

What is BigBlueButton?

BigBlueButton (BBB) is an open source, easy-to-use, Web conferencing system. It has been developed primarily for distance education at institutions of higher education to develop a high-quality learning experience for remote students.

BBB supports sharing of slides (PDF and PPT), video, audio, whiteboard, private or public chat, and desktops. It runs on Mac, Unix, and PC computers, and is supported by a community that cares about good design and a streamlined user experience.

BigBlueButton underwent testing by URI staff and faculty in January 2011, and is now available as a Pilot for the Spring Semester.

Although it is hosted by URI on a server, all access to BigBlueButton sessions, called "Meetings," will be managed via Sakai. Sakai is the scheduler and gateway to BigBlueButton, making additional logins and passwords unnecessary.

The new **Meetings** Tool in Sakai (available in **Site Info | Edit Tools**) is a gateway directing users from Sakai to the URI server hosting BigBlueButton. The Meetings tool is used to schedule Meetings sessions and make them available to a class roster or to project site members. The participants join the meeting by logging into the Sakai course or project site, selecting the Meetings tool and choosing from one or more available meeting sessions. All scheduling for URI's BBB meetings will be done through Sakai.

Users may enter the conference in one of two roles: viewer or moderator. As a viewer, a user may join the voice conference, share their Webcam, raise their hand, and chat with others. As a moderator, a user may mute/unmute others, eject any user from the session, and make any user the current presenter. The presenter may upload slides, control the presentation, and share a view of any open application on their desktop.

Some exciting BBB features include:

Webcam

Multiple users can share their Webcam at the same time. There is no built-in limit on the number of simultaneously active Webcams.

Integrated VoIP

BBB voice conferencing supports voice over IP (VoIP) conferencing out-of-the-box. All your students need are speakers and a microphone to participate, although a combination headphone-microphone is preferred.

Presentation

The presenter can upload any PDF presentation or office document and keep everyone in sync with their current page, zoom and pan; the audience can see the presenter's mouse pointer.

Desktop Sharing

Go beyond slides! The presenter can broadcast their desktop for all students to see, whether they are using the Mac, PC, or Unix system.

Additional information:

For an overview of BBB, go to <http://www.bigbluebutton.org>

To watch screen casts of how to use the features listed above, go to:
<http://www.bigbluebutton.org/content/videos>