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Overview

We can’t wait for FUSION 2011 so we can show off and talk with clients about Learning Environment 9.4 (planned for August) and all the exciting updates in it. This document gives an overview of what we’re planning for this release.

Learning Environment 9.4 will contain some great improvements not only to the look and feel, but the functionality of the Calendar tool. Seating Chart is an exciting new tool that provides an interactive view of your class for tracking participation and other great things. We’ve been building out more notification options for you, including new notification sources (such as News, Dropbox, and Updates) and destinations (such as RSS and SMS). There are some significant interface and workflow improvements for grading dropbox submissions, including conversion (locally without a third party hosted service) and display of common file types in the browser to save instructors from downloading and opening them. Social network users can add their profile information from sites like Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google to their Desire2Learn profile, and can easily share public areas of the system to Facebook, Twitter and Google. Lastly, there are some exciting changes to the News tool in this release: a consolidated list of news across a user’s active courses, and the ability for users to dismiss, or hide, news items they’ve already read.

Significant Calendar Changes and Improvements

The new Calendar is completely redesigned and built from the ground up to focus on the presentation of course material. This version also introduces a streamlined interface that is easy to use and powerful.

The previous Calendar enabled availability events and course events using Quicklinks to point to course materials. The new Calendar makes it possible to create events for Content and schedule your course independent of availability events. We integrated Content into Calendar to greatly simplify the process of scheduling course content. You can easily schedule a module or topic and view its contents directly in Calendar. We display content modules and topics in Calendar using an Agenda view that groups content into categories so you can distinguish between learning materials, discussions, quizzes, and assignments.

Calendar also features views that let you arrange and visualize course events in a way that makes sense to you. A new syllabus view lets you browse all events for any course. An agenda view displays the full details for upcoming events and lets you change the arrangement between dates, courses, or event type. You can also configure the date range...
for events shown in the Agenda so you can focus on events today and tomorrow, the next week, the next 2 weeks, or the next 3 weeks. Calendar even remembers your view states so when you return you see the same view that you previously used –even if you logged out of the system.

We also enabled iCal syncing to easily sync your Desire2Learn course events with external calendars such as Outlook and Google Calendar, and mobile devices such as iPhones, Android, and Blackberry.

Calendar management

The Calendar interface features a calendar area to add and remove calendars and quickly jump between courses in a single click. You can quickly choose to show all calendars or just your current calendar. You can view and print a syllabus for any course in just a few clicks.

Consolidated views of all calendars

The Calendar is a consolidated interface for all course calendars and features various views to consume content in a method that makes sense for you.
Custom Calendar Colors

Use the brand new color picker to set custom colors for any of your calendars. The color picker enables you to pick from a variety of predefined colors or use hex values to specify a specific color.
Integration with Content

We added the ability to add Content directly from the Calendar then display it right inside of the event. This enables instructors to use the Calendar as a presentation tool for their course Content in the context of a daily, weekly, and monthly schedule.

Agenda View

The agenda view shows details of course events and enables you to view events by date, course, or event type (assignments, discussion, tests). You can also customize the range of dates that appear in your Agenda view – Today and tomorrow, Next 7 Days, Next 14 Days, or Next 21 Days.

The agenda view pulls information from the course tools to display instructions for Dropbox assignments, Quizzes, and Discussions directly in Calendar. Agenda view also organizes the content of module events into smart groupings; files and links in a “Materials” section, dropboxes in an “Assignments” section, etc. You can customize the names of these groupings using the Language Management tool.
Schedule View

You can access a full course schedule for any course in your calendar with a single click. This provides a beautiful view of all events in the course calendar and access to lets you subscribe to the calendar or print the entire schedule.
Create a quicklink to the schedule view from anywhere in Learning Environment to provide participants with a birds-eye view of the course.

Calendar Views

We created stunning calendar views that allow you to view events for a day, week, or month and quickly visualize your availability. Combined with the calendar switcher you can switch between courses and create events for any calendar with just a few clicks.
Creating Events

Creating events couldn’t be more satisfying using our brand new interface, which provides a user-friendly experience and makes managing events easier and more fun.

You can add content directly to an event, change attendees, add a location, manage recurrence and restrictions, and add event presenters using a slick new interface.
Quick Create

You can click on a time interval to immediately create an event in that timeslot. In conjunction with the calendar switcher, this interface makes it possible to create events for any course in just a few clicks.
Recurrence and Restrictions

When you edit a recurring event Calendar gives you the option to update all occurrences, the active occurrence only, or the active occurrence and all future occurrences. This gives you maximum flexibility for changing your recurring course events.

Calendar also lets you change the visibility of your course events using relative criteria. You can set the event to be hidden until a specific number of days, hours, or minutes before the event starts, hidden after the event ends, visible between a date range, or hidden indefinitely.

This gives you the confidence to work on your content events without exposing the events to participants.

List View – Searching and Browsing All and Upcoming Events

You can search for any event based on its name and/or description and browse all events or just view upcoming events. You can also bulk edit event visibility and offset days forwards or backwards by date, week or minutes.
Bulk Edit Visibility and Offset Event Dates

You can bulk edit the visibility of all events across all course calendars (while still respecting permissions). Calendar provide you with the option to set relative visibility so you can set the visibility of all events relative to their own start and end dates.

![Event Restrictions](image1)

You can also bulk offset all your event dates. This is a great way to move events forwards or backwards by days, hours, or minutes.

![Offset Dates](image2)

Printing

We enabled options to customize the printing experience – from showing and hiding event details and navigation bars/branding, as well as defining a print range. You can print a course syllabus, or all events from all of your course calendars.

We implemented smart defaults, so if you print from the Day view the event range is automatically for the day, if you print from the List view while viewing upcoming events, then the print range will default to events starting today, etc.
iCal Subscriptions

You can subscribe to all your course calendars or individual course calendars. This enables you to easily view your Desire2Learn course events in external calendars such as Outlook and Google Calendar, and on mobile devices such as iPhones, Android, and Blackberry. Any changes made to events in Calendar automatically feed to all devices and external calendars you have subscribed to. The details of the agenda view are also sent with the iCal feed and are displayed as links.

Subscribe to all Calendars

Copy and paste this link into any external calendar application to subscribe to all of your events.

http://localhost:8080/le/calendar/feed/user/feed.ics?token=n@9@3@3@3@3@3@3

Click the Reset icon to generate a new private address. This will invalidate any existing feeds you have subscribed to.
Task Management

Keeping track of all your course tasks can be difficult, so we’re adding a tasks management interface for every user directly into the Calendar tool. Create and manage all of your course tasks alongside your events in the Calendar.

Task Notes

Use tasks to add quick reminders, course tasks, or general notes for course events.

Quick and efficient

The tasks interface is clean and simple with a focus on quick creation of tasks and smart default due dates.
Task options

We also provide a variety of options to customize the task interface and managing course tasks easier.

Add any user from Classlist as an event presenter and create custom presenter roles to define their role in the event.

The Market Economy, Supply & Demand, Price and Quantity  
8:40 AM - 10:00 AM
Finance 101
Instructor: Joanna Hill  
Guest Speaker: Jerry Hildebrand
Materials
- Readings (1-67-037)
Assignments
- Three Paths into the Future
Locations integration

Quickly add locations from the Locations tool or add custom locations for one-off events. Locations are remembered so when you create another event it defaults to your last used location.

Other Calendar Changes

CSV export and import no longer supported

As of 9.4, exporting calendar events into .csv files is no longer supported as there is no associated .csv export format and significant work has been done to improve the process of creating events directly from the Calendar tool. iCal file access is still supported, and iCal subscriptions are the recommended way to use Learning Environment calendars with external systems. iCal import is still supported.

New Locations tool

We created a new Locations tool to create and manage organization and course locations. You can create custom room layouts and add them to your locations to enable seating charts (more about those later).

Org and Course locations

At the organization level, the Locations tool creates and manages locations for the entire organization. This ensures that there is a centralized place for the locations and their layouts. These locations are used by both Calendar events and Seating Chart.

Active and Inactive Locations

At the course level, the Locations tool can make locations active or inactive. This ensures that your course events and seating charts are limited to locations for your course and not the entire list of organization locations.
Layout Management

Course instructors can customize the layout of their classrooms by versioning layouts at the course level. This provides greater flexibility and the freedom to arrange the seats in a layout without editing the location properties. If the location is updated at the organization level, course instructors can reset the location to update the layout to the newest version.

New Seating Chart tool

Seating Chart is an exciting new tool that enables you to create and manage a virtual room for your Classlist, using a slick drag and drop interface. Drag students from one seat to another and even swap seats on drop.

Seating Chart integrates with Calendar to automatically add seating charts to Calendar events that use any associated locations. This allows you to focus on teaching and learning without any admin overhead.

You can launch Seating Chart sessions directly from the Calendar to easily track participation and attendance for your course and group events. Use the custom focus filters to analyze user progress and guide your participation tracking.
Learning Suite 9.4 Features Guide

View Classlist in a room layout

Seating Chart enables you to view your classlist in the context of a virtual classroom. Your classrooms will come alive in a drag and drop interface for assigning seats and managing attendance and participation.

Group and Section Seating Charts

You can create seating charts for an entire course and for any group or section. The seating chart landing page summarizes the statistics for each so you can compare and contrast class performance.
Default Seating Charts

When you create a seating chart for a location it becomes the default seating chart. This means that any event created in the location automatically associates with the default seating chart. This frees administrators and teachers to focus on the events and content rather than worrying about updating events individually.

You can create multiple seating charts, and, when you are ready, set another seating chart as the default. Then all future events will use the new default seating chart.

Drag and Drop

Seating Chart features a drag and drop interface for managing your seating assignments. Drag users to and from the seating chart to easily assign and remove seat assignments.

Assigning and swapping seats

Drag a user to an empty seat to create a seating assignment. Drag a user onto another user to swap their seats.

Accessibility

All drag and drop functionality is accessible and standards compliant.
Randomize seating assignments

With a single click you can randomize all seating assignments in your seating chart.

Locking/Unlocking Seating Charts

You can lock and unlock seating charts to have more control over who can make changes to seating assignments. Locking a seating chart disables all drag and drop and bulk seating assignment actions. You can restrict this feature using Permissions, so only certain users can make changes.

Printing Seating Charts and Sessions

You can easily print any seating chart or session. When you print a seating chart it includes the navigation bar to create a polished and fully branded print view.

You can print to a large number of output formats and page sizes to create a seating chart that looks great as a large poster or as a small handout.

Printing from a session also includes all attendance and participation status indicators and counts.
Works great on iPad and netbooks

Seating Chart works great on smaller resolution screens and touchscreen devices such as an iPad. You can drag and drop, launch sessions, and enjoy all the benefits of Seating Chart while you’re on the go or in the classroom.

Calendar Integration

Seating Chart integrates with Calendar to save you time and add real value.

Events are accessible directly from the Seating Chart

Seating Chart sessions use the event name and date for easy searching and recognition when you’re in the seating chart.

Launch Sessions directly from the Calendar

Calendar events provide direct links to seating chart sessions so you can launch a seating chart and track attendance and participation without leaving the context of the Calendar.
Participant View

Participants can view seating charts directly from a calendar event to see where they are sitting and the layout of the classroom. No stats are shown to users without the proper Seating Chart management permissions.

Locations Integration

Default Seating Charts

Default seating charts allow you to associate seating charts automatically for course events in applicable locations. There's no admin overhead and no barrier to using Seating Chart.

Attendance Tracking

Use the custom filters to focus in on attendance tracking and mark participants as present, excused absent, or unexcused absent. You can also use the Set all present option to quickly mark all participants present. This only applies to users who don’t already have a status, meaning that you can add your absent students and then quickly populate the rest.
Auto attendance options and integrations

We also provide an automatic attendance option that allows you to automatically mark participants present when you start or open any session. Seating Chart provides extensibility options to enable integration with external systems you can use to populate absences. With these options you can implement an automatic attendance tracking solution.

Participation Tracking

Intuitive, simple controls for tracking participation

The Participation tracking interface is simple and intuitive with a focus on quick tracking using mobile devices such as iPads and Netbooks. Simply toggle left and right to add and subtract scores.

![Nancy Batiste](image)

**Attendance**

- Present

**Participation**

- 0

**Cold Calls**

- 0

**Session Comments**

- Add Comment

- No feedback found

View Details

Thresholds

Each course instructor defines the participation threshold and criteria for their course participation tracking. Seating Chart uses status styles to visually represent the session results directly in the seating chart and throughout the interface.

You can define the criteria for each status and set a custom color. This provides an easy and intuitive way to immediately understand student progress and performance.
Cold Calls

Along with participation tracking, Seating Chart also allows tracking the number of times you’ve called on a participant. This enables you to track both the quality and quantity of the participation per session. You can ensure that you aren’t calling some participants more than others and balance your discussion.

Overall and Session Statistics

Seating Chart tracks all attendance and participation data and displays the overall statistics for all sessions in your course throughout the interface. You can also view detailed participant statistics to compare and contrast scores between sessions and students.

Focus Filters

The Manage Seating Chart view and the Session view offer custom focus filters that provide a fantastic way to focus attention on users that satisfy your filter criteria. The criteria that you use stay with you from one seating chart to the next.
Live Searching

You can live search any participant by typing their name in the search field. The results immediately pop out from the page as you start typing.

Custom filters for attendance, participation, and cold calls

You can customize the name and criteria of the filters for your seating charts and sessions. There’s a seating chart filter set and session filter set. Both sets of filters are remembered across courses so you are using consistent criteria across seating charts and sessions.
User Details

A dedicated User Details view provides a way to focus on individual students and view their overall statistics, the history of all completed and in progress sessions, and some comment areas for leaving notes for reference.

General Comments

You can add general comments about the participant’s general performance and progress.

Session Comments

You can also leave session comments about a specific session.

Notifications

With Learning Environment 9.4, users can now opt to have more information delivered to them where and when they want it, without requiring them to log in to Learning Environment. Notifications in 9.4 introduce important additions to the underlying architecture to properly support time-based availability, user preferences for daily scheduling, and release conditions, making sure users get notifications when, where, and how they want them.

Preferences

The Preferences tool has been reorganized making Notification preferences easy to discover and use from the My Settings widget, and also to facilitate capturing new information such as the user’s SMS address and alternative email address, including Facebook email addresses. This page is for subscribing to notification sources, specifying
the time for daily course summaries, and identifying are any courses that you do not want to receive notifications for.

### Subscribe to News (Email, SMS, RSS)

Starting in Learning Environment 9.4, there are three new ways to receive notification about changes to course news: email to your system defined email address or other email address, SMS (text message) and RSS (news feed). By subscribing to news with one of these methods, users can be notified whenever a new news item is available, or when an instructor makes a major update to an existing news item.

Email notifications can go to any email address the user chooses and includes the headline and full body of the news item, plus link to access the News tool for the course and any attachments.

SMS notifications are a great way to hear about news when a user is away from their computer. These notifications include a course identifier and as much of the headline and news body text as fits in a short message.

For users who prefer to aggregate all their news into Google Reader, Outlook, etc. they can now subscribe to an RSS feed for News from all of their current courses or from individual courses.
You can access notification preferences from the My Settings homepage widget or from the link in the Discussions tool, News tool, and News widget. You can access RSS feeds from the news tool and news widget.

Subscribe to Dropbox Deadline Reminders (Email, SMS)

Users can subscribe to receive email or SMS notifications on dropbox folders with approaching end dates. If users have already submitted files to the folder, they still get notified of the approaching end date in case there are additional files they want to add, or if they want to make some final tweaks to their essay and submit an updated version before the end date. Administrators can determine how long before a dropbox end date these notifications should be sent, but 48 hours is the default.
In addition to these immediate notifications, dropbox folders with end dates in the next 7 days are included in the daily course update for users who chose to receive it.

Subscribe to Course updates (Email)

Instead of receiving individual messages immediately as event occur, users can also choose to receive a daily activity summary for each course. This daily summary includes news activity details, dropbox folders with approaching due dates, and all the information that users typically see in their course's Updates widget. For students, this includes the number of unread discussion messages, the number of new emails, the number of quizzes not attempted, and the number of dropbox submissions with unread feedback. For instructors, these updates include the number of unread discussion messages, the number of new emails, the number of ungraded quiz attempts, the number of new dropbox submissions, and the number of new enrolments.
all those currently active and within their availability window, and in which the user is enrolled. For users with cascading roles, the set of organizational units that generate daily activity summaries include any active and available organizational unit in which the user is explicitly enrolled (any organizational unit in which the user has a non-cascading role) and the highest-level organizational unit in which they are enrolled with a cascading role.

Redesigned Leave Feedback Interface in Dropbox

We understand that grading can be a time consuming and repetitive process. For this reason, we set out to make the experience of assigning grades and leaving feedback more efficient, and with fewer distractions. We redesigned the layout of the page, updated the interactions, and added some exciting new capabilities.

New Page Layout

To make better use of browser window real estate, the new layout arranges components horizontally and removes the navigation. It shows evaluators submissions on the left and space to evaluate the submissions on the right in a format that allows evaluators to grade a list of students with submissions defined by criteria set on the folders submissions page. In place of the navigation bar, we added navigation links to all the things you might need when evaluating submissions.

Making Viewing Users Submissions Better

The layout has two primary panels. The left panel is dedicated to submissions for a specific user or group. The redesigned list calls attention to the options available for the file and displays a file type icon to quickly understand they type of file submitted.
View Documents in the Browser/ File Conversion Tool (New Platform Feature)

A major goal for this redesign was to enable users to view documents in their browser without having to download them. This reduces issues with evaluators not having the appropriate software to view common file types, or issues with downloading and managing multiple copies of documents.

The in-line document viewer is powered by the platform's document viewer and conversion tools. It supports the viewing of a variety of file types, some of which are converted locally.

Unlike systems that send student submissions to hosted third party services to convert for in-browser rendering, Learning Environment converts supported file types locally into images and HTML/text versions where required prior to display.

- **Image view (File Types Supported)**
  - word processing documents (.doc, .docx, .txt)
  - presentations (.ppt, .pptx)
  - PDF (.pdf)
  - images (.gif, .png, .jpeg)

- **HTML/Text view (File Types Supported)**
  - word processing documents (.doc, .docx, .txt)
  - web documents (.html)
  - presentations (.ppt, .pptx)

- **Originality Report**
  - For institutions using plagiarism detection through the integration with Turnitin, users can also see the submitted document in the form of an originality report.

- **Download**
  - Instructors can download all other file types to work offline with the associated software program.
Improved interfaces for Feedback on Individual Submissions

A number of changes improve the look and feel, usability of the Leave Feedback page, and make existing features easier to find and use.

Annotating HTML and Text Documents (Improved)

The annotate action is offered on each applicable file and stored as an attachment with the version indicated, which makes annotating HTML files and text files through Learning Environment’s HTML Editor easier to discover.

Online Markup

Online Markup, the integration with Turnitin GradeMark for clients that use it, provides a number of features to annotate documents online, such as leaving text comments, markup, and highlights. This is accessible in two places to encourage instructors to provide rich feedback to students.

Download and edit

As in previous versions, instructors can download documents, make edits in the associated software, and then attach the updated files as feedback to the student.

Record Audio

A simple interface for recording audio feedback is easily accessible when reviewing a student’s submission. The generated audio file is attached to the feedback.
Access User Information and Contact Users

In the top, right is information about the user or group whose submission you are evaluating. This area offers student information visible to the evaluator and available contact methods.

Folder Information and Properties

Folder Information and Properties is a collapsible section that provides access to information about the folder and gives options for adjusting its properties. For example, you can quickly add special access to a user who might need more time to submit their assignment. A teacher’s assistant who does not have permission to edit or view the folder properties, can now consistently see the instructions for the assignment.

Evaluation Options

We added options to the evaluations section in the feedback panel. This section contains options instructors might have forgotten (e.g., adding rubrics), class benchmarking (e.g., teachers assistants evaluating how other markers scored students by reviewing rubric and grade statistics) and workflow elements (e.g., a link to the Gradebook to assign zeros to users without submissions).

Record Evaluation

We also compressed the areas to assign scores and score rubrics by adding learning objective associations in context of the rubric control.
Social Profiles and Social Sharing

In addition to notification subscriptions using an @facebook.com email address, users can do more with Facebook and other social networks in this release.

Linking Profiles

Starting with Learning Environment 9.4, you can add links to your profile for Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google. Other users who view your Desire2Learn profile can easily access the profiles from the other sites, and perform actions such as following you on Twitter, requesting you as a Facebook friend, or adding you to their LinkedIn or Google networks.
Sharing

The Blog Tool in Learning Environment is typically enabled for public access. For publicly-accessible blogs, both the blog author and anyone reading a public blog posting is now able to easily share it with others by “liking” on Facebook, “tweeting” using Twitter, or recommending with Google +1. Even more sharing options are planned for future releases. You can turn Sharing destinations on or off by organizational unit through DOME configuration variables.
Newness in News

There is significant new functionality in the News tool. In addition to the greatly anticipated notification features discussed earlier, there are features that improve the discoverability of new News items (and also, the hiding of “old” News).

End users dismissing news items

Course homepages can have lots of information on them, and if an instructor regularly posts News items, new items can have a hard time grabbing students’ attention.

In Learning Environment 9.4, when you read a News item and no longer want to see it in the News widget or on your mobile device, you can dismiss it so it won’t appear in the News widget or in Desire2Learn Mobile web. But you can always access it (and restore it to those places) by searching the News tool on the desktop and from the mobile device.

When you dismiss an item from the widget, a Reload button appears at the bottom of the widget if there are additional items that could then be loaded in its place. In the News tool, dismiss and restore items by toggling the action icon. In Desire2Learn Mobile Web, dismiss and restore items when you read a full news item.

News items you dismiss are automatically restored and returned to the widget if that news item is edited.
You can now dismiss/hide news items once you've read them (and still view/restore them later)

Lake Valley University
Posted Jun 3, 2011 8:05 AM

To dismiss a news item that you've already read and understand, click the X icon beside the headline in the News widget or News tool, or click the Dismiss button when viewing a news item from your mobile device.

If you want to see a previously-dismissed news item, you can use the search options in the News tool or from your mobile device when looking at the list of news items.
Consolidating news from multiple courses

One of the most common features requested for News, one that will help students discover course news items easily, is to show a student News items from all their courses in one widget when they first log in to Learning Environment. Version 9.4 to the rescue! Now, users can see a consolidated list of News items, sorted from newest to oldest by Start Date, from the News widget, News tool, and Desire2Learn Mobile Web. Search and filter options allow users to look at the consolidated list, or just the news for the org unit they are in.

When Learning Environment displays a consolidated, the org unit that the news item is from appears as a link below the headline, allowing you to easily jump to that org unit's homepage.
The set of consolidated org units include the current org unit, plus all org units in which the user is currently enrolled and that are currently active and still in their availability window. For users with cascading roles, the set of org units will include the current org unit, and any active and available org unit that the user is explicitly enrolled in (enrolled in with a non-cascading role), and the highest-level org unit in which they are enrolled with a cascading role.

This new feature is controlled by two DOME configuration variables that allow you to turn this consolidation on or off for the Organization, any org unit, or any course homepage. The variable d2l.Tools.News.AggregateNewsAtOrg configures the News tool (widget, tool, and mobile web) to show a consolidated list for the organization. The variable d2l.Tools.News.AggregateNewsInOrgUnit controls the consolidated list at the organization unit level.

Consolidating news also works with global news items, and gives users the ability to dismiss news items. Global news items set to show up on every course homepage are only shown once in the consolidated list, and if a user dismisses a news item from a consolidated view, it remains dismissed for other views. Also, the existing widget settings for number of items to show, and the cut-off date for displaying older news items are followed for consolidated views.

New Concepts for Instructors

News item status (draft, published, or scheduled)

To make sure an instructor can do all the tweaking to date restrictions, release conditions, content formatting, and getting the headline just right before a news item gets posted, version 9.4 introduces the concept of draft, published, and scheduled news items.
When a news item is in draft status, an instructor can make edits, but the news item is not visible to students. When a news item is published, students can see it and it will generate events for notifications to be sent (depending on news item availability dates and any release conditions on the item). Scheduled News items are published news items with a start date in the future.

Draft status is maintained when you copy course components, import or export.

In addition to status changes, you can add release conditions to a new News item before saving it.

Major vs. minor edits

We want instructors to be able to refine a news item, but that shouldn’t impact students’ notifications and dismissed news items. So now, when you edit a news item, you see a check box for major edits, that make the item visible again to any user who had dismissed it. And it generates “news item edited” event to trigger notifications (important for assignment changes and so on). Leave it unchecked to update the news item without making the item reappear for users that dismissed it, and without triggering a notification (good for changes to end date, release conditions, or simple formatting). For major edits,
instructors might want to change the item’s start date to “Now” so that when restored for users, it shows up at the top of any consolidated lists.

Other interface updates

Access to News tool from the News widget

We added a link to open the full News tool from the header of the News widget for students and instructors. This is an intuitive new entry point to the News tool.

Displaying Start Time

Even though news items always had a start date and time, in most places, only the start date (without the time) was listed. The News tool now displays the full start date and time according to the user’s date/time display settings below the headlines. Also, by default, the start date is visible to all users unless that option is unchecked by the author.
Post-dated Items in News Widget and Mobile Web

In previous versions, users with permission to see post-dated news could see post-dated news items in the News widget and in Desire2Learn Mobile Web. Learning Environment 9.4 no longer displays post-dated items in the News widget or in Desire2Learn Mobile Web, which should improve the usefulness of the consolidated news lists. Post-dated news items are still accessible from in the News tool.
ePortfolio

Streamlined ePortfolio “Stuff”

Streamlining the interface and experience for ePortfolio by combining all artifacts, reflections, presentations and collections into one list provides users with a single view to search and filter items. The single view provides more flexibility for filtering items and makes it easier to navigate and sort. Users can see information on how many users and groups an item is shared with and how many comments that item has directly on the list.

The “New” and “Upload” buttons allow users to jump directly into adding items to their ePortfolio more quickly than before.
Forms Portability

Supporting the use and re-use of forms, ePortfolio 3.5 allows users to import and export forms. This allows users to re-use forms across multiple courses without requiring top-level permissions and allows users to share forms across different departments and even different organizations. Sharing and re-use makes using forms easier and also allow users to share their best practices for scaffolding ePortfolio artifacts through examples with a broader community. The added portability also allows organizations to create and use standardized forms across multiple courses and departments.

Social Sharing

The integration of social media tools for externally shared presentations bridges the gap between the educational sharing in ePortfolio with a user’s personal and professional communities. Public presentations can now be “liked” on Facebook, “tweeted” on Twitter and recommended on Google +1. Users can now connect public presentations with their online social and peer network. Presentations shared within the organization but not made public do not support social sharing integrations.

Profile Updates

Users can now insert Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn identities in their profile as form fields or display them in a presentation ensuring users can leverage the new profile fields across the ePortfolio tool.
REST Web Services and Chrome Plug-in

ePortfolio 3.5 introduces REST Web Services as a new way to extend the ePortfolio tool. A demonstration of the new Web Services is the browser plug-in for Chrome. The plug-in allows users to directly add link artifacts for web pages, add image artifacts from a web page or save a segment of text from a web page.

Learning Repository

Course Builder Plug-in

Course Builder now supports dragging a learning object from Desire2Learn Learning Repository directly into the course structure. Search a repository directly from Course Builder to retrieve content and quizzes into your course.
Version Management

Simple version control provides added flexibility for users to preview and select from multiple versions of a learning object. This lets users easily change their course links between different versions of objects and even change how they linked to an objects: dynamically for the newest version or locked to a specific version.
Thumbnail Selection

Publishing images to Learning Repository supports the inclusion of a selected thumbnail for previewing and search results display. The thumbnail in search results makes it easier to scan and use images. Inserting images into content, quizzes, discussions and more has never been easier!

Publishing Workflow – Metadata Entry

The publish process now allows organizations to include entering metadata part of the publish workflow. You can make specific fields mandatory for all objects published to the repository.
Publishing Workflow – Confirmation

Bringing the publish workflow to a close and supporting users’ next steps, the Publish Complete screen was also updated in this release. You now have more options and more information about the learning object as you complete the publishing process.