

Welcome to the Blackboard updates podcast from the Reinert Center for Teaching Excellence.

I'm Ted Rubright.

This week I'll be discussing 5 common problems for students using Blackboard CE.

Students occasionally have problems with Blackboard CE. Today we'll look at five problems that arise and offer suggestions for addressing them.

Problem Number 1: Access

If students complain of not being able to get to Blackboard, it's possible that they are actually having trouble getting into the mySLU portal. Remember, the only way to get to Blackboard is through mySLU. If students can't get into mySLU, they need to call the ITS helpdesk at 977-4000 for assistance.

Once inside mySLU, it's still possible students might not be able to access Blackboard. There are several reasons for this. The most common is that they are new SLU and that their status in Banner has not been fully resolved. It might take a day or two to get them integrated into the system.

For some students, generally distance learners, it's possible that their place of business blocks Blackboard with a firewall. The solution is to try accessing Blackboard from home or another location.

Problem Number 2: Download Problems

This is most common with Internet Explorer users. IE has security settings which protect users from downloaded content. Usually, a light yellow bar appears at the top of the browser to alert users that they are downloading a file which might be harmful. The fix for this is to click on the bar, which makes it disappear. The user will be returned to their myBlackboard page and will have to reenter their class, but downloading will no longer be a problem.

Number 3: Pop-ups

Blackboard requires pop-ups to be enabled since it uses them for announcements, exams and other functions. Blackboard requires them to be turned off in the browser's preference panel.

Number 4: Word 2007

Files saved in Microsoft Word 2007 have a different saving protocol than earlier versions. Documents that begin with ~\$ or have a .lnk suffix are not true Word documents. The solution is to make sure students save their Word files with the .doc

extension. They can also be saved as Rich Text Files, which are compatible with all word processors.

5: Java

Java is an external application that is run in conjunction with web browsers to increase their functionality. It has to be installed and enabled to run Blackboard properly. From the myBlackboard page, click “Check Browser” on the upper right side of the page. A pop-up window will open with information about how your web browser is configured. Scrolling down in this window will reveal information on Java. If there’s a red x in the Java area, then Java needs to be installed or upgraded. Go to www.java.com to download and install the free software.

This concludes this week’s podcast. Thanks for listening.