

Connections Course Tools, WebCT, and eReserves: Comparison of Use and Features for Web Enhanced Courses

Feature	eReserves	Connections Course Tools	WebCT
URL	http://ereserves.webster.edu	http://connections.webster.edu	http://www.webster.edu/online
Ease of use	Easy	Easy	Hard
Course Creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor can create an eReserves course page at anytime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course homepage created automatically for every course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course shell needs to be requested from the Academic Distance Learning Center
Repost Course for New Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Courses remain in the system until the instructor deletes them. Instructor can update the year, term, session, and section of the course to "roll" course from one term to another. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Courses are removed at the end of the term. All postings and content must be repeated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Courses can be copied, downloaded, and restored into a new course shell each term
Student Use Tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor can view number "hits", but not "who" accessed items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor can monitor student access by last accessed date, but cannot view number of student visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor can view student number of visits, time, date, and frequency
Post Syllabus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor can post link to online syllabus or upload document 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor can post link to online syllabus or upload a document 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Syllabus can be posted in Syllabus Tool, as a link, HTML, or pdf file.
Post & Exchange Files/Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor can post documents Instructor can organize files and create subfolders Instructor can use regular fax machine to scan documents directly to the eReserves and then post them to the course page. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor can post documents Instructor can organize files and create subfolders Students can upload files but they must be approved by the instructor before posting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor can post or attach files to email and discussion messages. Students can attach files to email or discussion messages, or submit files in the assignments tool
Share Links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor can post links 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor can post links Students can post links with instructor approval Course homepage can be customized to include top 5 links and featured link 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links added by instructor to any page within course, in discussions, or emails Students may add links to Student homepages, in discussions, or emails
Share Photos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor can post photos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students can post photos with instructor approval Course homepage can be customized to include feature photo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Photos added by instructor to any page within course, or attach in email or discussions Students may add photos to Student homepages, or attach in email or discussions
Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor can email students Students can email instructor, but not other students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor can directly email students through course roster Students can email each other from within course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal email w/ forwarding option to outside email account Search function HTML editor with spell check
Announcements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor can post important class announcements which display to the course homepage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor can post important class announcements, which display to the course homepage and student's Connections personal announcements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course page announcements, but they don't display in Connections Portal Personal Announcements
Message Board & Discussion Forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor and students create topics and post 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor and students can create topics and post Private discussion groups can be setup within course
News	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor can post articles in plain text or HTML Students can post upon instructor approval 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content may be added in upper textblocks, organizer pages, as separate documents as a single page, within content modules, in email or discussions
Real-time chat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chat room with "whisper" function No chat log (cut & paste to document before closing session window) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 private rooms w/ private messages, chat logs & can send URL to chat room members One general course chat room
Calendar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course start and end times are automatically populated Additional event can be added 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calendar needs to be added to the course, all dates are entered manually
Searching within Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Search uploaded files/documents only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Search available for all course content, discussion postings and email
Timed Release of Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to release documents at specific dates/time Ability to password protect documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not Available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to release content, quizzes, and assignments at specific dates/times
Gradebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robust grading tools available Instructors can export to external spreadsheet
Interactive Quizzes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numerous options for quizzing

When do I use E-Reserves?

Use E-Reserves by itself when you only need to post and organize your syllabi, links, images, and audio materials for your students to access and when you want to retain materials for subsequent use. Use E-Reserves along with Connections Course Tools and WebCT when you need the other course tools but also wish to post materials for your students to access.

When do I use the Connections Course Tools?

Use Connections Course Tools if you want to upload documents or images, but aren't concerned about having to do it again for future terms. Use the Course Tools to have a class discussion open to all members of your course, to update students with announcements, or to post events to a shared calendar.

When do I use WebCT?

Use WebCT if you have multiple documents/images/link, a consistent syllabus, and want to have more enhanced features like quizzes, discussion groups, or gradebook. Also use WebCT if you want to copy and use same course from term to term.

What about copyright?

All three platforms are password-protected to restrict materials to students in the course, which is required for compliance with fair use guidelines. See Webster University's Fair Use Guidelines for other compliance requirements at:

http://www.webster.edu/fdc/fair_use

Still not sure what to do?

Feel free to contact your Instructional Support Specialist:

College or School	Specialist's Name	Email Address	Phone Number
College of Arts and Sciences	Erik Palmore	palmoeri@webster.edu	x8608
School of Communications	Jeff David	jefdavid@webster.edu	x8603
School of Education	Bill Dyer	bdyer@webster.edu	x8041
School of Business and Technology	Bradley Wolaver	wolaver@webster.edu	x8611
Leigh Gerdine College of Fine Arts	Ryan Robinson	ryanr@webster.edu	x7867

Or contact Tom James in the Faculty Development Center at (314) 961-2660 x8683 or by email at jamest@webster.edu.

For questions about eReserves, contact Greg Kettinger at (314) 968-6952 or by email at kettigre@webster.edu.

