

Blackboard and My MAC: How Can I Get Them to Work Nicely with One Another?

- Step One: Configure your MAC to work **better** with Blackboard. This means installing and using Blackboard's recommended software.
- Step Two: Blackboard is a PC-based product. Be sure to create course materials that can be accessible to all kinds of users whether MAC or PC.
- Step Three: MAC's cannot view documents within the browser. Safari, Internet Explorer, and Netscape are configured to automatically download most documents into the Download Manager, onto the Desktop, or some other location.

MAC OS Recommended Browser Settings for Blackboard

Step One: Download and Install the latest Internet Explorer version

- <http://www.microsoft.com/mac/downloads.msp>
- Download the version appropriate for your MAC OS.

Step Two: Download and Install the Java MRJ

- You will need this tool to use the Virtual Classroom.
- <http://developer.apple.com/java/download.html>

Step Three: Enable both JavaScript and Java to work on your MAC

To enable JavaScript:

1. Open Internet Explorer.
2. Click **Edit**.
3. Select **Preferences**.
4. Select **Web Content** under Web Browser section.
5. Click on the **checkbox** next to the words Enable Scripting, then click **OK**.

To enable Java:

1. Open Internet Explorer.
2. Click **Edit**.
3. Select **Preferences**.
4. Select **Java** under the Web Browser section.
5. Click on the **box** next to Enable Java (Apply MRJ), and then click **OK**.

Step Four: Enable Cookies

1. Click **Edit**.
2. Select **Preferences**.
3. Select **Cookies** under Receiving Files section.
4. When receiving cookies: **Never Ask**.

Note: Some people are nervous about allowing cookies onto their machine, which is why many opt to disable the cookie features. Only use Internet Explorer when you are using Blackboard, and switch to your preferred browser when doing other tasks online.

Creating MAC and PC Friendly Content for Blackboard

If you are using a MAC to create course materials for use on Blackboard, you probably have encountered difficulties either sharing your files with PC users or getting your files to display properly within Blackboard.

Strategy: Offer Different Versions of the Same File for Different Purposes

(I.e. one for viewing within the browser, one for printing out a copy, etc.)

Create Files that can be viewed Within Blackboard

The following files can be viewed immediately and require no downloading or opening of files.

- HTML files (Select File → Save As Webpage from Word)
- Add an Item to a content area and Copy/Paste text into the textbox. Do not upload a file.¹

Offer Documents for Printing

- Word document
- PDF file

Note: These items will download automatically for MAC users, but it will still be a printed version that they can use when they feel the need to print something out.

File Extensions

Blackboard expects PC style file-type extensions in order to process documents correctly. Solution: Add the three-character file type extension to your Mac file names. This will allow PC users to easily read your files. Here is a list of some of the most common file types:

- .doc: used for Microsoft Word documents
- .xls: used for Microsoft Excel documents
- .ppt: used for Microsoft PowerPoint presentations
- .htm or .html: used for HTML documents
- .txt: used for plain text files
- .jpg: used for JPEG image files
- .gif: used for GIF image files

¹ From any Content Area (i.e. Syllabus or Assignments), select “Add Item”. When you fill out the form, paste your copied text into the textbox area usually reserved for additional instructions or descriptions. Do not attach a file. Click Submit at the bottom of the page to finish.

- .mov: used for QuickTime movie files
- .pdf: used for Adobe PDF files

When you attempt to save a file, be sure to add on the appropriate file extension. If the file you are saving is called “syllabus” be sure to type “syllabus.doc” so that PC’s will recognize the file appropriately.

Note: If you are Using OS X, your MAC will automatically add appropriate file extensions for Office Files (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.).