

Why a new approach?

Blackboard Course Cartridges – materials supplied by textbook publishers to be uploaded into Blackboard courses – have given faculty a series of problems in the past.

As a result we have produced this document to outline:

- our recommendation that all course cartridges be thoroughly evaluated by faculty before they are used in real Blackboard courses.
- issues faculty should be aware of when evaluating course cartridges.

We recommend that faculty considering the use of course cartridges contact Blackboard Help (bbhelp@algonquincollege.com) **at least one month before** the cartridge is to be used in their course(s). We will create a development/evaluation course for you, in which you can preview the course cartridge, see how it interacts with your existing course materials, and decide what parts of the cartridge you wish to use. You need to evaluate the cartridge very thoroughly before attempting to load it into your course(s).

Is there a Blackboard Course Cartridge for my textbook?

Faculty wishing to know more about Blackboard Course Cartridges or to see if a course cartridge is available for a specific textbook should contact their textbook representative or visit “Course Cartridges” on the Blackboard website at: <http://www.blackboard.com/extend/ccart/>

A short checklist for faculty evaluation:

- What does the cartridge include?
- Is a student key required?
- If the cartridge includes tests or assessments, were they created as pools or tests?
- Is the cartridge copy protected?
- Do you have multiple sections in which you need the cartridge?

With regards to evaluation, you should be aware of the following issues:

- All cartridges are not alike – some are course exports which need to be Restored or Imported, others have a key to be entered in an existing Blackboard course which initiates a connection to a Cartridge Server that loads the content.
- Sometimes a cartridge includes Question Pools or Tests. It is far better for you to have question pools than, tests as they are more flexible. Tests may

be created from Pools, which means they can be exported or copied and then modified to make other “tailored” tests. Tests which are not in a pool cannot be exported or individually copied.

- Some cartridges are copy protected, preventing you from using the normal Blackboard course or element copying processes. If you have multiple sections, you may need to download the cartridge and configure each course individually or create a combined course and load the cartridge content to that instead of the regular sections.

Issues with student keys:

- Many cartridges require the students to purchase a “key” with their textbook to access the content areas. It is worth confirming that the bookstore has the correct keys for the book you are using.
- Keep in mind that the cartridge usually downloads the content to the “Course Documents” area. If you do not require all students to buy the book, the “Course Documents” area will be inaccessible to those students who have not purchased the textbook and key. Blackboard Help can advise you on ways to avoid these difficulties, should they arise.