



**PowerLink
for Blackboard Vista 4.2+ /
Campus Edition 6.2+**

Version 1.1
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Installation and Configuration Guide

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Introduction

The edutxt PowerLink provides an integration between the WebCT versions of the Blackboard Learning Systems and the SMS text service provided by txttools. The PowerLink can be added to a WebCT Section and used to send SMS text messages to any enrolled users who have registered a mobile telephone number in their WebCT profile. Messages sent by SMS may also be distributed to users as an announcement and/or via WebCT mail. A record of messages sent is retained within the Section. The PowerLink may also be used to handle incoming messages. An interface is defined to permit extensions to be developed to add custom functionality.

Technical requirements

Using the edutxt PowerLink has the following requirements:

- ❖ an installation of Blackboard Learning System (WebCT) Vista 4.2 (or later) or Campus Edition 6.2 (or later)
- ❖ a licence for the edutxt service provided by txttools

Any firewalls in front of the WebCT application nodes must allow traffic to/from the txttools server on either port 80 (http) or port 443 (https).

Installation

The process of installing the edutxt PowerLink comprises the following steps:

- ❖ copy the PowerLink and dependent files onto the WebCT server(s)
- ❖ enable the PowerLink
- ❖ create a proxy tool

Each of these steps is explained below.

Deploy PowerLink files

The download file available from txttools includes the following files:

- ❖ `edutxt-1.0.00.jar`
- ❖ `commons-httpclient-3.0.1.jar`
- ❖ `webctdao-2.4.01.jar`

On each WebCT application server (and the administration server for clustered installations):

- ❖ create a directory named `edutxt` within the `deployablecomponents` directory of the WebCT domain area
- ❖ copy the three jar files into the newly created `edutxt` directory
- ❖ restart the WebCT server(s)

The download file also contains an icon which may optionally be added to the WebCT repository so users can apply it within their Sections:

- ❖ log into WebCT as `domainadmin`
- ❖ click on the `Content Manager` tab
- ❖ click on the `Repository` button
- ❖ locate/create an appropriate directory and use the `Get Files` button to upload the `edutxt.gif` file into it

Enable PowerLink

When a new PowerLink is detected by WebCT it is disabled by default. To enable the PowerLink:

- ❖ log into WebCT as `serveradmin`
- ❖ on the `Administration` tab click on `Utilities`
- ❖ click on the `Settings` link
- ❖ under the column headed `System Integration` click on the `Edutxt` module link
- ❖ select the radio button labelled `true` against the `Enable` setting
- ❖ click on the `Save Values` button at the bottom of the page

Create proxy tool

A PowerLink is made available within a WebCT Section by creating a proxy tool:

- ❖ log into WebCT as `serveradmin`
- ❖ on the `Administration` tab click on `PowerLinks Proxy Tools`
- ❖ click on the `Create Proxy Tool` button
- ❖ from the `Select Authentication Module` drop-down menu select `Edutxt` module
- ❖ click on the `Next` button
- ❖ in the `Proxy Tool Name` box enter the title you wish the tool to be known; for example, `SMS text service` (this name appears on `Add Content Link` button within WebCT sections)
- ❖ in the `Version` box enter `1.0`
- ❖ in the `Description` box enter `The txttools SMS text message service.`
- ❖ click on the `Save` button at the bottom of the page
- ❖ click on `Utilities`
- ❖ click on the `Settings` link
- ❖ under the column headed `Tools` click on the proxy tool name as entered above
- ❖ check the `Unlock this setting` box against the `Enable Tool` setting
- ❖ click on the `Save Values` button at the bottom of the page

Configuration

The default settings for the `edutxt` PowerLink should be appropriate in most cases but the some may need to be altered to fit local preferences. Because of the way in which WebCT works, it is important to edit the configuration settings in the correct place according to the scope of each setting.

Administrative settings

The administrative settings are those which are not available for configuration at the Section level. These settings should always be changed by clicking on the `Edutxt` module link under the `System Integration` column on the `Settings` pages. In all cases a setting value of `NA` is equivalent to an empty setting (and is used as a workaround to a bug in WebCT)

The following settings may be customised at the server, domain or institution level:

- ❖ *Custom profile column for mobile number* - if left empty the standard profile entry for a mobile phone entry is used; otherwise numbers are taken from the custom profile field named here.

- ❖ *URL to help information* - enter a URL to local support documentation, a help icon will be displayed within the PowerLink interface to link to this URL (optional). When not set the help button will connect to txttools *Live Help!*
- ❖ *Default country code for telephone numbers* - this code is used when a mobile telephone number is entered without a country code; it should normally be set to the code for the country in which the institution is located.
- ❖ *Location of class files area* - this setting specifies the folder within the class files area of each Section in which files created by the PowerLink will be located. This setting should not be changed after the PowerLink has been used.
- ❖ *Telephone number for incoming messages* - the number to be used when sending messages to be received by the section.
- ❖ *Keyword for inbound messages* - keyword with which messages being sent to the section should start.

Edutxt account details

It is recommended that a different edutxt account is used for each distinct unit of teaching. For example, where the *Course* level in WebCT is used to represent this and the *Section* level used to represent each delivery of this unit of teaching, then edutxt accounts can be assigned at the *Course* level. If the *Course* level is not used to identify distinct units of teaching then edutxt accounts should be assigned at the *Section* level.

To assign an edutxt account at the *Course* level so that it is used by all *Sections* which have that *Course* as a parent:

- ❖ log into WebCT using an account with rights to edit the settings for the relevant *Course* (e.g. an *Institutional Administrator* or *Course Designer*)
- ❖ click on the `Administration` tab
- ❖ navigate to the appropriate *Course*
- ❖ click on `Utilities`
- ❖ click on the `Settings` link
- ❖ under the column headed `System Integration` click on the `Edutxt` module link
- ❖ enter the account username in the setting labelled `Secure Edutxt account username`
- ❖ enter the account password in the setting labelled `Secure Edutxt account password`
- ❖ enter the account keyword in the setting labelled `Keyword for inbound messages to enable the Inbox` (optional)
- ❖ click on the `Save Values` button at the bottom of the page

When assigning edutxt accounts at the *Course* level it is also recommended that the *Section* level and keyword options are locked to prevent the account details from being overridden:

- ❖ log into WebCT as `serveradmin`
- ❖ on the `Administration` tab click on `Utilities`
- ❖ under the column headed `System Integration` click on the `Edutxt` module link
- ❖ ensure that the value of the setting labelled `Edutxt account username for Section` is set to `NA` and check the `Lock This Setting` box against this setting

- ❖ ensure that the value of the setting labelled *Edutxt account password for Section* is set to NA and check the *Lock This Setting* box against this setting
- ❖ check the *Lock This Setting* box against the setting labelled *Keyword for inbound messages*
- ❖ click on the *Save Values* button at the bottom of the page

When assigning edutxt accounts at the *Section* level the username and password can be entered by the Section Designer in the same way as other designer settings (see below).

Designer settings

The designer settings are those available to be configured at the Section level. Their default values can be set up at a higher level:

- ❖ log into WebCT using an account with administrative rights (e.g. serveradmin, domainadmin or admin)
- ❖ on the *Administration* tab click on *Utilities*
- ❖ click on the *Settings* link
- ❖ under the column headed *Tools* click on the proxy tool name as entered when installing the PowerLink above
- ❖ change the values of the settings as required and optionally check the *Lock This Setting* box for any which are not to be changed by Section Designers
- ❖ click on the *Save Values* button at the bottom of the page

The following settings may be customised at the *Section* level:

- ❖ *Edutxt account username for Section* - see above
- ❖ *Edutxt account password for Section* - see above
- ❖ *Keyword for inbound messages* - see above
- ❖ *User roles for potential recipients* - check the box against each role to be included in the list of potential recipients; only members with a role which has been checked can be sent a SMS text message
- ❖ *Number of users to display per page* - for sections with large numbers of members, the list of users is split into pages of the size entered here
- ❖ *Default landing page* - specify the page to be displayed first when clicking on an instance of this proxy tool from the *Teach* tab
- ❖ *Signature for messages* - enter text which can be appended to a message as a standard signature
- ❖ *Mark emails as urgent?*
- ❖ *Default subject for email/announcement* - when no subject is entered this value will be used as the subject of any announcement created or email message sent (if not value is specified then the text *Urgent message* is used)
- ❖ *Create announcements as popups?*
- ❖ *Default duration for an announcement in hours*

Adding the proxy tool to a Section

To use the edutxt PowerLink within a WebCT Section, an instance of the tool must be added to the Section:

- ❖ log into WebCT as a Section Designer for the Section on which the tool is to be added
- ❖ click on the link to the relevant Section

- ❖ click on the *Build* tab
- ❖ click on the `Add Content Link` button
- ❖ select the name of the edutxt proxy tool (as entered when configuring the PowerLink above)
- ❖ click on the `Create` button
- ❖ enter a title to appear against the icon in the *Section*
- ❖ alter any of the available settings as required (including the edutxt account username and password if these are being set at the *Section* level)
- ❖ click on the `Save` button at the bottom of the page

This proxy tool instance should now be available for use from the *Teach* tab.