

Blackboard Support Bulletin

Announcing the End Of Life of the *Blackboard Learn™ for the Facebook® Platform* Application and the End of Life of *Blackboard Scholar™*.

This **Support Bulletin** is to inform you of the end-of-life plans for two legacy Blackboard products:

- Blackboard will formally cease offering and supporting the *Blackboard Learn™ for the Facebook® Platform* application(<http://www.facebook.com/apps/application.php?id=27522527824&sk=info>) **at the end of this month on September 30, 2011.**

The *Blackboard Learn for the Facebook Platform* application is a Facebook app that allows students to receive notifications of changes to their Blackboard course inside of Facebook. It is part of the *Blackboard Sync™* service along with the *Blackboard Learn Toolbar™ with Bing™*. (In the near term, the *Blackboard Sync* product will continue to be supported, as will the *Blackboard Learn Toolbar with Bing*.)

- Blackboard will formally cease offering and supporting *Scholar™* (<http://www.scholar.com>) **on January 13, 2012.**

Scholar (<http://www.scholar.com>) is a social bookmarking service integrated with the *Blackboard Learn™* platform.

Blackboard Learn for the Facebook Platform End-of-Life Plans

The *Blackboard Learn for the Facebook Platform application* will be shut down on September 30, 2011.

We regret the short notice of this announcement. However, based on conversations with customers and analysis of the existing usage, we felt the current Facebook application has not served the client base well. This analysis, combined with changes to the Facebook APIs that are occurring this fall, required a rapid end-of-life for this product.

For clients on *Blackboard Learn, Release 9.x* or *Blackboard Learning System, Release 8.x*:

- Other than notifying your users of this impending change, no action is necessary on your part. If users have questions about how to remove the Facebook application from their Facebook account, you can direct them to Facebook's Help Center instructions on how to remove an app from a Facebook account: <http://www.facebook.com/help/?faq=13452>

For clients on *Blackboard Learn, Vista Edition*, or *Blackboard Learn, CE Edition*:

- The *Blackboard Learn for the Facebook Platform* application was not available for Vista or CE. No action or communication is necessary.

If you have additional questions, please contact your Client Support representative.

Scholar End-of-Life Plans

The *Scholar* central service at <http://www.scholar.com> will be shut down on the January 13, 2012.

The *Scholar Building Block* will no longer be bundled with the *Blackboard Learn* platform as of *Blackboard Learn, Release 9.1 Service Pack 8*, which is currently scheduled for release later this year.

For clients on *Blackboard Learn, Release 9.x* or *Blackboard Learning System, Release 8.x*:

- You should communicate to your faculty and students using *Scholar* that they can export their bookmarks from *Scholar* for use elsewhere, whether it is in their browser or another social bookmarking service, e.g. Delicious (<http://www.delicious.com>). This process is documented in a Behind the Blackboard Knowledge Base article at <http://kb.blackboard.com/display/KB/How+To+Migrate+Your+Scholar+Bookmarks+to+Your+Browser+or+Another+Social+Bookmarking+Service>.
- You should communicate to faculty that have added *Scholar* Streams as content items to their courses that those Streams will no longer function after *Scholar* has reached its end-of-life. Those content items should be removed from their courses.
- If you will not be immediately upgrading to *Release 9.1 Service Pack 8* after its release, you should disable and/or remove the *Scholar Building Block* before the end-of-life date. Please consider leaving the *Scholar Building Block* enabled until your users have had an appropriate amount of time to export their bookmarks from *Scholar*.

For clients on *Blackboard Learn, Vista Edition*, or *Blackboard Learn, CE Edition*:

- You should communicate to your faculty and students using *Scholar* that they can export their bookmarks from *Scholar* for use elsewhere, whether it is in their browser or another social bookmarking service, e.g. Delicious (<http://www.delicious.com>). This process is documented in a Behind the Blackboard Knowledge Base article at <http://kb.blackboard.com/display/KB/How+To+Migrate+Your+Scholar+Bookmarks+to+Your+Browser+or+Another+Social+Bookmarking+Service>.
- If you will not be immediately upgrading to *Release 9.1 Service Pack 8* after its release, you should disable and/or remove the *Scholar PowerLink* before the end-of-life date. Please consider leaving the *Scholar PowerLink* enabled until your users have had an appropriate amount of time to export their bookmarks from *Scholar*.

If you have additional questions, please contact your Client Support representative.

Additional Information

Neither of these products achieved broad usage among clients. Regarding Scholar, client feedback indicated social bookmarking was too narrow of a social activity and difficult to integrate in instructional practices. With the Facebook application, students let us know that they were less interested in being able to access Learn notifications inside of Facebook than other social media integrations.

Based on the low usage of these solutions as well as the changing Facebook APIs, we feel our focus and development resources are better spent on other key areas of the application suite. Blackboard is fully committed to social learning and is working on several development projects that will improve the close connection and integration of social learning and the classroom. Blackboard learned important insights from our early integration with Facebook as well as from Scholar. These observations, among others, have informed the vision for social learning that Blackboard shared with our clients this past July at BbWorld 2011 in Las Vegas. (For more information on this vision, see the video of the BbWorld 2011 keynote: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rIGA9_p--c).

Enabling Blackboard students and faculty to connect with each other through *Blackboard Learn* and through other social media applications remains a key component of the Blackboard vision, and we look forward to sharing more with you about this in coming months.