

Frequently Asked Questions: Inline Grading and the Transition from Crocodoc to the New Box View API

Product Blackboard Learn

Release SaaS; 9.1

Service Pack(s) Learn 9.1 Q4 2016; Learn 9.1 Q2 2016; Learn 9.1 Q4 2015 (9.1.201510.1171621); Learn October 2014 (9.1.201410.160373); Learn April 2014 (9.1.201404.160205)

Introduction

This FAQ answers some of the most common client questions related to a Support Bulletin that was published on May 8th, 2017 that describes an upcoming change related to the Blackboard Learn Inline Grading feature, and the transition from the Crocodoc API to the New Box View API. After the publication of the first Support Bulletin, we also published another Support Bulletin that changed the versions of Learn that would support the New Box View API. For reference the Support Bulletins are provided below:

- [Blackboard Learn Integration with the New Box View Services and Crocodoc End of Life \(Article #45930\) - Published May 8th, 2017](#)
- [Update on the Blackboard Learn Integration with the New Box View Service and Crocodoc End of Life \(Article #45989\) - Published May 16th, 2017](#)

If you have additional questions about these support bulletins, or this FAQ, please contact Blackboard product support.

What is the change, and why is Blackboard making it?

Box Inc. – the provider Blackboard uses to support the Inline Grading capability – made a decision to discontinue availability of the Crocodoc API, which is the service Blackboard Learn uses for the current implementation of Inline Grading feature. As a result, we have decided to update this capability to leverage the New Box View API, which will allow the feature to continue to work in supported Blackboard Learn releases after January 15th, 2018, which is the end of life date for the Crocodoc API.

When did Blackboard start working on this change?

Blackboard has been working with Box since the official end-of-life announcement was made on November 15th, 2016. We have been working with Box staff to understand their decision, the implications of the decision, the implementation options for using the New Box View API, and the best way to support our Learn clients going forward.

What do clients need to do to start using the New Box View in place of Crocodoc API?

Clients will need to upgrade their Learn instance(s) to a version of Learn that supports the New Box View API. The Learn versions that will support the New Box View API are 9.1 Q2 2016, 9.1 Q4 2016, 9.1 Q2 2017, and 9.1 Q4 2017 (planned for release in October 2017). Our current plan is to deliver the change in a Cumulative Update for most of the supported releases – see below for more information. Once the upgrade is complete, no other action is required.

I'm a self-hosted or managed-hosted client. What versions of Learn will support the New Box View service and offer a migration path away from the Crocodoc API?

At the time of the EOL of the Crocodoc API (January 15th, 2018), four releases of Blackboard Learn, listed below, will support the New Box View API and allow clients to continue to use the

Inline Grading feature, if they wish. Our plan is to make the updated integration replacing the Crocodoc API with the New Box View API available as a Cumulative Update for the 9.1 Q2 2016, 9.1 Q4 2016, and 9.1 Q2 2017 releases, and as part of the GA release for the 9.1 Q4 2017 release. Therefore, the four supported releases as of January 15th, 2018 will include:

- [Blackboard Learn 9.1 Q2 2016](#) (Available now, released April 26th, 2016)
- [Blackboard Learn 9.1 Q4 2016](#) (Available now, released on November 14th, 2016)
- [Blackboard Learn 9.1 Q2 2017](#) (Available now, released on April 12th, 2017)
- [Blackboard Learn 9.1 Q4 2017](#) (In development now, planned for release in October 2017, with a technical preview planned for release in September 2017)

The exact release dates for the Cumulative Updates have not been finalized, but we expect those dates to be around the same time as the 9.1 Q4 2017 release, which is planned for October 2017. We will communicate more specific information about these Cumulative Updates as soon as possible.

I'm already on, or plan to be on, 9.1 Q2 2016, 9.1 Q4 2016 or 9.1 Q2 2017 soon. Once I'm on one of these releases, will I need to do anything to continue using the Inline Grading feature?

Yes. Our plan is to make this change available in a Cumulative Update for the 9.1 Q2 2016, 9.1 Q4 2016, and 9.1 Q2 2017 releases. You will need to apply the respective Cumulative Update before January 15th, 2018 to ensure uninterrupted use of the Inline Grading capability.

Will the Inline Grading feature work for the 9.1 Q4 2015 release, or earlier releases, as of January 16th, 2018?

No. The releases that will support the New Box View API are listed above.

Will there be an outage or downtime when transitioning between the Crocodoc API and the New Box View API?

Due to the transitional nature of moving from one service to another, it is possible that Blackboard Learn will require an outage period or moratorium relating to Crocodoc usage to prevent data loss during the transition. As we finalize the implementation approach, we will provide more information on this topic.

My institution uses the SaaS deployment method. Will my version of Learn support the New Box View API?

Yes. Because the SaaS Continuous Delivery and Flexible Deployment Options are on versions of Learn that will fully support the New Box View API, SaaS clients can continue using the Inline Grading feature with the New Box View API, if they wish. We will provide an updated schedule for Continuous Delivery and Flexible Deployment Option clients when the Q4 2017 release becomes available.

Will the new Inline Grading feature be able to toggle between the New Box View API and Crocodoc API (so we can install it and not immediately enable the New Box View API while working on change management) or will the shift to the New Box View API be "all-at-once?"

No, transitioning to the use of the New Box View API for the Blackboard Learn Inline Grading feature will be "all at once." This will occur when a client upgrades to one of the supported versions of Learn for which the Inline Grading capability is updated to work with the New Box View API. Any changes in the way the Inline Grading capability works due to changes to the New Box View API will be fully documented by Blackboard and included in our release notes and on help.blackboard.com to assist with change management.

What happens to client data previously submitted to Crocodoc if a Learn instance is not upgraded to a version that uses the New Box View API before the Crocodoc EOL?

On January 15th, 2018, the Crocodoc service will no longer accept new documents nor allow users to access previously submitted documents. However, the client data associated with that instance will still exist in either the Crocodoc or New Box View database. Blackboard is working with Box on an appropriate strategy for retaining and accessing Crocodoc client data after the Crocodoc EOL.

date, and Blackboard will provide an update when more details are available.

What will happen to the Inline Grading user interface for a specific Learn instance that is not upgraded to a version that uses the New Box View service as of January 15th, 2018?

On January 15th, 2018, the Crocodoc service will no longer accept new documents nor allow users to access previously submitted documents. The Crocodoc experience will likely present users with a "service no longer available" screen in place of the document being requested. Blackboard is actively working with Box on an appropriate experience for users requesting documents from Crocodoc after January 15th, 2018, and Blackboard will provide an update when more details are available.

What will happen if, after we upgrade to a supported version that includes the New Box View API, an instructor goes into an old course and opens a student assignment submitted to Crocodoc?

Client data that exists in Crocodoc will be accessible in the New Box View service after upgrade. The exact implementation and user experience details are still being determined. Blackboard will provide an update when more details are available

We've never used or enabled the Inline Grading capability at my school. Does this change affect me?

No. If you have never enabled the Inline Grading capability on your Learn instance(s), this change will have no impact.

How long will existing submissions and annotations remain available?

Blackboard is working with Box on an appropriate strategy for retaining Crocodoc client data after the Crocodoc EOL date, and Blackboard will provide an update when more details are available. It is important to note that all original student submissions are stored in Learn in addition to being sent to Crocodoc for conversion and display within the Inline Grading interface. Learn course archives contain original student submissions only, a known limitation.

When a Blackboard course is archived, will the inline feedback via the New Box View API be archived?

The current plan for the integration with the New Box View API includes the ability to archive annotations and feedback provided within the document when a course is archived. This would be an improvement over the current functionality of Crocodoc, which does not include annotations on documents when courses are archived. The technical feasibility and implementation details of this specific use case are still being investigated, and Blackboard will provide an update when more information is available.

Is there going to be a different look/workflow for instructors and students using Inline Grading with the New Box View API?

We are finalizing the design and implementation of the Inline Grading feature using the New Box View API. The feature will work in largely the same way it does today, and the design/workflow will be largely unchanged. However, because the New Box View APIs are not exactly the same as the Crocodoc APIs, there will be some changes to the Inline Grading feature, and we will document those fully once the implementation is complete. Some expected benefits of the New Box View service are annotation capabilities for students, localization for the UI, and a significantly expanded number of supported document types.

When will we be able to see how the Inline Grading feature using the New Box View service will look and work within our systems?

You will be able to see the Inline Grading feature using the New Box View API when we provide the update to one of our supported releases (see earlier answer for details), and you choose to install it on a test or staging environment.

Will users be able to annotate assignment files using the New Box View API in both desktop and mobile?

The first implementation of the New Box View service for Learn will provide the same capabilities on mobile browsers as Crocodoc. Blackboard may consider improving the experience for mobile browsers in the future. We are still working to define the implementation strategy for our native mobile apps. Blackboard will provide an update when more information is available.

Will the New Box View integration allow Instructors to modify other markers' annotations?

While this may be possible with the New Box View API, the first implementation of the New Box View API in place of Crocodoc will not support this scenario. Blackboard may consider adding this ability in the future.

Will the New Box View service (and Blackboard's integration with it) offer a Canadian Hosting capability so that Canadian Blackboard clients can have their inline grading assignments hosted in Canada (for our privacy impact assessment)?

The New Box View service infrastructure is built on and served from Box's internally-managed infrastructure, similar in concept to Blackboard's Managed Hosting infrastructure. Box does not have infrastructure regions outside of the United States at this time.

Functionality**Related System
Information****Evaluating Related
System Info****Common Issues****Internal Only
Notes****Solution Published
Date****Link for
Attachments** /apex/KnowledgeArticleManagement