Content Import and Export To & From Blackboard Learn and SkillsCommons.org

Skills Commons (www.skillscommons.org) contains a variety of materials, including courses covering a particular subject. Instructors may want to adopt such a course in total or nearly so. One of the platforms to deliver such a course to students is *Blackboard Learn* (www.blackboard.com), one of the leading Learning Management System (LMS) products in higher education.

Note that while *Blackboard Learn* is a commercial product, Blackboard offers a no-cost platform as well. The Coursesites platform (www.coursesites.com) is free and hosts many open online courses. Blackboard, the company, merged with MoodleRooms, which is a hosted implementation of Moodle (www.moodlerooms.com).

The purpose of this document is to illustrate the steps to import a course that resides in Skills Commons in an interoperable format, especially the IMS Common Cartridge (http://www.imsglobal.org/cc/index.html). Common Cartridge is a mature file format specification developed by the members of IMS, primarily those from the LMS and publisher communities. The document will also discuss how to export a *Blackboard Learn* course in either a native or cartridge form. This document is intended for course instructors and designers. A system administrator has access to course import and export options from outside a course.

Common Cartridge solves an important challenge, namely how to author a course-sized body of material, including documents, web links, assessments, and discussion topics, only once and yet have that content be readily imported into a variety of LMS platforms. Prior to the arrival and adoption of Common Cartridge, publishers had to prepare a separate file set for each LMS, which is less efficient and economical than a single format.

Skills Commons recommends that teachers who are already using *Blackboard Learn* to deliver the content they wish to submit to the repository should provide two submissions: a native LMS export and an IMS Common Cartridge export. As a common denominator, Common Cartridge limits the range of content it supports to that set of features LMS vendors share. This means that a native export offer a higher level of fidelity than a Common Cartridge, although the cartridge offers significant value. In a few cases, an LMS will import the native export of another LMS (e.g. Canvas will import Desire2Learn), but this is the exception rather than the norm. The two-format recommendation is intended to offer the higher fidelity when the adopting teacher's LMS is the same as the submitter's and lower but still useful fidelity when the adopting teacher's LMS and the submitter's differ.

Note there are many versions of Blackboard Learn, so the exact look and features in your instance may vary.

Importing Content Into Blackboard Learn

First decide whether you want to import content into an existing course or have the material for the basis of new one course. To import into an existing course, open that course and continue with the instructions below; to import into a new course create or have the course created, open it, and then continue.

Next, find out if the file you want to import is an export of a *Blackboard Learn* course (.zip extension) or an IMS Common Cartridge (.imscc) extension.

Many LMS platforms use the zip extension, so be certain you have an export from *Blackboard Learn* and not from another LMS. The extension alone will not tell you if the cartridge came from *Blackboard* Learn; check the Skills Commons submission's description. Note that you can unzip the file and if it contains a file named imsmanifest.xml and if that file contains a line similar to this:

\<manifest identifier="man00001" xmlns:bb="http://www.blackboard.com/content-packaging/"\>

near the top, then it is a *Blackboard Learn* export. If the export did not come from *Blackboard* Learn and you try to import it, *Blackboard Learn* will show and import error with no harm done, so you can always just try it.

The Common Cartridge, as its name implies, is an export file format intended for use with many LMS platforms.

Importing IMS Common Cartridge Into Blackboard Learn

The cartridge is imported into an existing course, so create one if needed. From within a course, from the course **Course Management** menu, choose **Import Package / View Logs**.
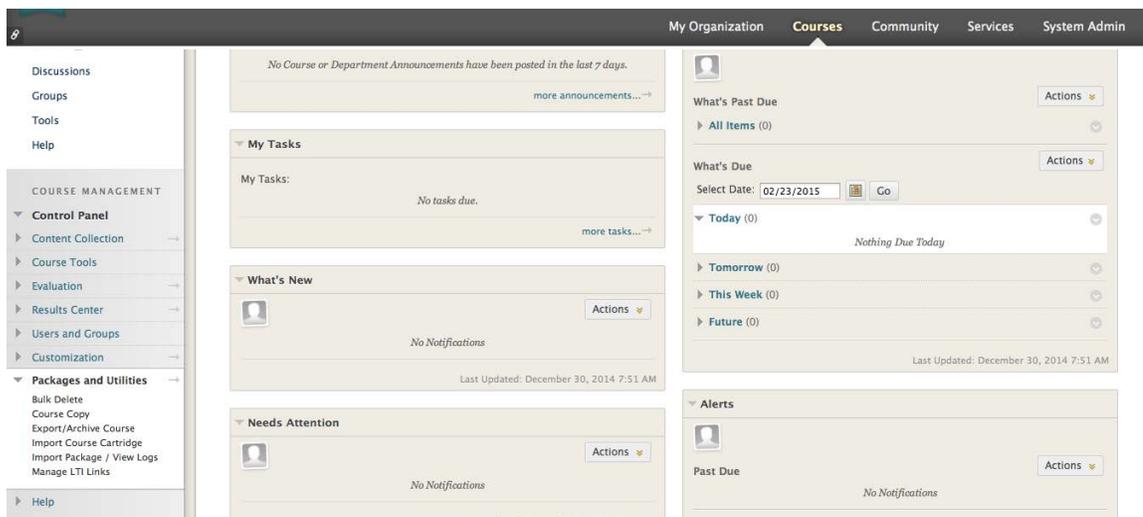
This menu will bring up an Import page. Click on the **Import** Package button.
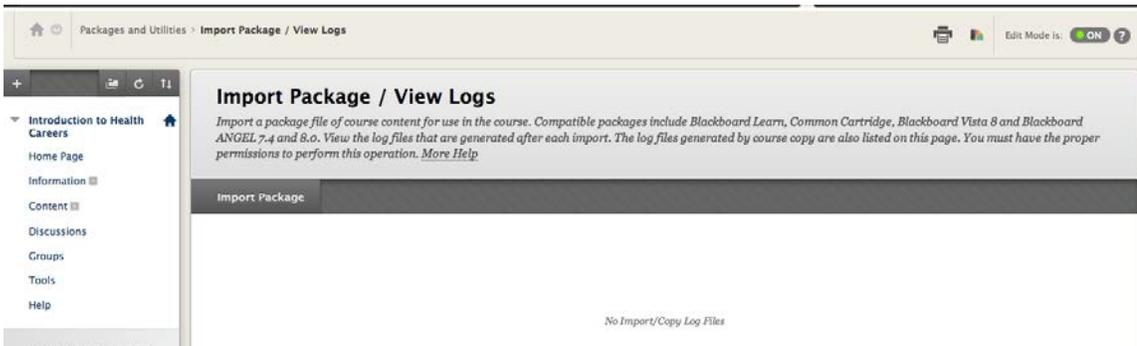
From the Import Package page, browse to select an IMS Common Cartridge. Cartridges having the extension "imscc".   If your file has a ".zip" extension it probably is not a cartridge but a course export instead. Either file type can be imported.

Lower down on the page, select which types of content to include. Note that while you can specify which type of content, you cannot select some content of this type and not another. Some LMS platforms allow you to import a subset of the content, but with *Blackboard Learn* it is all or nothing for a given content type. Of course, after importing, you can remove content you don't want from the course.

Given this import model, we recommend that submissions to Skills Commons include only the content that logically belongs together. If there is a lot of content, it may be better to submit subsets for the convenience of those adopting the material. Check the guidelines for packaging content in the SkillsCommons Support Services Center for more information.

SELECT COURSE MATERIALS

Select materials to include. To recreate a course from an archive package, including user records, use restore instead of import.

Select All   Unselect All

☑ Content Areas
☑ Content Alignments
☑ Discussion Board
☑ Tests, Surveys, and Pools

Click Submit to proceed. Click Cancel to go back.

Cancel   **Submit**

The import file will be queued for processing:

Import: MED_342_2015_Spring is Waiting. To access the detailed log, click here

Success: This action has been queued. An email will be sent when the process is complete.

Import Package / View Logs

Import a package file of course content for use in the course. Compatible packages include Blackboard Learn, Common Cartridge, Blackboard Vista 8 and Blackboard ANGEL 7.4 and 8.0. View the log files that are generated after each import. The log files generated by course copy are also listed on this page. You must have the proper permissions to perform this operation. More Help

When the import is complete, there is an opportunity to view a log of the operation.

Import: MED_342_2015_Spring is Complete. To access the detailed log, click here

Import Package / View Logs

Import a package file of course content for use in the course. Compatible packages include Blackboard Learn, Common Cartridge, Blackboard Vista 8 and Blackboard ANGEL 7.4 and 8.0. View the log files that are generated after each import. The log files generated by course copy are also listed on this page. You must have the proper permissions to perform this operation. More Help

Import Package

Import/Copy Log Name	Import/Copy DateTime
ImportFile_MED_342_2015_Spring_20150223102245_detailed.txt	Feb 23, 2015 10:23:37 AM PST

Displaying 1 to 1 of 1 items   Show All   Edit Paging...

Refreshing to view of the course should show the new content added to the navigation menu. For example, the result of this import created two content areas: "Introduction to Health Careers" and "Web Links".
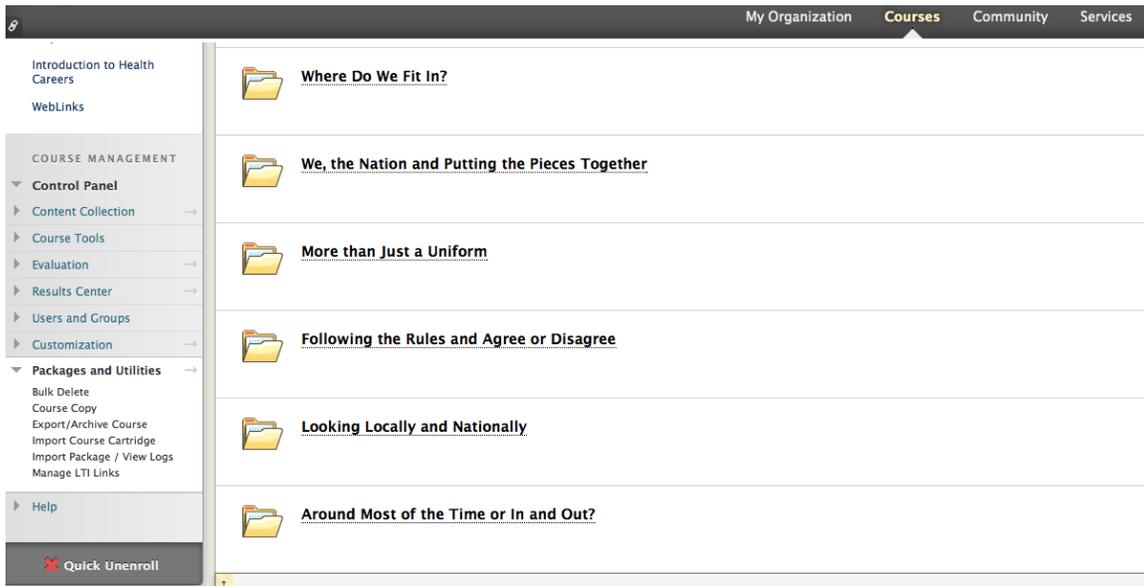
This completes the import process and the new material can be reviewed and used directly.
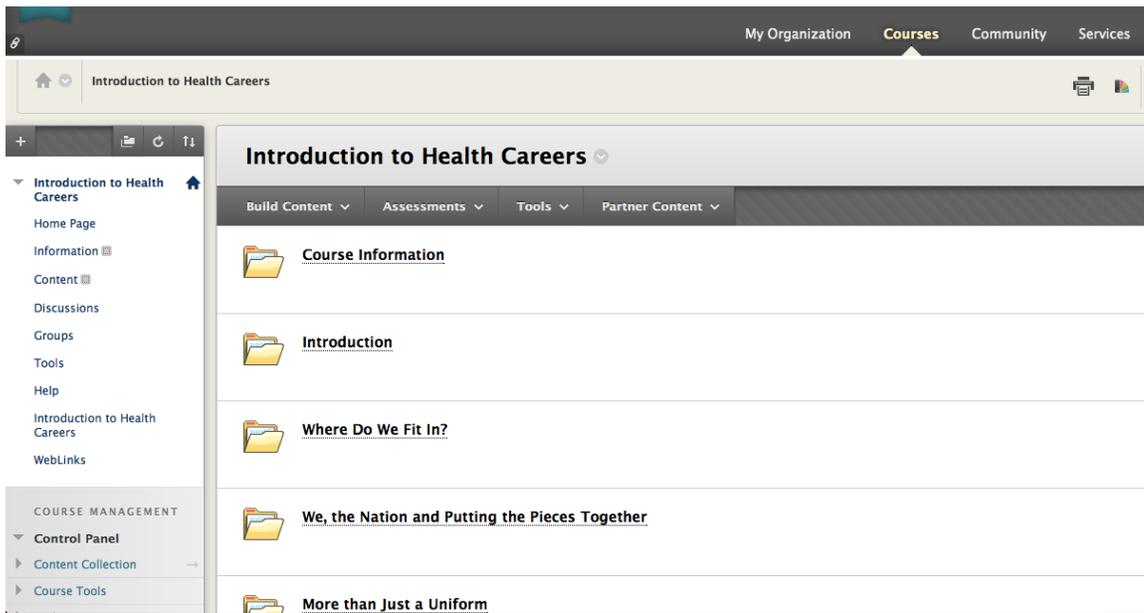
Exporting Content From Blackboard Learn

From within a course, from the course **Course Management** menu, choose **Export / Archive Course**.

At this juncture, you can create Export a Package or Export a Common Cartridge Package. Exporting a package will create a copy of the course suitable for importing into another *Blackboard Learn* course in your instance or someone else's. The package will contain all the features of the course, such as content, announcements, discussions, etc, with only the user data such as grades missing. To include user data, make an Archive, but that is not apprpriate for Skills Commons. The package is complete, but contains data that will not be importable by an LMS other than *Blackboard Learn*.   Skills Commons suggests you make both an export package and a Common Cartridge to have the best of both, namely a complete course for those importing into *Blackboard Learn* and a Common Cartridge for us in other LMS platforms.
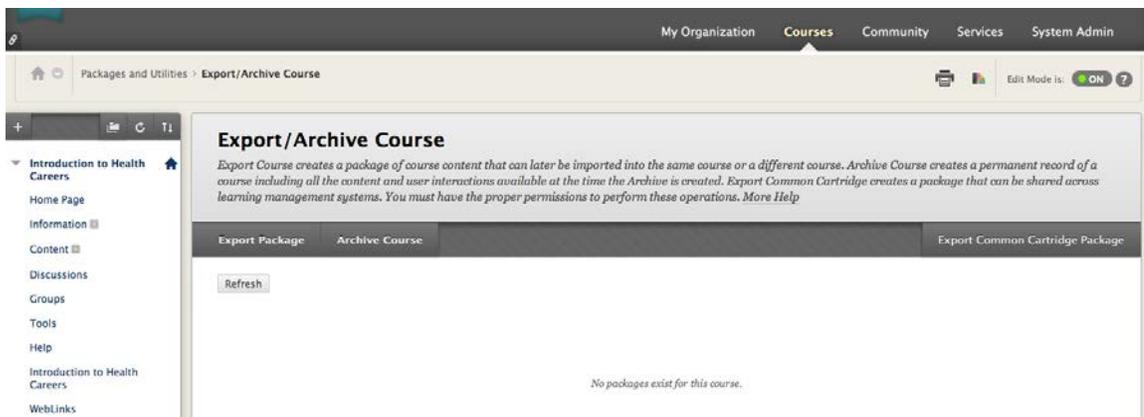
Following the Export Package path for now, there is a long page of options that control what is included in the export.

Export Course

Export Course creates a package of course content for reuse. Exporting a course includes Content, Settings, and Tools, but does not include user records. To create a copy of a course including user records, use Archive Course. More Help

Cancel   **Submit**

SELECT COPY OPTIONS

✱ Source Course ID   MED_342_2015_Spring

FILE ATTACHMENTS

Choose between copying only the links to files or the links and new copies of every file attached within the course. Click **Calculate Size** to make sure that the package size does not exceed the limit.

Course Files Default Directory
- ○ Copy only links to course default directory files
- ● Copy links and include copies of the files in the course default directory

Files Outside of the Course Default Directory
- ● Copy only links to files stored outside of the course default directory
- ○ Copy links and include copies of the files outside of the course default directory

Package Size   [Calculate Size] [Manage Package Contents]

SELECT COURSE MATERIALS

Select materials to include in the export package. For a package to serve as an exact record, including user records, use archive instead of export.

[Select All] [Unselect All]

- ☑ Content Areas
  - ☑ Home Page
  - ☑ Information
  - ☑ Content
  - ☑ Introduction to Health Careers
  - ☑ WebLinks

- ☑ Adaptive Release Rules for Content
- ☑ Announcements
- ☑ Blogs
- ☑ Calendar
- ☑ Collaboration Sessions
- ☑ Contacts
- ☑ Content Alignments
- ☑ Discussion Board
  - ● Include starter posts for each thread in each forum (anonymized)
  - ○ Include only the forums, with no starter posts

- ☑ Glossary
- ☑ Group Settings
- ☑ Journals
- ☑ Results Center Columns and Settings
- ☑ Retention Center Rules
- ☑ Rubrics
- ☑ Settings
  - ☑ Availability
  - ☑ Banner Image
  - ☑ Course Guest Access
  - ☑ Course Observer Access
  - ☑ Duration
  - ☑ Enrollment Options
  - ☑ Language Pack
  - ☑ Navigation Settings
- ☑ Tasks
- ☑ Tests, Surveys, and Pools
- ☑ Wikis

The export is queued for processing:

Success: This action has been queued. An email will be sent when the process is complete.

Export/Archive Course

Export Course creates a package of course content that can later be imported into the same course or a different course. Archive Course creates a permanent record of a course including all the content and user interactions available at the time the Archive is created. Export Common Cartridge creates a package that can be shared across learning management systems. You must have the proper permissions to perform these operations. More Help

| Export Package | Archive Course | | Export Common Cartridge Package |

When the export is complete,

Export/Archive Course

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| Export Package | Archive Course | | Export Common Cartridge Package |

Refresh

File Name	Date Created
ExportFile_MED_342_2015_Spring_20150223105129.zip	2/23/15 10:51 AM

Displaying 1 to 1 of 1 items   Show All   Edit Paging...

there will be a link to the zip file. Click on this link to download the file. You can upload the file to Skills Commons now, following the process outlined in the Single Submission User Guide located in the SkillsCommons Support Services Center.

Following the Export Common Cartridge Package path, there is an option to select which version of Common Cartridge. Skills Commons recommends version 1.1, which is the most widely supported currently.

Note that you can also select whether to export all areas or specific content folders. If all the course material logically belongs as a single unit, then select all content. On the other hand, if the contents might be useful in pieces, consider exporting more than one cartridge. Think ahead to how someone else might use the content in their own course to guide you. Skills Commons recommends the smallest set of content that make sense pedagogically as a way to maximize reuse across the community.

The export is queued for processing:

When the export is complete,

there will be a link to the imscc file. Click on this link to download the file. You can upload the file to Skills Commons now, following the process outlined in the Single Submission User Guide located in the SkillsCommons Support Services Center.

This workforce solution was created through a cooperative agreement between the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration and the California State University-Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching (MERLOT).