begin building a ...

Community in the Portal

University of Toronto

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Lesson 1 – Introduction to the Portal (aka Blackboard)

At the end of this lesson, you will know:

- What the Portal is all about
- How to login
- Who to contact for assistance
- How to navigate the Portal
- How to access your Portal Organization
- How to navigate around your Portal Organization

1 - 1 Introduction to the Portal and Organizations

Think of the Portal as an online doorway to three different systems (a learning system, a content system and a community system – all built using Blackboard software) as well as other information, resources like ROSI and tools that are relevant to your life at the University of Toronto. Enter the Portal using your UTORid and password.

Organizations make up the community system in the Portal. Organizations are virtual meeting spaces for members of University community groups such as recognized student groups, academic communities of interest and administrative committees and offices to connect, communicate and share information.

1 - 2 Log on to the Portal

- Go to https://portal.utoronto.ca
- Click on Login
- Enter your UTORid and password

1 - 3 Portal Support / Login Page

- Portal Login page: https://portal.utoronto.ca
- Common Questions: http://www.portalinfo.utoronto.ca/
- Email General Questions: **portal.help@utoronto.ca**

1 - 4 Navigating the Portal

After logging into the Portal, you will see three main tabs, a panel of boxes, hotspots, and tools. The boxes are called modules.

1 - 5 Navigating the My Page Window

- Tabs: My Page, Community, Content
- Hot Spots: A window to other systems that require a UTORid
- Announcements: System, Course, Organization
- My Courses: Lists all courses via ROSI
- Other modules (Modify Content, Modify Layout)

1 - 6 Navigating the Community Window

- My Organizations Plus
- Organization Catalogue
- Organization Search

1 - 7 Navigating in an Organization Window

When you click on one of your organizations from the **My Organizations Plus** module, a window will open up showing you the same view that your community members see, plus the **Control Panel** option for the leader of the organization. The menu on the left gives members access to content and other areas of interest. Leaders can customize this menu.

Lesson 2 – The Organization Menu

At the end of this section, you will be familiar with:

- The Organizations Menu section

2 – 1 Overview of Organization Menu

The **Organization Menu** on the left of the screen gives members access to your organization content. As the leader, you can specify the names used for Organization Menu options, reorder and/or deactivate any menu options you don't want.

Note: remember to remove any Organization Menu items you are not using, as this will make it easier for the members to navigate around the organization.

The default menu includes:

- Announcements
- Organization Information
- Staff Information
- Organization Documents
- Assignments
- Communication
- Discussion Board
- External Links
- Tools

Lesson 3 – Control Panel

At the end of this lesson, you will be familiar with:

- The Control Panel
- How to modify your personal details including your contact information e.g. office hours, etc.
- Adding a Content Area

3 – 1 Add a Content Area

The Portal environment contains an **Organization Menu** area that provides the user with a variety of types of content and tools. Some organization menu links can be populated with numerous content documents such as PowerPoint slides, Word documents and PDF files**.** New **Content Areas** and **Tool Links** are added from the **Control Panel**. Follow these steps to add a new Content Area:

- Click Control Panel
- Click the **Manage Organization Menu** link
- From the Add menu, select Content Area
- Within the **Set Area Properties,** select a **new Content area** from the drop-down list
- Click **Submit**, then **OK**

To change the display order, select a new ordering position from the drop down list beside the area name.

3 - 2 Add Staff Information

Adding Staff Information allows your members access to information about your email address, office hours, location and personal web space. Additional individuals, such as members of your executive can also be added.

- Click Control Panel
- Click Staff Information
- Click **Profile** in the Add bar
- First Name, Last Name, Email
- Office Location & Office Hours
- Click **Submit**, then **OK**

3 - 3 Add a Banner

Adding a banner helps to define the identity of your group and establish a look and feel for the organization.

- Click Control Panel
- Click Organization Design
- Click Organization Banner
- Click Browse to locate the banner on your computer
- Click Submit
- Return to the main window of your organization to see your banner

Lesson 4 - Adding Content from the Content Tab

At the end of this module you will:

- Know how to add content to your Portal Organization
- Know how to add folders and links (adding Surveys is an advanced topic)
- Know how to work with the Web Folder, Item, Folder, Copy, Move, Remove functions

The content collection in the Portal works like a folder on your computer; you can upload all your organization documents (PowerPoint files, word documents, images, etc.) into the content collection, and then link to them from any (or all) of your organizations. When first uploaded, these files will only be visible to you; feel free to organize them, as you like. It is recommended that you create a separate folder for each of your organizations, with subfolders as necessary. This will help with linking to your organization from the content collection. Once you link to these files from a organization shell, the document will become visible to the members of that class (and no one else).

Before transferring your files into the Portal content collection area, collect all of your content pieces together. These can include:

- PowerPoint presentations
- Word documents
- Excel spreadsheets
- Images

4 – 1 Adding Content to the Content Collection via the Web Folder function

- Click on the **content tab** in the header
- Click on web folder
- This will open a new window
- **Locate** organization materials on your computer or from wherever your files are stored
- **Drag the content** into your web folder
- Close web folder
- Click Refresh

Your documents have now been transferred into the content collection.

4 - 2 Uploading Single Files into the Content Collection via the Item function

- Within the content collection you can upload single files, such as a PowerPoint:
- Click on the **content tab** in the header
- Click on **item**
- Browse to find your file and select the file
- Click Submit

4 - 3 Adding Content to a Organization

Organization Content Areas within an organization may contain a variety of documents. Leaders use these areas to present information from basic text to multimedia to links to tools. Leaders can also add Surveys to any content areas.

- Click on your **Organization link** from within **My Organizations Plus** module
- Click on Control Panel
- From the **Content Area** choose the location to add files
- Click **Item**
- Enter Content Information
- **Browse** for file beside Link to Content Collection Item
- Choose **Options** (if needed)
- Click **Submit**

4 - 4 Organizing Files within the Content Collection

Once your files are in the content collection, you can organize them however you like. To create and move individual files into new folders:

- Click **Folder**
- Provide a **name** for the folder
- Click **Submit**

You should now see your folder in the content area.

4 - 5 Moving Files within the Content Collection

- Select the box beside the **filename** to select it
- Click **Move**
- Under **Destination,** leave the text as is (*/orgsorganization-name/*) and **add the name** of your folder (*/orgs/organization-name/foldername*)
- You can also **Browse** for your folder
- Click **Submit**

Your document will now be found inside your new folder. To move it back out, simply retrace your steps and remove the name of the folder from the directory tree. (*/orgs/organization-name/*)

4 - 6 Deleting Files within the Content Collection

Portal organizations are not electronic file archives. Good maintenance practises include deleting files.

- Select the box **beside the filename** (or the name of the folder) to select it
- Click **Remove**
- You will see a **warning pop up window** that reminds you that this action cannot be undone.
- Click **OK**

Lesson 5 – Communication

Communication and collaboration, asynchronous and synchronous, allows for greater contact between faculty and learners with varying schedules. These tools help to create a sense of community.

At the end of this module, you will be familiar with:

Types of communication tools available in the Portal

- How these tools are used
- Announcements
- Send mail
- Discussion Board
- Groups

5 – 1 Add an Announcement

- Click Control Panel
- Click on Announcements
- Click Add Announcement
- Enter a **title** in the Subject field
- Enter a **message** in the Message field
- Enter **Yes or No** in the Permanent Announcement Field
- Select **specific start and end dates** for a specific time period
- To **link** to another area in the organization, click **Browse** and select an area
- Click **Submit**, then **OK**

Modify: Click the **Modify** button next to the desired announcement and edit as needed

The **Announcement tool** is used primarily as a means of broadcasting information which can be critical to the success of the organization. This method of communication can be used to display important information to members as they enter the organization, and be used to decrease the number of emails they receive. Permanent Announcements appear before temporary announcements on the Announcements page, with the most recently posted announcements on top.

5 - 2 Send Email

Send Email is used primarily for sending personal email to organization participants. The Portal stores UTORmail addresses only.

- Click Control Panel
- Click on **Send Email** in the Organization Tools section
- **Select** the **individual users or group** of users in the Send Email section
- **Select** the **Recipients** of your email if necessary (depend on previous selection)
- Enter the **subject** in the Subject field and type in message in the Message field
- Note: The sender receives a copy of this email
- Click **Attach** a file beside Attachments to add an attachment
- Click **Submit** to send

5 - 3 Add a Discussion Forum to the Discussion Board

The Discussion Board is used for collaborative organization work and the sharing of ideas. Sessions can be organized in threads and archived. Groups can be formed to discuss case studies and hold group discussions.

- Click Control Panel
- Click on the **Discussion Board** in the Organization Tools section
- Click on the **Organization** (i.e. training01)
- Click on add **Forum**
- Enter both a **Name and Description** of what the discussion
- Select the desired **Forum Settings**
- Click **Submit**, then **OK**

5 - 4 Create a New Thread in the Discussion Board

- Click Control Panel
- Click Discussion Board
- Click on the **Organization**
- Click on the **Title of the Forum** you would like to participate in
- Click the add **Thread** button to create a new discussion thread (topic)

- Enter the **information** in the **Subject** and **Message** to be posted. Click the Browse button to select a file if you would like to attach one.
- If you wish to save the message prior to submitting it you can do so at this time by selecting **Save**. In the Display options, select Show All to preview all *draft* (saved) threads.
- Click **Submit**, then **OK**

5 - 5 Replying to a Thread

- Click on the **thread** you wish to send a reply to
- To send an email to the author **click the author's name** beside the subject
- Click the **Reply** button that appears at the finish of the post
- In the message box that appears above the original post, **enter your reply**
- Click **Browse** to attach a file
- Click **Submit** to post, then **OK**

5 - 6 Search

- Open the **forum** you would like to search in for postings
- Click the **Search icon** at the top right of your screen
- Select your search options and click submit
- To **print postings** select the message by selecting the checkbox beside it and then select the **collect button**
- Click **Print** on the top panel of your browser or go to **File > Print**

5 - 6 Create Groups

You may wish to create groups for members to discuss projects, work on group assignments/presentations or to provide for easier administration of your organization. Groups are created through the Manage Groups link. You can view the group's activities, discussion boards, file exchange, virtual classroom and email.

- Click Control Panel
- Click on Manage Groups
- Click Add Group
- Give the **group a name** and select options.
- Select whether the group is visible to the students
- Click **Submit**
- Click the **Modify** button next to the group name
- Click Add Users To Group, then List All
- **Check the boxes** next to those users you want in the group (to remove a user uncheck the box)
- Click **Submit**, then **OK**

Lesson 6 – Enrollment

At the end of this module, you will be familiar with:

- Enrollment Options
- Adding, removing and assigning roles to members through My Organizations Plus.

6 - 1 Enrollment Methods

There are two main methods for enrollment (adding members) to an Organization. Each method has an option(s) associated with it for greater flexibiltiy.

- **Leader Led:** The leader has exclusive control over the addition and removal of members using the My Organizations Plus [Edit Users] function (discussed in 6-2). There is an option to allow potential members to email enrollment requests. A leader can accept or deny any given request.
- **Self Enrollment:** This option allows new members to join without the assistance of the leader. Enrollment can be restricted by adding a secret passcode and/or indicating a window in time where enrollment is permitted.

The desired enrollment method can be set through *Control Panel* > *Settings* > *Enrollment Options*.

6 - 2 My Organizations Plus

A leader may add, remove and/or assign roles to members using the My Organizations Plus [Edit Users] function.

Please reference the PDF document *My Organizations Plus: Managing Membership in Your Portal (Blackboard) Organization* located on the Portal Project Website at http://www.portalinfo.utoronto.ca/__shared/assets/My_Organizations_Plus736.pdf .

Lesson 7 – Organization Maintenance

At the end of this module, you will be familiar with:

- Archiving your Organization
- Making Your Organization Available

7 - 1 Archiving your Organization

- Click on **Archive Organization** from within the **Organization Options** section
- Click on **Archive**
- Select your **Organization**
- Click **Submit**

7 - 2 - Make Organization Available

- Click Control Panel
- Click on **Settings** within Organization Options
- Click on Organization Availability
- Select **Yes** from Set Availability
- Click **Submit**, then **OK**