What and why?

# Introduction

The following offers a brief description of what the Content Interface is and its purpose.

More information about the rationale and design of the Content Interface is available [in a paper](https://djon.es/ascilite2019/fullPaper/14.pdf) (Jones, 2019) and [this blog post](https://djon.es/blog/2019/11/28/how-to-share-design-knowledge-in-design-for-digital-learning/).

### In summary

As observed by others ([Pardo, 2015](http://abelardopardo.blogspot.com/2015/02/re-visiting-authoring-reauthoring.html))

Creating learning resources is getting incredibly diffficult. Gone are the days in which a bunch of PDFs or PPTs were the only resources available to students. In a matter of years, learning resources have to be engaging, interactive, render in all sorts of devices

The Content Interface

1. Allows you to use common authoring tools (Microsoft Word and its associated ecosystem) to create and maintain content.
2. Transforms that content into a more contemporary and interactive interface for readers.

# What?

The Content Interface is a collection of different technologies ([all available here](https://github.com/djplaner/Content-Interface-Tweak)) designed to be integrated with [Blackboard Learn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blackboard_Learn), Microsoft Word, the broader Office365 suite, and your approach to creating and updating learning content.

This page has been produced using the Content Interface. All of the content here is created and edited using Microsoft Word and the associated ecosystem. For example, the [Zotero citation management software](https://www.zotero.org/) is used to manage the references.

### Embedding and sharing design knowledge

Beyond technology integration, the Content Interface enables embedding within it a range of different design knowledge that improve quality while reducing workload requirements.

For example, knowledge of Griffith University trimester calendar. This means dates can be written in the Word document in terms of trimester weeks - e.g. Wednesday, Week 1. But when displayed in Blackboard Learn, a calendar date specific to the current course site will be inserted.

The images below show how the previous paragraph appears in Microsoft Word (Figure 1) and in Blackboard Learn (Figure 2).

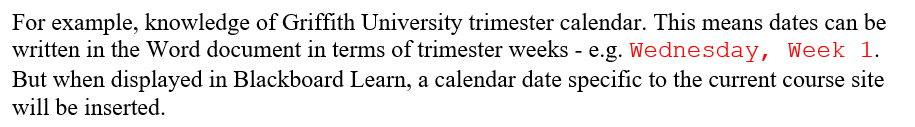


Figure 1 - Paragraph in Word showing "University Date" style

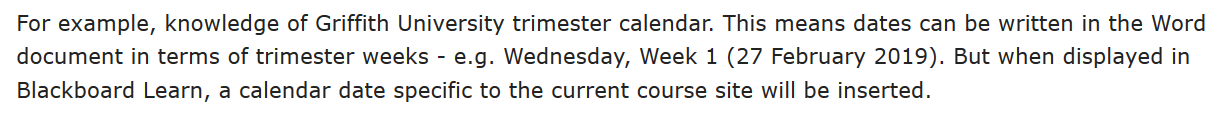


Figure 2 - Same paragraph as Figure 1 displayed in Blackboard showing automatic insertion of trimester specific date.

# Why?

The content provided by a course is known to have a significant influence on students’ perceptions of course quality (Peltier et al., 2007). Failing to leverage affordances of the online environment can create a disengaging student experience (Stone & O’Shea, 2019). Creating high quality course content that fully leverages the affordances of the online environment is difficult and Blackboard Learn does little to help. Blackboard’s lack of support is known to encourage teaching staff to avoid the interface by using offline documents and slides (Bartuskova et al., 2015) and has been discussed amongst the community of Blackboard users.

The Content Interface aims to provide explicit support for creating and maintaining online learning content, it is hoped that the content interface will:

1. Reduce the workload for all involved.
2. Lift the quality of what can be produced.
3. Improve both the learning and teaching experience.
4. Perhaps, eventually, improve learning outcomes.

By starting with Word documents, the process harnesses existing widespread academic familiarity with Word and associated tools (e.g. citation management with EndNote). It inserts the ability to automatically transform and uplift that Word content into a quality online format. That transformation is flexible and we’ve only touched the surface of what could be done.

# References

Bartuskova, A., Krejcar, O., & Soukal, I. (2015). Framework of Design Requirements for E-learning Applied on Blackboard Learning System. In M. Núñez, N. T. Nguyen, D. Camacho, & B. Trawiński (Eds.), *Computational Collective Intelligence* (pp. 471–480). Springer International Publishing.

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Peltier, J. W., Schibrowsky, J. A., & Drago, W. (2007). The Interdependence of the Factors Influencing the Perceived Quality of the Online Learning Experience: A Causal Model. *Journal of Marketing Education; Boulder*, *29*(2), 140–153. http://dx.doi.org.libraryproxy.griffith.edu.au/10.1177/0273475307302016

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