

How to Use Wimba Voice Authoring Tools in Blackboard 8

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Introduction

Wimba Voice Tools are a suite of tools that allow teachers to communicate with their students and present content via audio recordings in Blackboard. At this time four tools are available in Blackboard: **Wimba Podcaster Extension, Wimba Voice Announcements, Wimba Voice Boards, and Wimba Voice Emails.**

After working through this tutorial you should know how to:

- Check your computer to make sure it is ready to record audio
- Test your browser settings to make sure your computer has the necessary components installed to use the Wimba Voice Tools
- Add the Wimba Voice Tools to your Blackboard course
- Create a voice announcement
- Create a voice email
- Create a voice board
- Create a podcast

Check Your Computer to Make Sure it is Ready to Record Audio

There are tutorials on the Digital Audio website at Austin Community College that contain step-by-step instructions on how to check your computer to make sure it is ready to record audio. The one that covers a PC running Windows XP has instructions for Mac OSX at the end. You may access them by clicking on the links below:

[Setting Up Your Computer to Record Audio – PC Running Windows XP](#)

[Setting Up Your Computer to Record Audio – PC Running Windows Vista](#)

[Setting Up Your Computer to Record Audio – PC Running Windows 7](#)

Running Browser Test

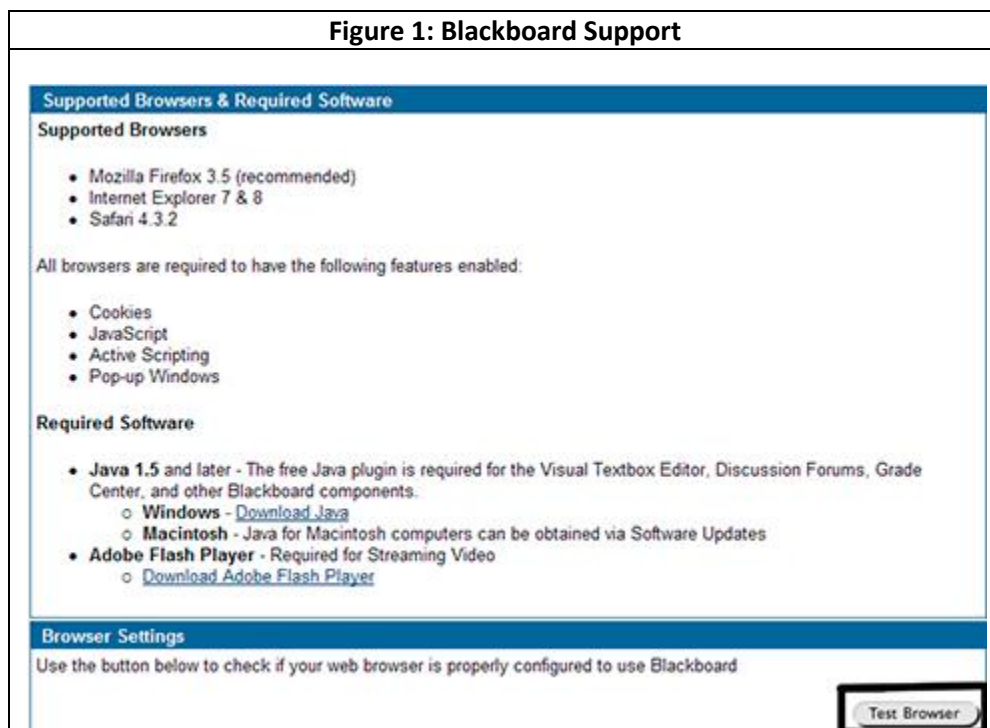
You should run **Browser Test** to be sure your web browser has the components installed to use the Wimba Voice Authoring Tools.

As of May 2011 the only browsers certified by Blackboard are:

- Microsoft Internet Explorer 8
- Microsoft Internet Explorer 7
- Firefox 3.0
- Firefox 3.5
- Firefox 3.6

To run Browser Test:

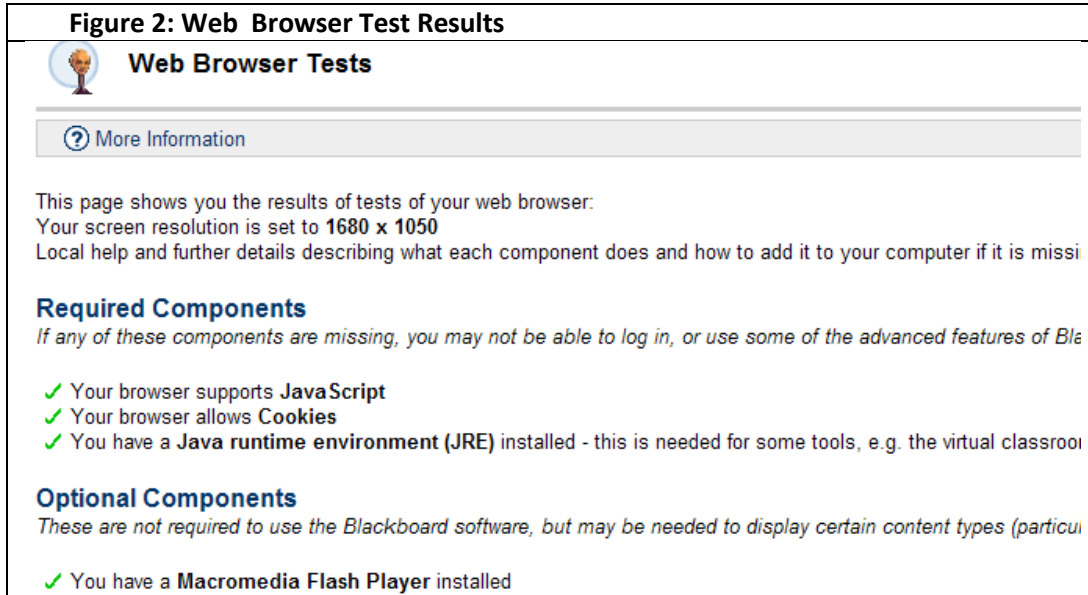
1. Click the **Blackboard Support** tab that displays at the top of the page from any page in Blackboard. Click the **Test Browser** button.



2. The **Web Browser Test** results will display. They will tell you if the three required components, **JavaScript**, **Cookies**, and **Java Runtime Environment** are installed. If some of them are missing you will be directed to a website where you can download them free. Certain other components, such as the Adobe Flash Player, the Windows Media Player, and Apple QuickTime are not required to run Blackboard but may be required to display certain content. Near the bottom of the screen you should

see the results of the pop-up content. You may have to enable your browser to display pop-ups to display some content in Blackboard.

Figure 2: Web Browser Test Results



Web Browser Tests

[? More Information](#)

This page shows you the results of tests of your web browser:
Your screen resolution is set to **1680 x 1050**
Local help and further details describing what each component does and how to add it to your computer if it is missing.

Required Components
If any of these components are missing, you may not be able to log in, or use some of the advanced features of Blackboard.

- ✓ Your browser supports **JavaScript**
- ✓ Your browser allows **Cookies**
- ✓ You have a **Java runtime environment (JRE)** installed - this is needed for some tools, e.g. the virtual classroom

Optional Components
These are not required to use the Blackboard software, but may be needed to display certain content types (particularly audio and video).

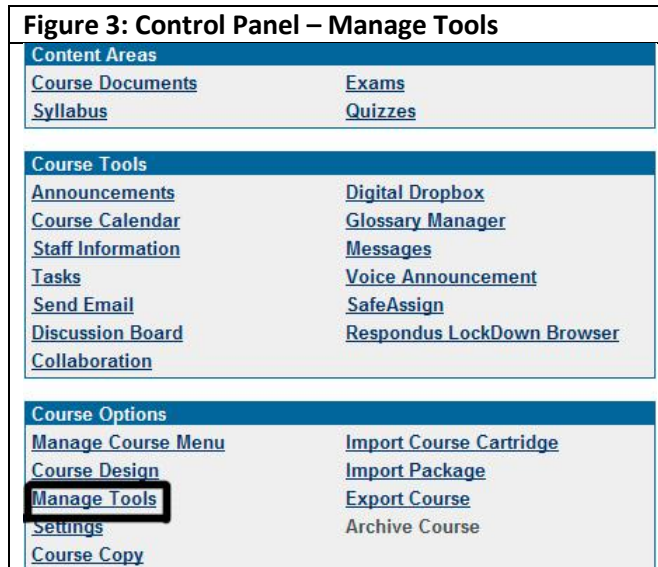
- ✓ You have a **Macromedia Flash Player** installed

Add Wimba Voice Tools to Your Blackboard Course

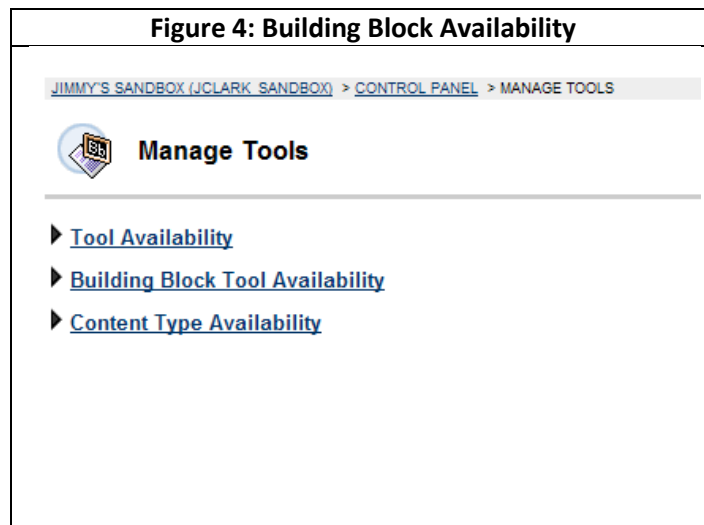
We will be working with these Wimba tools in this tutorial:

- Wimba Voice Announcement
- Wimba Voice Email
- Wimba Voice Board
- Wimba Podcaster

1. First, we need to see if these tools, which are actually building blocks, have been activated in our Blackboard course. Open the **Control Panel** if it is not already open. Select **Manage Tools**.



2. When the **Manage Tools** page opens select **Building Block Availability**.



3. The next screen will display all the building blocks that have been made available in your course. The four Wimba tools are at the bottom of the list. If some of them are not available place a check in each box to make them available. Click **Submit**, then **OK**, on the next screen to complete this operation.

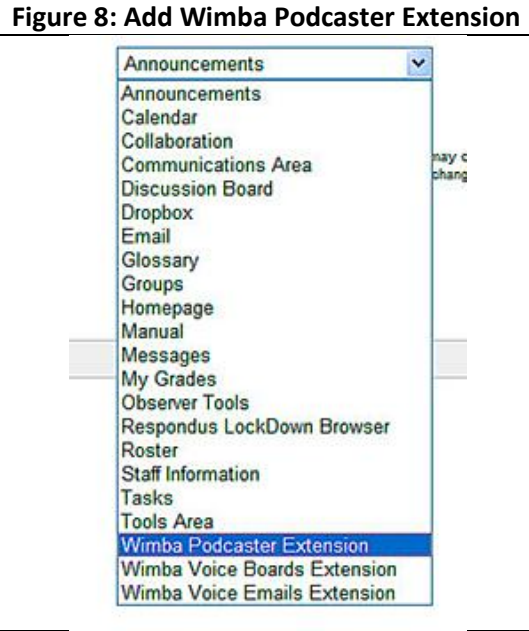
Figure 5: Making Wimba Tools Available

Wimba Podcaster Extension Wimba Podcaster Extension	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Wimba Voice Announcements Extension Wimba Voice Announcements Extension	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Wimba Voice Boards Extension Wimba Voice Boards Extension	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Wimba Voice Emails Extension Wimba Voice Emails Extension	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

4. Now we have to add the Wimba Voice Tools to our course menu. Return to the **Control Panel**. Select **Manage Course Menu**. Click **Add Tool Link**.

<p>Figure 6: Manage Course Menu</p>	<p>Figure 7: Add Tool Link</p>
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5. The **Add New Area** page will display. Click the arrow next to **Announcements** and select **Wimba Podcaster Extension**. You must type a name for the tool in the **Name** text box. Type **Wimba Podcaster**. Complete the same step to add the **Wimba Voice Boards Extension** and the **Wimba Voice Emails Extension**. Use **Wimba Voice Boards** and **Wimba Voice Emails** for the names of these tools. Click the **Submit** button each time you add one of these tools. **NOTE: WIMBA VOICE ANNOUNCEMENT IS ADDED TO YOUR COURSE TOOLS BY DEFAULT, BUT IT WILL NOT SHOW UP ON THE COURSE MENU YOUR STUDENTS WILL SEE UNLESS YOU ADD IT AS A CONTENT AREA.**



6. Select the name of your course in the menu at the top of your screen. Example:

[JIMMY'S SANDBOX \(JCLARK SANDBOX\)](#) > CONTROL PANEL

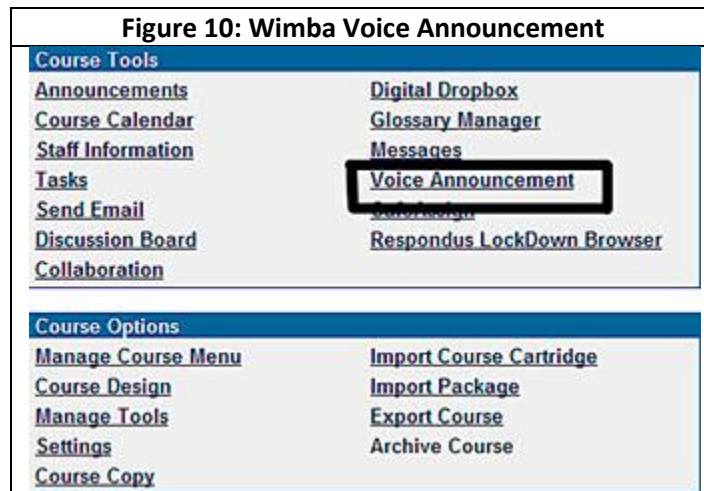
The course menu on the left side of the page should now include three Wimba Voice Tools: **Wimba Podcaster**, **Wimba Voice Boards** and, **Wimba Voice Emails**. If one of these tools does not appear on your course menu follow steps 4 and 5 again.



Create a Voice Announcement

If your microphone is not plugged into your computer, plug it into a USB port or into the microphone jack. Open the **Control Panel** and select **Sounds and Audio Devices > Voice** (for Windows XP, **Hardware and Sound** for Windows Vista, or **Sound** for Windows 7) to verify that your computer recognized your microphone. To create a Voice Announcement:

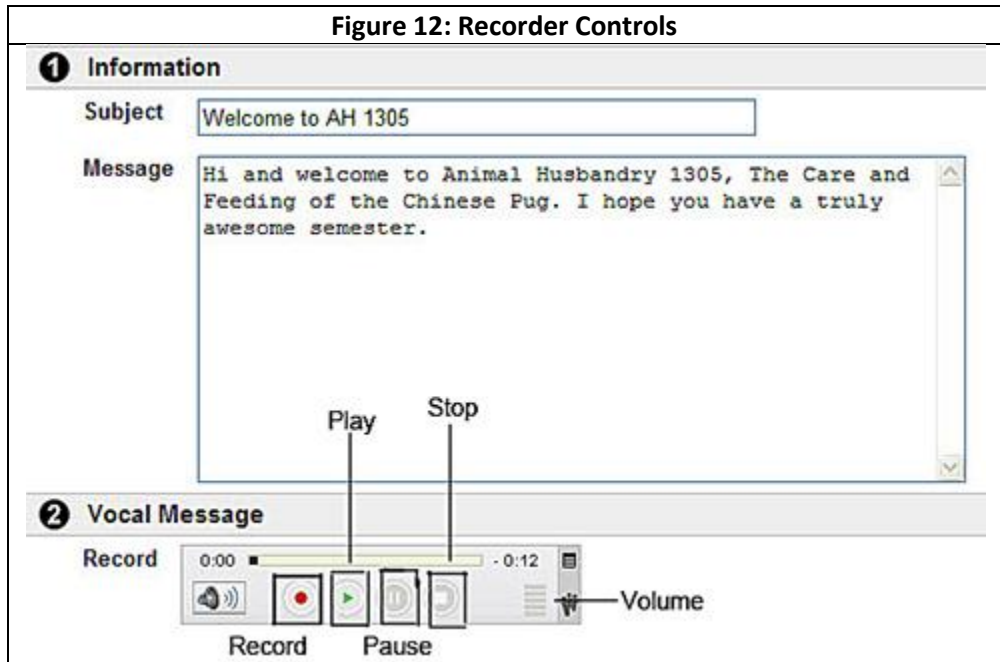
1. Open the **Control Panel** and select **Voice Announcement**.



2. The **Add Voice Announcement** page should display. Type the subject of your message in the **Subject** text box. You do not have to type the text of your message in the **Message** box, but it is a good idea. Click the button that has a red circle inside it to begin recording.



3. Click the **Stop** button when you are finished. Click the **Play** button to hear your message. There is no button that lets you delete your message. If you don't like the way it sounds you will have to close the window and record it again.



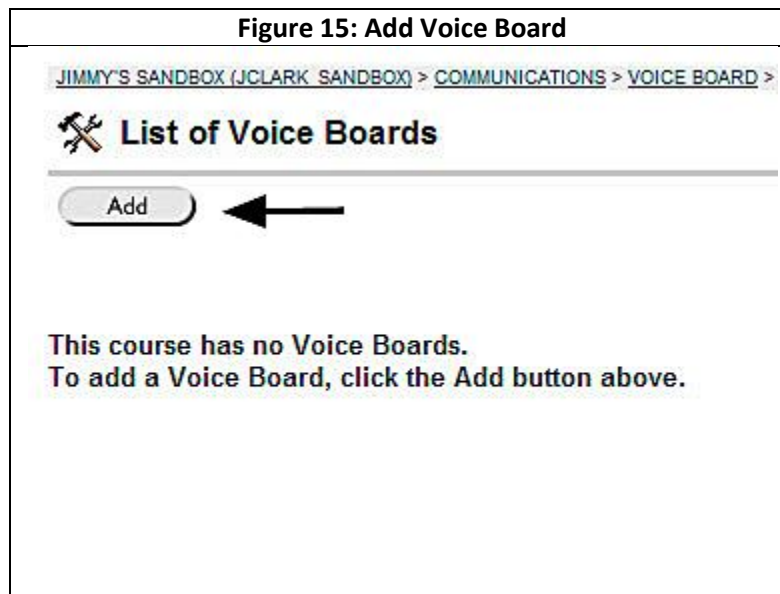
4. You can save your recording as a MP3 file and edit it in a program such as Audacity or Garageband if you wish. To do this, click on the small icon on the top right side of the recording tool bar and save it to your computer. You can restrict the dates of this announcement, or you can make it permanent. There is a note under section #4 that warns you not to modify this announcement. As I stated in #2, if you don't like the way it sounds, record it again. Click the **Submit** button to save the announcement. It will appear under **Announcements** on the Control Panel. If your students click on Announcements on their course menu they can listen to it.

<p>Figure 13: Save Recording</p>	<p>Figure 14: Do Not Modify Announcement</p> <p>Important</p> <p>Note: Later modifications to this Voice Announcement using the Blackboard WYSIWYG editor will cause abnormal behavior in the Blackboard Announcement tool.</p> <p>If you wish to edit this Voice Announcement, do not use the MODIFY button. Instead REMOVE it and then add a new Voice Announcement.</p> <p>Please contact your system administrator for more information.</p>
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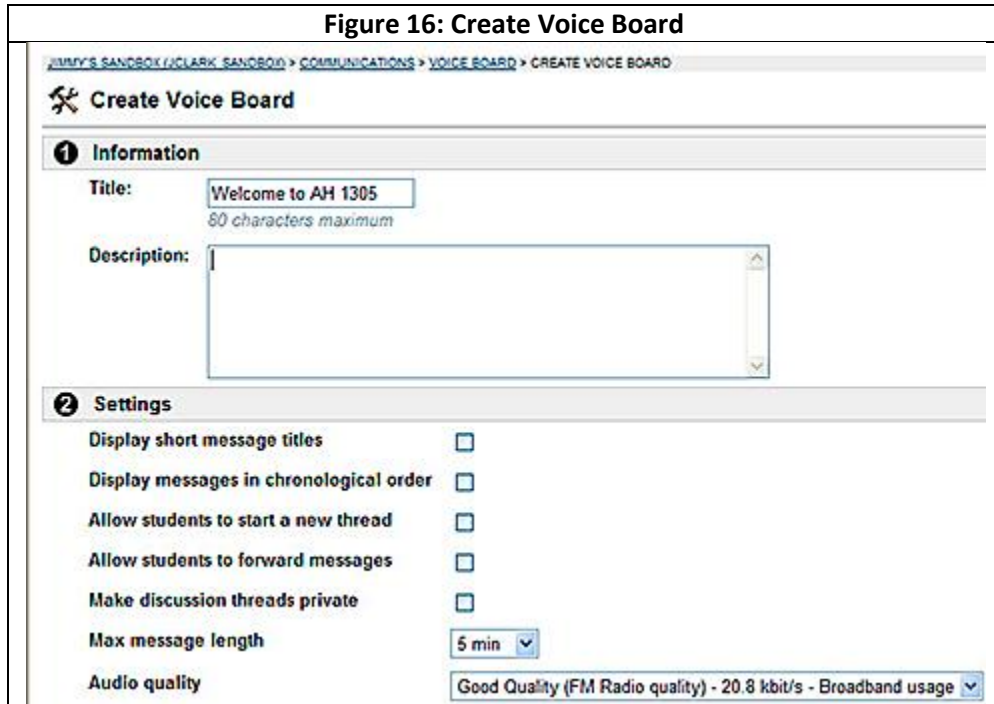
Wimba Voice Board

You must add a **Wimba Voice Board** before you can record and send a Voice Email.

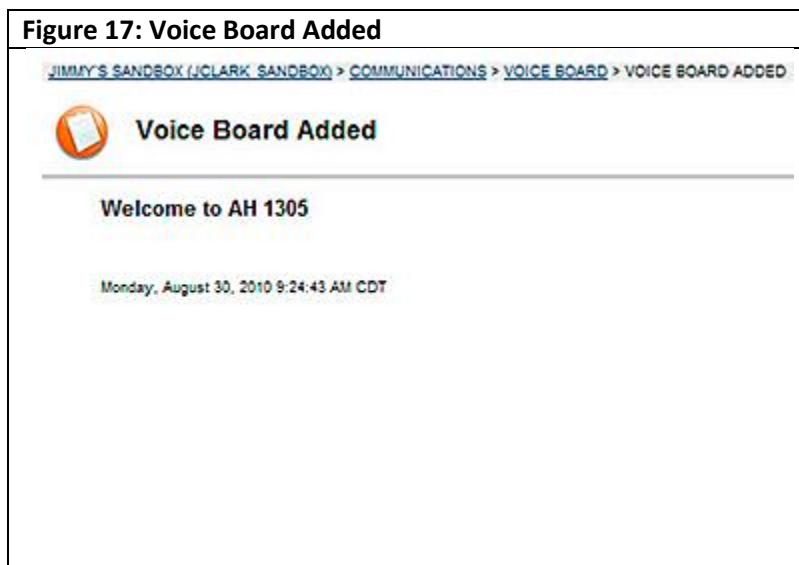
1. To add a Voice Board, click **Voice Board** on the course menu.
2. The **Wimba Voice Board dialog box** will open. Click the **Add** button to add it.



- The **Create Voice Board dialog box** will open. You probably do not need to change any setting except to select **Good Quality (FM Radio quality) audio**. Five minutes is the default maximum message length, but you can record up to 20 minutes. Click the **Submit** button to create the Voice Board after you have given your Voice Board a title and changed all the settings you wish to change.

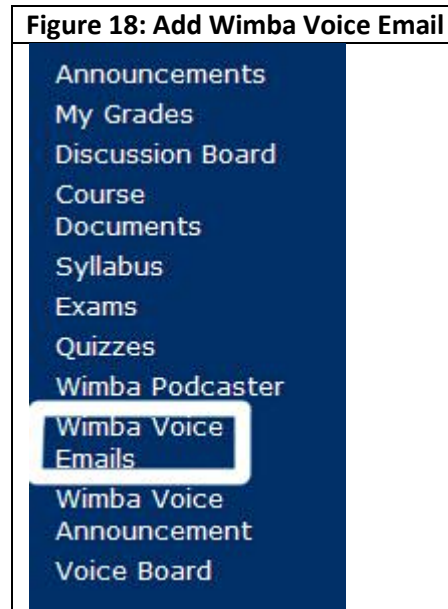


- You will see a message verifying that your Voice Board has been added. Click the **OK** button.

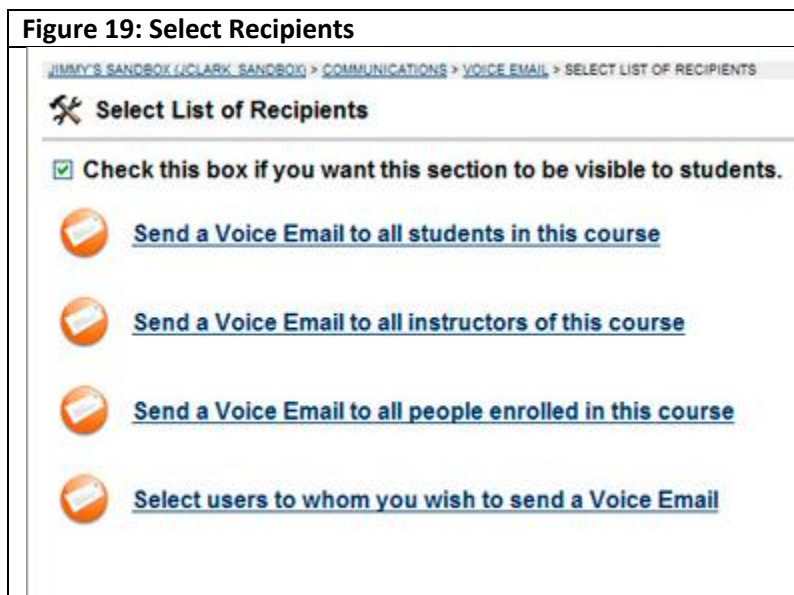


Wimba Voice Email

1. To add a **Wimba Voice Email** select **Wimba Voice Emails** on the course menu.



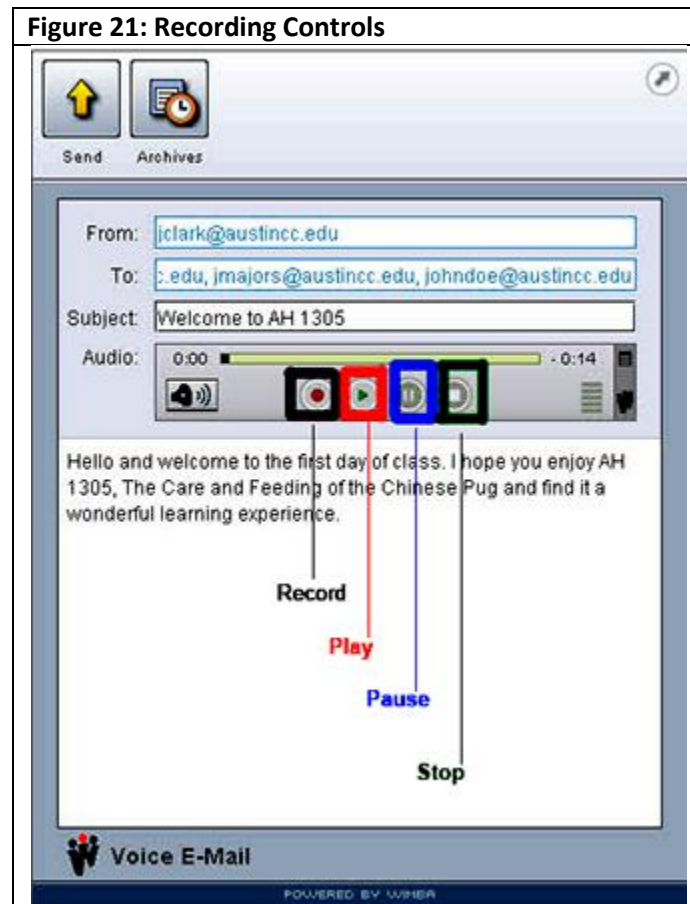
2. The **Select List of Recipients** dialog box will open. Click on the list of recipients you wish to send your voice email to.



3. The next screen that displays will allow you to record your voice email. Type the title of your recording in the textbox next to **Subject**. It is not required, but it is a good idea to type a transcript of your message in the text box. When you are ready to record your message, click the red **Record** button.



4. When you have finished recording click the **Stop** button (fourth one from the left). Click the **Play** button to hear your recording. After you have recorded your message click the **Send** button to send it to the recipients you have selected.



Wimba Podcast

According to Wikipedia a podcast is a “series of digital files (either audio or video) that are released episodically and often downloaded through web syndication.” (Wikipedia, September 2, 2010). The word is a portmanteau formed from the words “pod” (from Apple’s iPod) and broadcasting. Blackboard has a built-in podcasting tool you can use to produce podcasts for your classes. In this section of the tutorial we will learn how to produce a simple audio podcast. Video podcasts are really movies. If you can film a movie with your Flip or other digital camcorder and upload it to YouTube you already know how to produce a video podcast, sometimes called a “vodcast.”

Introduction to Podcasting

You can find a podcasting quickstart guide on the IRT website, at this address:

<http://irt.austincc.edu/Audio/Online%20Podcasting%20Workshop/podcasting/index.html> . The information in the guide is not specific to Wimba or any other podcasting tool. The only thing in the quickstart I am going to mention is the seven-step process many podcasters use. The steps are:

1. Plan your podcast
2. Assemble the hardware and software needed to create your podcast
3. Set up a podcasting account
4. Record your podcast
5. Edit your podcast
6. Convert your podcast to MP3 format
7. Publish and publicize your podcast

Creating a Podcast in Wimba

1. Open your course in Blackboard. Select **Wimba Podcaster** on your course menu.



2. You should have already added the **Wimba Podcaster** extension. If it does not show up when you open Wimba Podcaster from the course menu, return to the Control Panel and select **Manage Tools**. Open **Building Block Availability** and enable the **Wimba Podcaster Extension**. Click **Submit**, and then **OK**. Return to the **Control Panel**. If you want it to appear in your list of **Content Areas**, open **Manage Course Menu**, click on **Tool Link** and add the **Wimba Podcaster** tool.



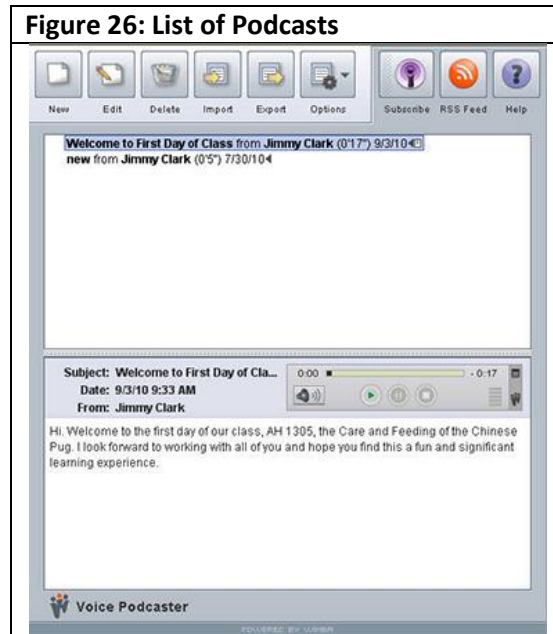
3. If you have added a podcaster it will display on the list, as shown in **Figure 23**. You have not named it yet, but we will do that in this step. Click the **Modify** button to the right of **podcast name**. Type any title for your podcast you like. The **Description** box is optional. The only setting I would change under **#2 Settings** is to change the quality to **Good Quality FM Radio**. Most people now have a broadband Internet connection, so downloading your podcast of this quality on their computers will not take very long. Click the **Submit** button to finish.



4. Click **New** to add a new podcast. When you do this, the **Compose** screen will open. Type the title of your podcast. I suggest you type the transcript of your podcast before recording it, but this is optional. When you are ready to record, click the red **Record** button.



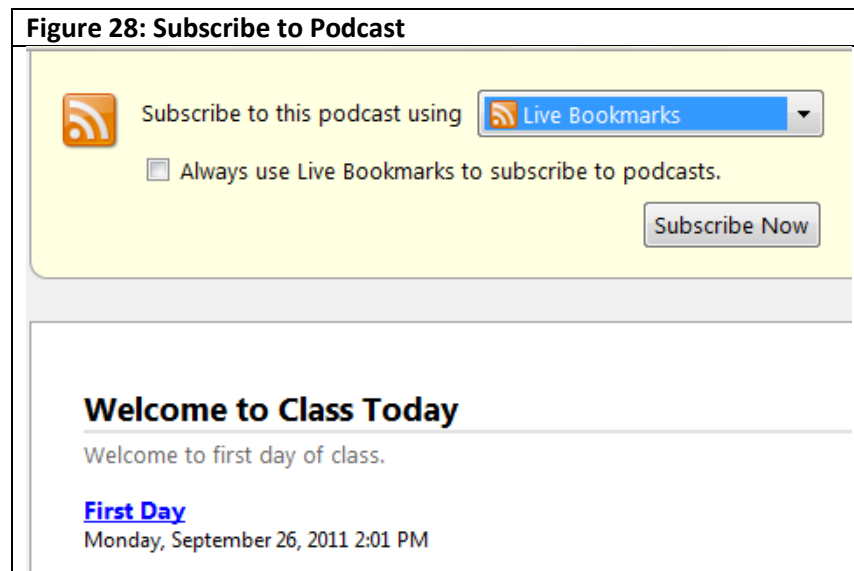
5. Record your podcast and click the **Stop** button, the fourth button from the left. Click the **Play** button to listen to it. If you are satisfied with your recording click the **Post** button to add it to your class. If you open the **Wimba Podcaster** again you will see the title of the podcast you just recorded.



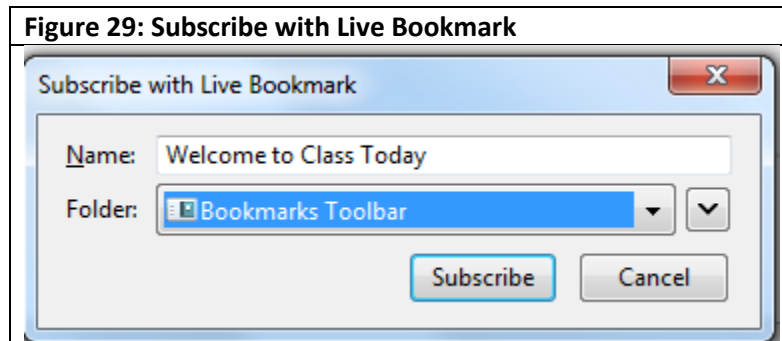
6. If you want to subscribe to your podcast in iTunes, click the **Subscribe** button at the top and it should download to iTunes. Click on **Podcasts** in your iTunes library and it will appear on the list. Your students will be able to subscribe to your podcast and listen to it in iTunes. You and your students can open this URL and download the free iTunes digital media player: <http://www.apple.com/itunes/> .



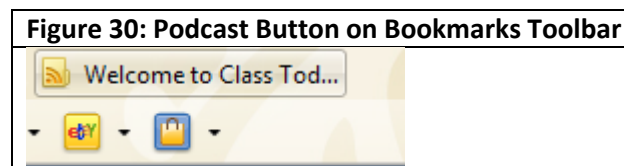
7. If you wish to subscribe to the RSS feed of your podcast, click the **RSS** button.



8. The only option Wimba now offers is to subscribe to podcasts through **Live Bookmarks**, which will add a button for the podcast to your browser's bookmarks toolbar. Click the **Subscribe Now** button.



9. You can listen to your podcast by clicking on its button on the **Bookmarks toolbar**.



In this tutorial we have covered the four Wimba Voice Authoring Tools: Wimba Voice Announcements, Wimba Voice Emails, Wimba Voice Boards, and Wimba Podcaster. If you have any questions about using any of them please call me at **223-2117**, or email me at jclark@austincc.edu.

Wimba Resources on the Web

[Wimba Audio Tools at Austin Community College](#)

[Wimba website](#) (Now called Blackboard Collaborate)

[Resources for instructors on Wimba website](#)

[Wimba resources on Blackboard website](#)

[Wimba tutorial for faculty of Amherst College](#)