Blackboard 5

Why Adopt Level Three

July 2000


**OVERVIEW**

Level Three of Blackboard 5™, the Advanced Course & Portal Manager, offers your institution the only completely integrated, single platform to unite your institution’s online course and portal management with your existing administrative systems. Supported by a highly-qualified technical consulting team, Level Three of Blackboard 5 allows your institution to Web-enable an entire campus – or even multiple campuses within a system or consortium. Level Three of Blackboard 5 supports the mapping of course and portal management with administrative systems and processes.

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**TOP REASONS TO UPGRADE TO LEVEL THREE OF BLACKBOARD 5**

- Snapshot integration with existing administrative systems, reducing redundancy associated with creating and maintaining user accounts, class rosters and other data
- Real-time integration with existing administrative systems, automating much of the user management function in a manner students expect in web-based environments
- Integrate Blackboard 5 with your existing end-user authentication (security) systems to: reduce the complexity of multiple passwords for each different system; increase overall institutional network security; and create a true single login portal for all institutional services.
- Growth without disruption – enables phased approach to integration
- Support multiple unique domains so that each school, department or division has its own, customized e-Learning environment driven by one Blackboard 5 installation (upcoming)

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**PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT PHILOSOPHY**

Level Three of Blackboard 5 is anchored in three product development pillars:

- Integration with Administrative Systems
- Flexibility for a Phased Integration Approach
- Vision for a Long-Term Online Learning Initiative
INTEGRATION WITH ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS
While Blackboard 5 can be deployed as a standalone application, the product is the first and only e-Learning platform that can be readily integrated with an institution’s business and administrative software systems. Blackboard 5 incorporates APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) and data bridges that enable such integration. For the user, this means the ability to possess a single username and password to participate in both the online teaching and learning environment and the functions performed by the registrar, bursar, library, bookstore etc. – all from a single page using a single login. This capability enables the most brand-loyal and enduring community – your institution’s students, alumni, parents, faculty and administrators – all using the institutional portal powered by Blackboard® as the common point of entry to the institution.

Blackboard 5 is a powerful application that has the flexibility to be integrated into your current system architecture. Blackboard can assist with either a “snapshot” integration approach (one-time, or on a regular basis) or a more sophisticated event-driven (real-time) integration with your administrative software systems. The choice is yours.

FLEXIBILITY FOR A PHASED INTEGRATION APPROACH
Many institutions are excited about a future where their online teaching and learning environment is integrated with their business and administrative software platforms. However, many institutions are unprepared for intensive, one-time-only software integration projects. Blackboard’s approach to this dilemma was to create a software platform that is capable of full integration, yet does not require full integration to provide a rich and rewarding online experience. Institutions can conduct flexible, multi-phased integrations with back-office systems as their needs and capabilities grow.

You decide what systems to integrate and in what fashion. For example, some institutions might start by performing snapshot integration with the Student Information System, to populate course and group environments. Then, as enrollments grow, or as the number of users and courses in the Blackboard system grows, they might upgrade their configuration to incorporate real-time integration for full automation. This can be done separately from integration with end user authentication systems, or all at once. Choice and flexibility are hallmarks of the Blackboard e-Learning platform.

VISION FOR A LONG-TERM ONLINE LEARNING INITIATIVE
Blackboard 5 features a modular architecture that can be easily upgraded over time. For institutions that know today that online learning is an important initiative going forward, Blackboard 5 provides a robust technology infrastructure on which to build and grow an entire online learning program, departmentally or campus-wide.
Similarly, if an institution is based entirely on online course delivery (such as a “virtual university” program), Blackboard 5 provides a reliable and scalable system for delivering courses to all students over the Internet.

The modular architecture and object-oriented code of Blackboard 5 provide a foundation for plugging in a variety of third party tools over time. Blackboard is continually evaluating such third party tools for integration/inclusion with the Blackboard e-Learning platform.

BLACKBOARD 5 LEVEL THREE: REQUIREMENTS

BLACKBOARD UNIX ADMINISTRATOR
Technical Requirements
• Strong knowledge/experience with Linux/Solaris
• Experience with Apache Web server
• Experience with MySQL, or other database application

Other Skills
• Experience running mission critical 24/7 application

BLACKBOARD WINDOWS NT/ WINDOWS 2000 ADMINISTRATOR:
Technical Requirements
• Strong knowledge/experience with Windows NT/Windows 2000
• Experience with the Microsoft Internet Information Server
• Experience with Microsoft SQL Server 7
• Some experience with accessing databases and SQL scripts
• Plus: MSCE certification

Other Skills
• Experience running mission critical 24/7 application

SUPPORTED PLATFORMS
• Solaris: 2.6 or 7
• Red Hat Linux: 5.x, 6.1, or 6.2
• Windows NT with SP 4 or higher

SUPPORTED DATABASES
• Solaris: Oracle and Apache
• Red Hat Linux: Oracle and Apache
• Windows NT: SQL Server 7 with SP 1, IIS 4
For additional information about supported platforms, technical information, and install guide, please refer to documentation available at the Blackboard 5 Orientation Center at http://company.blackboard.com/products/orientation

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

Level Three of Blackboard 5 is the most comprehensive e-Learning platform on the market. From course management, to portal creation, to complete integration with an institution’s back-end administrative systems, Level Three of Blackboard 5 offers the widest range of features and functionality. Regardless of an institution’s size or current capabilities, Level Three of Blackboard 5 is scalable, ready for growth, and adaptable to meet both current and future needs.
For more information regarding Blackboard’s products and services, please contact us at 1.800.424.9299 or visit www.blackboard.com

Blackboard Inc.
1899 L Street, NW
5th Floor
Washington, DC 20036
202.463.4860
(fax) 202.463.4863
www.blackboard.com

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