

Blackboard®

Reminder: Effective April 15, 2020, the Social Learning Tools and Cloud Profile Features of Blackboard Learn will no Longer be Available

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Product: Blackboard Learn

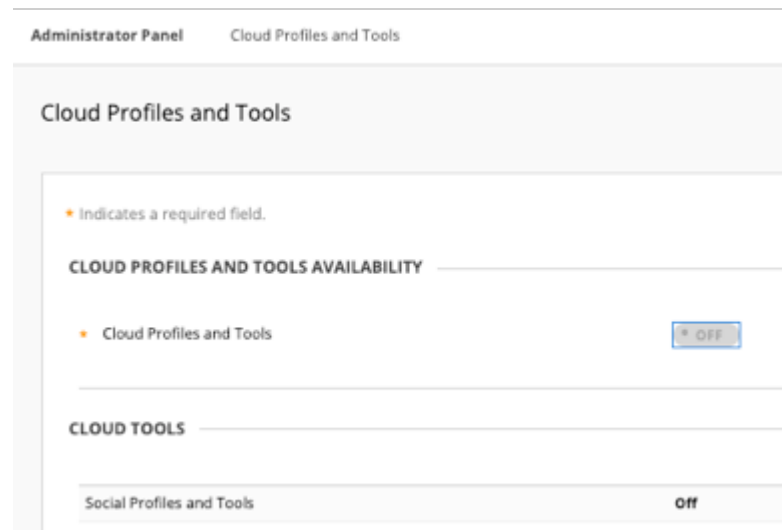
Type:Support Bulletin

Bulletin/Advisory Information:

Updated Bulletin (Published April 1, 2020):

As a part of our commitment to delivering a Learning Management System of the highest quality, feature areas are periodically evaluated to determine their suitability to support our clients' academic goals. Last year, this evaluation was made of the Social Learning Tools and Cloud Profiles. As a result of this evaluation, we have made the difficult decision to remove this functionality within the Learn product. In an effort to provide the longest transition period possible for institutions utilizing this feature, we set April 15, 2020 as the official discontinue date. This Support Bulletin serves as a final reminder; these changes were previously announced in this Support Bulletin in December 2018 and added to the [Help site](#). Additional reminders were published in July and December 2019.

In order to avoid experiencing an unexpected end of service and end users receiving error messages, clients should turn off the features in the Administrator Panel as outlined in this article. Clients should ensure the tools are turned off in **Admin Panel > Cloud Profiles and Tools** as shown here.



Administrator Panel Cloud Profiles and Tools

Cloud Profiles and Tools

* Indicates a required field.

CLOUD PROFILES AND TOOLS AVAILABILITY

* Cloud Profiles and Tools

CLOUD TOOLS

Social Profiles and Tools **Off**

Please reach out to Client Support or your Account Manager with any questions or concerns. You can also join the conversation on [Blackboard Community](#).

Updated Bulletin (Published December 9, 2019):

Effective December 31, 2019, the Social Learning Tools and Cloud Profile features of Blackboard Learn will no longer be available.

As a part of our commitment to delivering a Learning Management System of the highest quality, feature areas are periodically evaluated to determine their suitability to support our clients' academic goals. Last year, this evaluation was made of the Social Learning Tools and Cloud Profiles. As a result of this evaluation, we have made the difficult decision to remove this functionality within the Learn product. In an effort to provide the longest transition period possible for institutions utilizing this feature, we set December 31, 2019 as the official discontinue date. This bulletin is a reminder--these changes were previously announced in this Support Bulletin in December 2018 and added to the [Help site](#); an additional reminder was published in July 2019.

When will the Social Learning Tools no longer be available?

Effective December 31, 2019, the Social Learning Tools and Cloud Profile features inside the Blackboard Learn LMS will no longer be available to users.

When will support for Blackboard Social Learning Tools end?

Support for the Social Learning Tools and Cloud Profile features will end in concurrence with the discontinue date on December 31, 2019.

What is meant by, “the Social Learning Tools”?

The Social Learning Tools functionality inside of Learn consists of a set of tools that can be enabled on a user's “My Blackboard” page such as the following:

- Enhanced Cloud Profile – add personal information about experiences, skills, projects, and accomplishments
- My Learning Network – create a network of connections with people inside and outside the institution
- Social Messaging – send a message to another person inside or outside the institution; not related to the Course Messages feature
- My Spaces – create, discover, and join groups of users inside or outside the institution
- Following – follow another user or space in the Social Learning Tools

How can I determine if these features are on in my environment?

An administrator must enable these tools; they are not made available by default. You can determine if they are enabled in the **Admin Panel > Cloud Profiles and Tools**.

What actions should I take as an administrator?

As administrators, we ask that you please use available communication channels to your end user community about the discontinuation of these services if they are utilized at your institution. We do not plan any direct communications to end users as we expect that most of our clients will prefer to inform their end users themselves.

Can I revert to the Avatars capability for user images? Can profile photos be moved?

Yes, the Avatars feature can be used instead of the Enhanced Cloud Profile. When the Cloud Profile feature is turned off in Admin Panel > Cloud Profiles and Tools, the Avatars capability can be configured in Admin Panel > Avatars. Images will appear in various user list pages and tools such as the Discussion Board. If images are centrally managed by the institution, they can be uploaded in bulk using [instructions found on Help](#). This process is generally to use REST APIs to retrieve the user primary key value, structure the image file names as described in the documentation, and uploading a .zip package of user images.

If users are expected to be able to manage and upload their own images, this is set in Admin Panel > Avatars. When configured this way, Learn captures a record of a user's action and choice to opt-in to sharing their image. This record of the opt-in process is captured in the user registry. There is not a supported mechanism for updating the user registry to capture this opt-in because that needs to be done by each individual user. Therefore, there isn't a supported way to migrate images from the Enhanced Cloud Profile to the Avatars tool when users are allowed to manage their own Avatar. It is recommended that users are encouraged themselves to upload an Avatar image, opting in to share that image during the process.

Can I retrieve other data from the social learning tools?

One key feature of the Social Learning Tools is to connect end users across institutions. This means that the Social Learning Tools may have gathered information from users

outside of your institutional context and potentially with users outside of your institution. As a result, we cannot provide full extractions of all interactions to respect the privacy rights of the end users. We can provide upon request an extraction of text authored by your users, but it will not have any context or structure in order to protect privacy of other users not part of your institution. This data would provide little value for transitioning to other educational tools or reconstructing for the purposes of academic records. However, if you determine with your legal counsel that you must retain this data, please enter a support case for this data extraction before December 31, 2019. Requests will be fulfilled early in 2020. In order to comply with various regulations and our contractual commitments, all Social Learning Tools data will be purged after December 31, 2019 once any extraction requests have been fulfilled.

I've enabled the Ultra Base Navigation in our environment. Are we impacted?

No. These features are not available when the Ultra Base Navigation has been enabled, so your users no longer have access to them.

What are other options for current users of the Social Learning Tools or Enhanced Cloud Profile features?

There are several social learning tools in the market today along with solutions for personal portfolios. Blackboard is not promoting or endorsing any solution as part of this announcement. Please reach out to Client Support or your Account Manager with any questions or concerns. You can also join the conversation on [the Blackboard Community](#).

Updated Bulletin (Published July 17, 2019):

Effective December 31, 2019, the Social Learning Tools and Cloud Profile features of Blackboard Learn will no longer be available.

As a part of our commitment to delivering a Learning Management System of the highest quality, feature areas are periodically evaluated to determine their suitability to support our clients' academic goals. Recently, this evaluation was made of the Social Learning Tools and Cloud Profiles. As a result of this evaluation, we have made the difficult decision to remove this functionality within the Learn product. In an effort to provide the longest transition period possible for institutions utilizing this feature, we have set December 31, 2019 as the official discontinue date. This bulletin is a reminder--these changes were previously announced in this Support Bulletin in December 2018 and added to the [Help site](#).

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How can I determine if these features are on in my environment?

An administrator must enable these tools; they are not made available by default. You can determine if they are enabled in the **Admin Panel > Cloud Profiles and Tools**.

What actions should I take as an administrator?

The setup process for the Social Tools, which required each user to create an account with an email address, did not include authorization for use of the email address for communications in the terms of use that was presented at the time. Given regulations that now exist in various jurisdictions, we cannot use this list to communicate via email information about the end of these services. As administrators, we ask that you please use available communication channels to your end user community about the

discontinuation of these services if they are utilized at your institution.

I've enabled the Ultra Base Navigation in our environment. Are we impacted?

No. These features are not available when the Ultra Base Navigation has been enabled, so your users no longer have access to them.

What are other options for current users of the Social Learning Tools or Enhanced Cloud Profile features?

While there are several social learning tools in the market today along with solutions for personal portfolios, Blackboard does not promote or endorse any solution. We are encouraged that there are options on the market that will fit your needs. We will continue to share timely information over the course of the year. Please reach out to Client Support or your Account Manager with any questions or concerns. You can also join the conversation on [the Blackboard Community](#).

Original Bulletin (Published December 17, 2018):

Effective December 31, 2019, the Social Learning Tools feature-set found inside of the Blackboard Learn LMS will no longer be available.

As a part of our commitment to delivering a Learning Management System of the highest quality, feature areas are periodically evaluated to determine their suitability to support our clients' academic goals. Recently, this evaluation was made of the Social Learning Tools. As a result of this evaluation, we have made the difficult decision to remove this functionality within the Learn product. In an effort to provide the longest transition period possible for institutions utilizing this feature, we have set December 31, 2019 as the official discontinue date.

When will the Social Learning Tools feature no longer be available?

Effective December 31, 2019, the Social Learning Tools feature inside the Blackboard Learn LMS will no longer be available to current users of the product.

When will support for Blackboard Social Learning Tools end?

Support for the Social Learning Tools feature will end in concurrence with the discontinue date on December 31, 2019.

What do we mean when we say, “the Social Learning Tools feature”?

The Social Learning Tools functionality inside of Learn consists of a set of tools that can be enabled on a user's Accounts page such as:

- My Learning Network
- Profile following
- Organization following
- Social Messaging
- My Spaces

What are other options for current users of the Social Learning Tools feature?

While there are several social learning tools in the market today Blackboard does not promote or endorse any solution. We are encouraged that there are options on the market that will fit your needs.

We will continue to share timely information over the course of the year. Please reach out to Client Support or your Account Manager with any questions or concerns.