

Big Blue Button Sandbox Project - Final Report

This document outlines the deliverables for the Final Report

Application: Big Blue Button

Type: Web conferencing

Similar to: Adobe Acrobat, Blackboard Collaborate

Teaching & learning application: enables synchronous interaction among faculty & students

Due Date: Mon,
June 30

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Reporting date: June 23, 2014

Note: these results must be considered in light of the fact that we had only 6 users (including our Educational Technology staff) for the BBB pilot.

Institutional Deliverables

A final report on the institutional experience with the project is due on June 30th, 2014. This report does not have to be extensive, but should address the following questions.

1. Describe how the system was tested at your institution.

- **How often did you use the system during the pilot?:** Approximately twice per month during the piloting phase
- **How many users did you have testing the system?** Six, including moderators
- **What types of activities did you try in the system?** Basically testing out the primary functions of BBB: audio, video, PowerPoint-type presentation, desktop sharing, recording.

2. What parts of the system did your users like? Dislike? Features rated most highly include audio, webcam, & document sharing. The ability to enable shared annotation of PowerPoint-type slides in 'live time' was especially appreciated. Desktop sharing was rated less highly (although 60% of respondents indicated it was 'good'.) The ability to record sessions & offer playback later was very important.

What worked well with the system and what did not work as expected? Most aspects worked very well. However, the desktop function was rated by some as 'clunky' & problematic on some browsers (Firefox & Safari).

3. How could this application be used in a teaching and learning context? We are anticipating an increased emphasis on synchronous learning events to be incorporated into online teaching (current research suggests that online courses incorporating activities that are synchronous (or with synchronous components) enjoy a higher completion rate & greater student satisfaction. BBB could be used for real-time presentations (with either student or teacher presenting). It could also be used for online tutoring, library orientation sessions, troubleshooting of technical problems. Students will appreciate having access to recorded sessions for later or repeated viewing or review.

4. Were there technical issues with the system during the sandbox project? Describe them. While using the desktop sharing aspect of BBB, we should have been able to adjust/move/resize the area selected for sharing. However, this seemed impossible to do. We found the desktop sharing app very sensitive to Java version (had to install the latest version before it would work). Performance when using Safari on a Mac was not reliable. For example, when one participant logged in through Safari (on a Mac) the BBB appeared to launch but resulted in only a blank screen: the BBB interface did not load. Consequently, the participant was unable to participate in any components of the interface.

5. Were you able to find support independently (i.e. from a user community or other open resources, like websites and blogs) **when you experienced issues?** Sorry – we didn't even look!

6. Did you use the application within an LMS? How difficult was it to integrate with LMS's? We used the application mostly within Moodle. It integrated VERY well within Moodle & this tight integration is one of the strongest features we see with this product.

7. What features are missing that you wish the system had? One feature I especially appreciate about Collaborate is the way it adapts to interruptions in audio. When a speaker's audio is suspended for a short time, Collaborate 'saves up' the audio stream, compresses it, & delivers it (really fast) until the audio is caught up with live-time. This makes Collaborate a really strong synchronous learning platform for users with varying connectivity speeds.

8. Compared to other types of web conferencing system you have used, how would you compare BBB? More than half of the participants rated BBB as 'better' than other systems. It appears to be a 'cleaner' and more intuitive interface than Adobe Connect; somewhat less fully-featured than Bb Collaborate.

9. What advice would you have to other institutions who might be considering using this software? Being a part of a shared service (e.g. BCcampus) would probably be the way to go. Be sure to include a piloting period WITH students since it's very hard to assess the full functionality with Educational Technology staff + the occasional willing faculty member.



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