

## BACKGROUND

### Reasons for the evaluation

- Since adopting WebCT a number of years ago, the market has matured and it was time to re-evaluate elearning applications.
- Significant increase in price of current eLearning Product – WebCT
- Low adoption rate of WebCT

### Criteria

1. **Ease of Use:** The system should be easy to use and intuitive to the novice user as well as to the designer, learner, and administrator and for backend support.
2. **Ease & Speed of Conversion:** Conversion from the current WebCT courses should be easy and quick with minimal redesign effort.
3. **Accessibility:** The system should adhere to W3 standards. It should also be able to be accessed via 56k modems from home with minimal effect on performance. Accessibility by different web technologies
4. **Flexibility:** The system should be able to facilitate courses of varying complexity and support creative development of courses
5. **Functionality of the System:** Functionality of the system supports the requirements of UQ
6. **Adaptability/Versatility:** Ability to upgrade to new technologies as they arise.
7. **Integration:** Integrates with other systems used by the University, this includes email, calendar, Peoplesoft student system, timetabling systems, LDAP directories and Kerberos authentication
8. **Compatibility with UQ Systems & Infrastructure:** The system is can be installed and operational with minimal purchases and modification to UQ systems and infrastructure.
9. **Scalability:** The system should be able to scale to host up to 3000 courses online with around 40,000 students accessing them
10. **Support Infrastructure:** Support structure offered is sufficient to meet UQs need for future 24x7 access by students and to address issues in a timely manner
11. **Value for Money:** Cost versus Benefits

## EVALUATION

### Evaluation teams

A number of teams were setup for the evaluation from both a business and technical perspective. Members of the evaluation committees included representatives from Faculties, TEDI, the Library, ITS and the eLearning working party consisting of senior executives of the University.

### EVALUATION PROCESS

The tender evaluation process, included tender document evaluation against criteria, presentations, designer evaluation by TEDI and faculty academics, review of the conversion of files, review of integration requirements and workload for other UQ systems, review of administration effort, review of training requirements and workload for staff and students, review of hardware & software requirements, review of costs, and referee checks.

### System Selection

Based on the outcome of these evaluations against the criteria, a decision was made to migrate to the enterprise Blackboard software. Ease of use and ease of integration being the two most predominant factors highlighted in the evaluations.

As an interim step, UQ will be required to upgrade to WebCT Campus Edition for courses in 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester, 2004. Conversion and integration is expected to be minimal. Blackboard is to be ready to pilot in summer semester 2004. Resources will be allocated to ensure this transition occurs smoothly.

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## IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT

### Description of Approach

A comprehensive implementation plan has been developed for eLearning. A project team will be formed for the purposes of implementation. Steps in implementation include:

- Development of a change management plan with communication plan
- Purchasing and installation of the software & hardware
- Provide training for Instructional designers, technical staff and students
- Provide staff development for teaching staff
- Develop eLearning policies, and procedures including those required for adding Building Blocks
- Conversion of the courses for Semester 2 to WebCT Campus Edition (this will be a simple upgrade which will be required before we convert to Blackboard.)
- Conversion of the courses to Blackboard for Summer Semester – Pilot
- Conversion of existing WebCT courses to Blackboard for 2005
- Develop process and procedures for the conversion of non-WebCT courses Semester 2 2005.

### KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR BLACKBOARD IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT

- Blackboard Pilot: Summer 2004
- Blackboard implementation including current integrations and at least 400 online courses completed 1<sup>st</sup> Semester 2005
- Processes in place for conversion of courses from other systems by 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester 2005.
- Completion of Implementation project by 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester 2005.