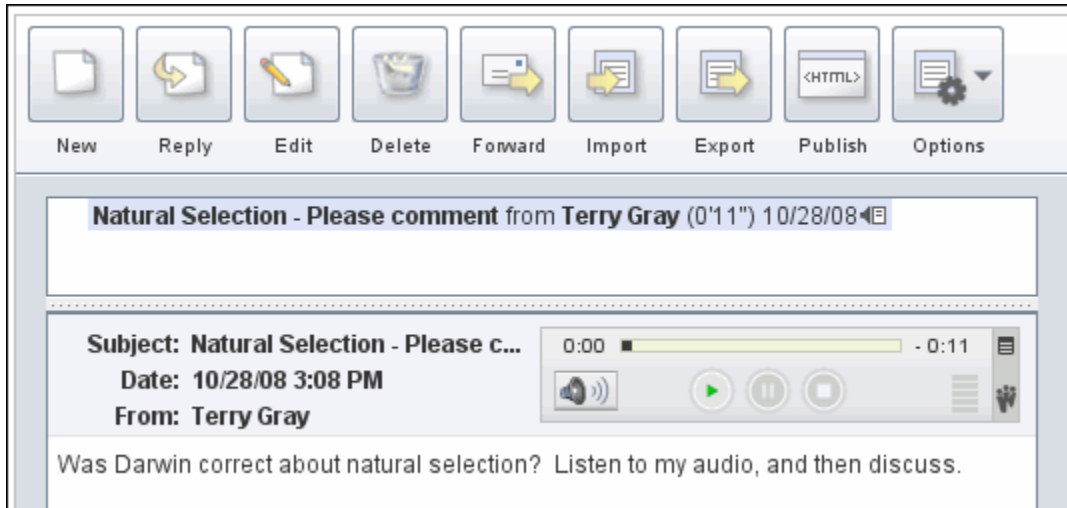
■ **Adding text to a message**

In addition to recording a message, you must also enter a relevant title for your thread in the *Subject* line box. This field is required. To write a message to accompany your recording, click and type in the large text field at the bottom of the *Compose* window. Typing a message is optional, but may provide helpful information (such as instructions or an assessment question for users), or text that complements your recording.

■ **Posting a message**

When you are satisfied with your recording and you have entered a subject line (as well as any appropriate text), click the “*Post*” button at the bottom of the *Compose* form.

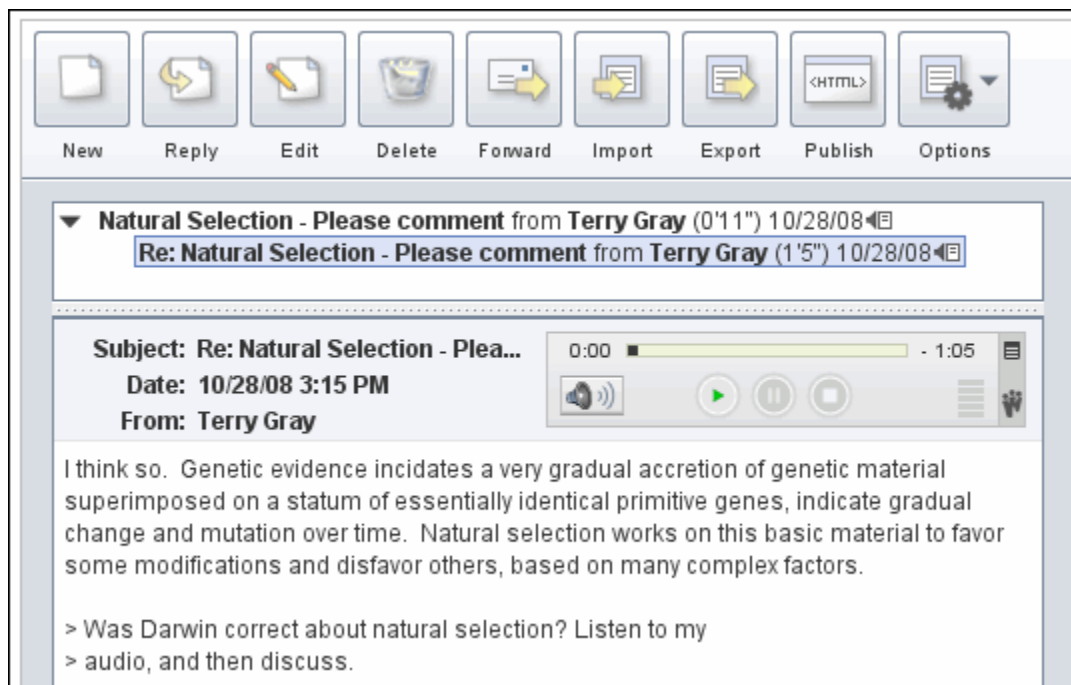
Your posting will appear in the voice board, along with a player and the Subject, Date, and originator of the post and any text from the original message.



Note the set of options across the top of the voice board.

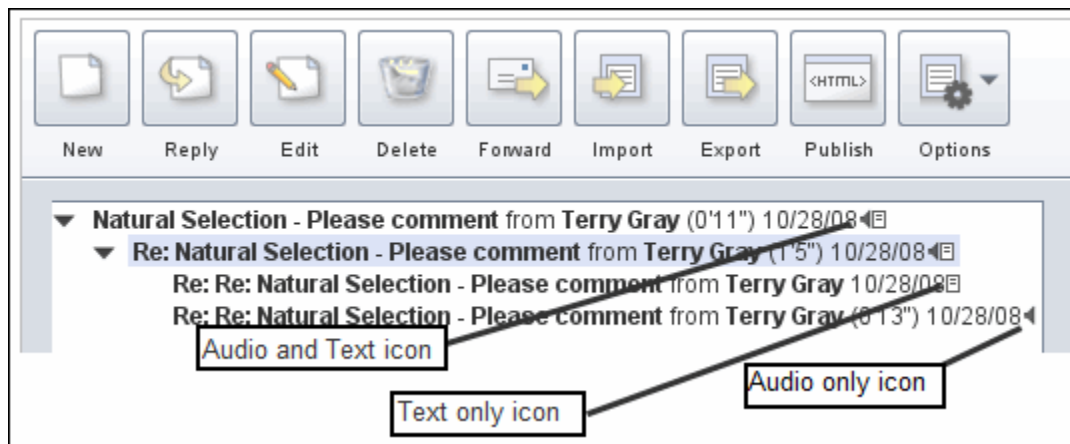
- **Replying to a Message**

Once you have started a thread, students can post replies, and the replies are indented as in a normal discussion board. To reply to a message, click the appropriate message from the top half of the Voice Board, followed by the "Reply" button in the upper left-hand corner. A new window will open. The process for creating a reply is identical to that of a new thread; the only difference is that any text associated with the message to which you are replying appears inline in the large text field at the bottom of the message. You can leave this text for reference, delete, or overwrite it.



■ Reviewing a Message

To review a message, click its title in the top half of the Voice Board. The message, along with any associated text, will appear in the message pane at the bottom of the Voice Board. To listen to an audio message, click the *Play* button on the right-hand side of the message. Messages with text (but with no audio recording) show a white paper icon to the right of the message title. Messages with audio (but with no text in the message body) display a black speaker icon to the right of the title. Messages that contain both audio and text in the message body display both a speaker and a paper icon to the right of the title.



■ Editing a Message

If you wish to modify an existing message posted to the Board, click the *Edit* button at the top of the Board. A new window will appear, providing the ability to record/re-record an audio message, as well as alter any text and even the subject line. Editing is only available to individuals with instructor level privileges, who may edit any post on the Board (including messages from other instructors and any student).

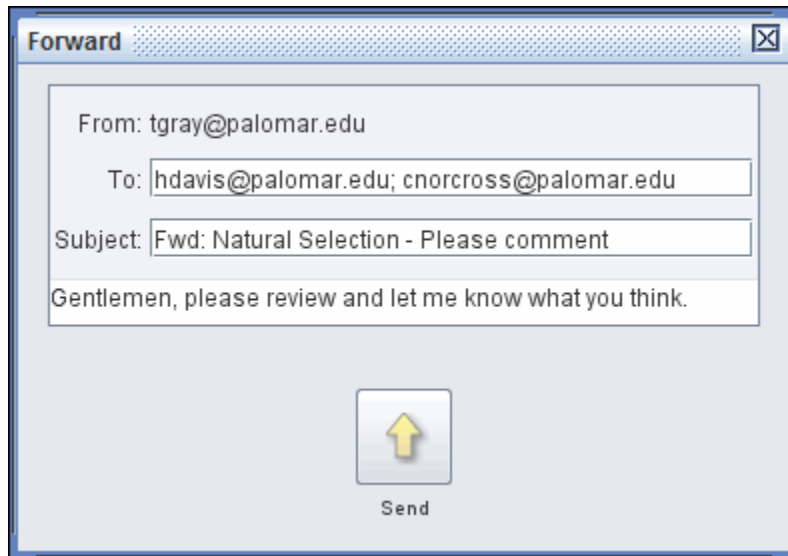
■ Deleting a Message

Entire threads, as well as single messages, can be deleted from a Voice Board at any time. Use with caution, as these messages cannot be recovered. This feature is only available to individuals with instructor level privileges. To delete a message or thread, click the appropriate message or thread in the top half of the Voice Board, followed by the *Delete* button at the top of the Board. A confirmation prompt will pop-up asking if you wish to delete the message. Click *Yes* to delete the message (deleting a thread will also remove all sub-threads associated with it). Click *No* to cancel.

■ Forwarding a Message

A single message can be forwarded to an email address (perhaps with someone who does not have access to the Voice Board). Instructors always have the ability to forward messages. Students only have access to this feature if the privilege was granted when the board was set up. To forward a message, click the appropriate message header to select it, and then click the *Forward* button at the top of the Voice Board form. A new window will open. Specify the complete email address(es) of

the individual(s) to whom you wish to send your message, separated by commas or semi-colons. You can add optional text as a note to this forwarded message by clicking and typing in the large text field at the bottom of the window. Click the *Send* button in the upper left-hand corner of the window when ready to forward this message.



An email will be sent to the addresses specified, containing the following:

- All text associated with the Voice Board message
- Any text entered as a note in the Forward window

The forwarded message will contain links to listen to the audio from the post, as well as any associated text. The message will not contain any attachments; all recorded messages reside on the Voice Tools server maintained by Wimba, so there is no need to worry about rejected attachment types or large messages cluttering inboxes.

Advanced Features

Additional features are available to more advanced users who wish to explore further possibilities when using Voice Boards.

- **Importing**

In addition to recording new messages, instructors also have the ability to import content directly to a Voice Board. This includes pre-recorded audio files, a single or multiple Voice Board messages / threads, or even an entire Voice Board! Supported audio formats include:

- **MP3:** Mpeg 1, layer 3 at 32, 44 or 48kHz (mono or stereo)
- **PCM/WAV:** 8bit or 16bit at 8, 11, 16, 22, 32, and 44 kHz (mono or stereo)
- **Ogg Speex** (NOT Ogg Vorbis): at 8, 11, 16, 22, 32, and 44 kHz (mono or stereo)
- **GSM/WAV:** 8, 11, 16, 22, 32, and 44 kHz (mono or stereo)

Note: *Previously exported Voice Board Files contain a .wvb file format extension.*

To import content

1. Click the *Import* button at the top of a Voice Board.
2. A new window will open.
3. Browse for the file on your hard drive or network drive.
4. Select the appropriate file.
5. Click the *OK* button at the bottom of the *Import* window.
6. An *Import Progress* window will appear as the file is uploaded.
7. A confirmation message will appear once the import has finished.
8. Click *OK* to complete the process.
9. A new thread will appear on the Board titled, "*Imported message.*" This title may be edited.
10. Expand this thread to access the audio/message(s) associated with the imported file.

You may also import a previously exported Wimba Voice Board (.wvb) file directly from the Manager interface by clicking the *Import* button in the center of the screen.

■ Exporting

Voice Board content need not remain exclusively online. Single and multiple messages, top-level threads, and entire Voice Boards can be exported for preservation, re-purposing, or importing to another Voice Board. Exporting content allows instructors to utilize course material every semester within new Voice Boards, as well as develop a repository of audio and text, which can be shared with other faculty members using Voice Boards.

Voice Board content can be downloaded in the following formats:

- Wimba Voice Board (.wvb)
- Speex audio in archive (.zip)
- WAV audio in archive (.zip)
- MP3 audio in archive (.zip)

Note: *The Wimba Voice Board (.wvb) file format is only playable within a Voice Board. This format is recommended if you plan to import content to another Voice Board. Otherwise, we recommend the mp3 format.*

NB: *To extract a file or files from zip format using Windows XP or Windows Vista, right-click the file and choose "Extract all" from the context menu. Mac OSX will automatically extract them.*

To export content

1. Click the *Export* button at the top of a Voice Board.
2. A new window will open.
3. Use the *Select what you want to export* drop-down menu at the top of the window to choose the appropriate content.
4. Use the *Select the export format* drop-down menu to determine your desired data output.

5. Click the *Next* button to select the download location of your choice. (Select your Desktop or a folder you have specified for exported content so it is easy to locate later).
6. Enter a name in the *File Name* box.
7. Click the *Save* button at the bottom of the window.

Note: *Opening a Voice Board without clicking any message on the Board, followed by the Export button, will allow you to export either an entire Voice Board or all top-level messages (from the Select what you want to export drop-down menu).*

Clicking an individual message or thread allows you to export either of the two options above, as well as that selected message/thread.

- **To export multiple individual messages or threads**

Select the first message of your choice.

- To select the next consecutive message(s) / thread(s), hold down the *Shift* key on your keyboard and then click the next message(s)/thread.
- To select a non-consecutive message(s)/thread(s) you wish to export at the same time, hold down the *Control* key on your keyboard and then click the appropriate message(s)/thread(s).

Follow the instructions above to export the content.

- **Publishing Individual Messages**

Individual Voice Board messages can be published on the web. This feature is only available to instructors. To publish audio clips, click the appropriate message from the top half of the Voice Board, followed by the *Publish* button at the top of the Board. A new window will open. You can review the recording by clicking the *Play* button at the top of the window. This window also displays a large box containing Javascript code. Copy and paste this code into an HTML page on your website and the Voice Board posting will display on that page.

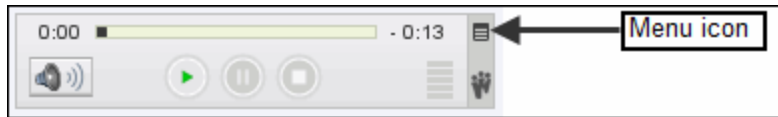
Note: *To enable playback on the webpage, the website's domain must be listed or added to the Voice Tools server configuration file. Please speak to your Server Administrator for additional assistance.*

- **Saving Message Audio**

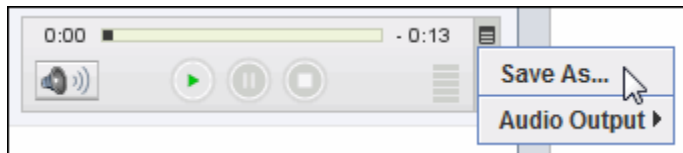
Audio associated with any message can be downloaded to your local hard drive.

To save audio

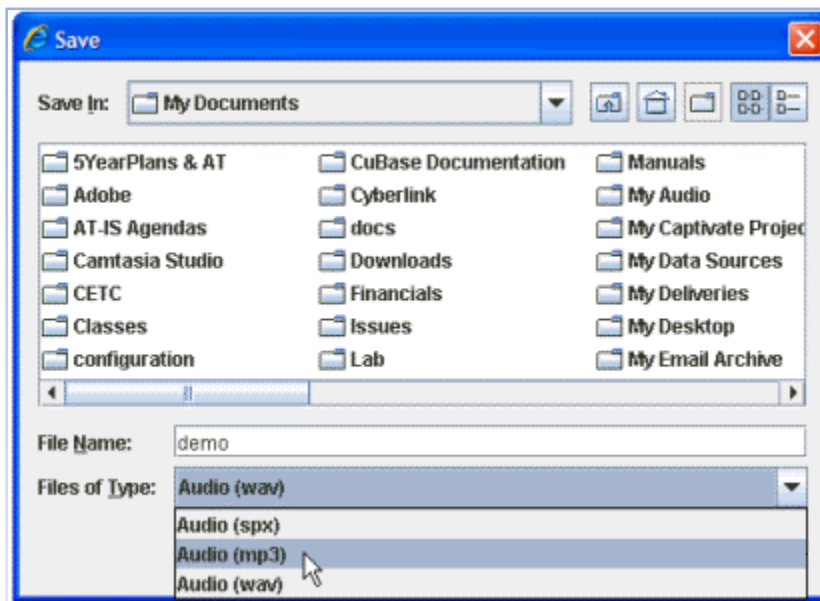
1. Click the appropriate message from the top half of the Voice Board.
2. Click the menu icon in the Voice Player applet.



3. Click the *Save As...* button.



4. A new window will appear. Use the *Save In* drop-down menu to select the download location of your choice. (Select your Desktop or a folder you have specified for exported content so it is easy to locate later).
5. Use the *Files of Type* drop-down box to select the file format you wish to save. You may select *.wav*, *.spx*, or *.mp3*. We recommend *mp3*.
6. Enter an appropriate name in the *File Name* box and click *Save*.



■ **Options**

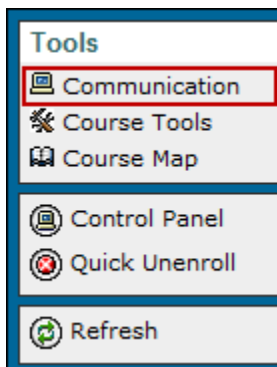
A more time-efficient manner for reviewing posts on a Voice Board. Rather than first selecting a message and then clicking its *Play* button, you can choose to play messages automatically when clicking on them. To enable this setting, click the *Options* button in the upper right-hand corner of a Voice Board and then select *Play on click*. The next time you click on a message containing audio, playback will begin automatically.

- **Reordering Messages**

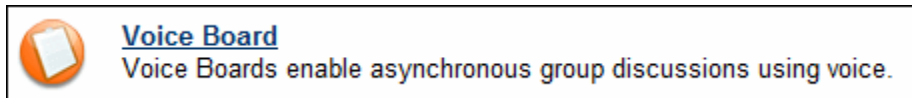
Messages can be reorganized using simple drag-and-drop functionality. Drag the post of your choice above or below another post or thread. Drop the post in its new location. Posts will be instantly reordered. To move a post so it becomes a reply of another post or thread, drag that post and highlight the post or thread of your choice by mousing over it. Entire threads may also be relocated. Dragging and dropping a thread will move the top-level post, along with all replies, to a desired new location using the methods described above.

Method 2 (not recommended)

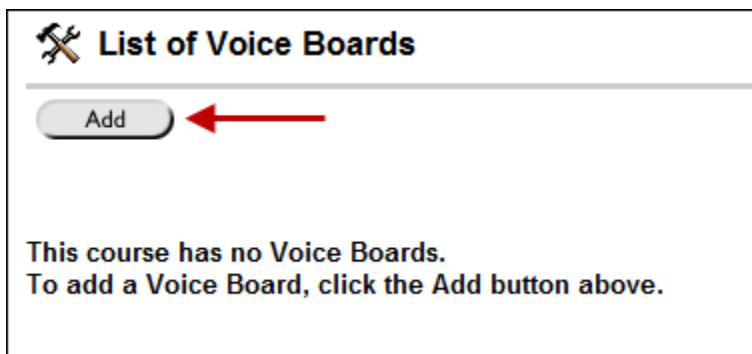
Voice Boards can also be set up from the Communications area of your Blackboard course.




After clicking on Communication in the Tools sidebar, click on the Voice Board link.



You will see a list of all Voice Boards in your course that have been set up in this fashion, and an Add button which will allow you to create another.



Clicking the Add button will cause the Create Voice Board screen to appear.

 **Create Voice Board**

1 Information

Title:
80 characters maximum

Description:

2 Settings

Display short message titles

Display messages in chronological order

Allow students to start a new thread

Allow students to forward messages

Make discussion threads private

Max message length

Audio quality

3 Submit

Click **Submit** to finish. Click **Cancel** to quit.

As you can see, the configuration options are the same as those discussed in Method 1 above. The only real difference between creating a Voice Board using this technique and creating one using method 1 is that the resulting Voice Board created using this technique will be accessible only from the Communications area of your course, where Voice Boards created using method 1 can be accessed from the course content area where you initially create them, or from a course link to that content area.