

Making the Move – Web-harnessed WIDS



Once WIDS Software is released as a Web-harnessed application, it will bring instantaneous access to WIDS via the Web;

new program assessment rubrics, program outcomes and improvement plans; and significantly enhanced syllabus, learning plan and course assessment design capabilities. Every new and improved element – as always – will be built around current research in performance-based learning, according to WIDS Associate Director Robin Nickel.

“WIDS has provided tools and services in curriculum development for more than 16 years,” she says, “so the move to a Web-based technology to improve user access, ease of use and customization was a logical next step. We’ve been through product transformations before and have a proven development history that includes user and best practice input, expert developers, and most importantly, a solid foundation on how learners learn and what makes ‘good’ curriculum.”

When WIDS for the Web development is complete, users can anticipate a significant improvement over the current software – WIDS 7.5.

Perhaps the most convenient change is that WIDS will be accessible via the Web, where curriculum documents will be created, improved, stored and secured. This will significantly reduce the load on IT departments because the WIDS application will be accessible via a Web site, rather than a central server or local computer.

Cloud Computing

WIDS will harness Microsoft cloud computing technology – which allows for the delivery of a service or capability over the Internet – to ensure a variety of powerful benefits. “Cloud computing refers to IT resources and services that are abstracted from the underlying infrastructure and are provided ‘on demand’ and ‘at scale’ in a multi-tenant environment,” according to an article in *Campus Technology*. Microsoft cloud computing will work in concert with the WIDS Web-based application to ensure licensed users can design, revise, export and store curriculum documents online, at any time of the day or night. In doing so, cloud computing – and the new Web-based WIDS curriculum design application – remove the expense and labor

associated with WIDS clients installing, updating and troubleshooting traditional WIDS Software files on local computers and central servers. “Cloud computing allows us to offer better service to our clients, and unmatched security,” said Nickel.

What Users Will See – A Branded Portal

Licensed WIDS users will login to a Web portal branded for their college, school or company, to access the WIDS curriculum design application. Each college/client will be able to establish access rights for personnel. In other words, a person at the “Instructor” level may only be able to access final curriculum, while a “Developer” may access and develop curriculum, and a “Project Manager” may edit curriculum.

While still in development, the new WIDS will bring refreshing conveniences and comforting security.

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—Robin Nickel, WIDS Associate Director

The New WIDS Brings Customization:

- Use your own terms and model
- Add needed fields or hide unused items
- Define access by user role
- Set organizational-wide core abilities
- Designate approval protocol
- Batch load users

The New WIDS Allows Organizations To:

- Balance need for curriculum consistency and honor unique teaching/learning techniques
- Create unique syllabi, learning modules and assessment tasks

- Ensure curriculum is accurate, consistent and valid with common competencies and performance standards
- Develop curriculum centrally and collaboratively; track edits
- Access external standards as curriculum is written
- Eliminate version control and file management headaches and associated costs
- Develop outcome assessment plans
- Identify standards for learner success, program quality objectives and details for data collection

WIDS for Programs:

- Link organization outcomes to programs, such as core abilities and external standards
- Create customized program configurations
- Build program assessment rubrics with common or unique indicators

WIDS for Courses:

- See only what you need to see via a dashboard that is personalized by your role: instructor, developer or project manager
- Infuse higher order thinking with Bloom’s taxonomy
- Control official course documentation such as competencies, grading information, linked program outcomes, linked core abilities, and external standards
- Build syllabi, learning plans and assessment rubrics off approved curriculum
 - Personalize these without compromising integrity of college-approved curriculum
 - Submit syllabi for review
 - Create multiple sections of approved syllabus

Plan for Assessment:

- Designate summative assessment strategies for organizational outcomes
- Describe results achieved for organizational outcome assessment
- Edit incrementally without disturbing official data (by program or course)●