Editing Files Using Google Docs

# A Modular Alternative to Word’s Copy and Paste

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# Introduction

Hello; my name is Megan Jones and I am an Instructional Designer here at EKU. Today, as part of our faculty professional development, we are going to cover **how to edit text files and content**. As you know, Blackboard has particular quirks and alternative ways of performing tasks, so hopefully you will find this short tutorial helpful.

# Why We Avoid Microsoft Word

The main reason we recommend avoiding using Word documents relates to the copy and paste nature of Blackboard. Many of us, or actually I would say the majority of us, **use alternative word processing programs to assemble our content** and then use the **copy and paste** feature to post our content in Blackboard. What’s the problem with using Word to copy and paste course content?

The main problem we encounter is the **automatic formatting** Blackboard does to any input. Whether it be a table, or a bullet list with text – or even images – **Blackboard will reformat the content to its own specifications.** To assist with this issue, Blackboard has actually included a button in its text editor that allows us to **clear the formatting** from any input. The caveat with clearing all formatting? **Sometimes we don’t want our format to be altered.** And it’s even worse – and **time consuming** – to go back and reformat input in Blackboard’s text editor.

Fortunately, we have found a versatile **solution**. That solution comes in the form of cloud-based office programs implemented by Google. We often think of Google as just a search engine, but in reality, Google has **several services** that I have found useful as an Instructional Designer and former faculty. Today, we will be covering a browser-based program called **Google Docs.**

# Google Docs Basics

**Google Docs is a browser-based word processing program.** There is **no software to install or purchase** – you only need to **create a Google account**. You may notice other programs from Google, including spreadsheet, presentation, and database programs. Google also has **cloud storage** – similar to Microsoft’s OneDrive – called Google Drive. All of these programs are **accessible through a Google account.**

For the purpose of this tutorial, we will only be **editing a Google Docs file**. I will also show you **how to input Google Docs content into Blackboard**. It may seem complicated at first, but in fact, you may find this method can **increase your productivity time** – by eliminating the need of reformatting text after pasting the content into Blackboard.

An added benefit of using Google Docs is the **embed feature**, which allows you to **update content automatically in Blackboard,** without the need to go back and copy/paste content multiple times. The embed feature is also **compatible with other Learning Management Systems** – which means that you won’t have to do much to change content if we stop using Blackboard. The embed feature is more advanced, and it would be best to **consult an Instructional Designer** before altering any source code in Blackboard content items.

# Creating a New Document

The first step of creating a new document in Google Docs is **opening your Web browser** and **navigating to** [**https://docs.google.com**](https://docs.google.com)– you can hold CTRL and click the link with your right mouse button to open the site in a browser. After you have navigated to the site, **Google will prompt you for your username and password**. This is the step where you would either **create an account** or **log in with your previously created account.**

After you log in, you will be brought to the **Start a New Document** screen.



*Figure 1: Start a New Document – Template Panel*

This screen offers a variety of templates, as well as the option of creating a blank document. Google also shows the most recent documents you have accessed below the **template panel.**

For this exercise, let’s click on the **Blank** starter file:

*Figure 2: Blank File Selection*

Once you have clicked on the **Blank** starter file, Google will bring up a **blank document** for you within the Web browser. Remember, since this is cloud-based, any and all information entered is **immediately saved to Google’s server**. *Even if the browser crashes, your last changes are preserved.*



*Figure 3: Blank Document in Google Docs*

**Congratulations!** You have created a new document in Google Docs!

# Editing Your Document

As you look at the new blank document, hopefully you’ll notice some features that are very **similar to Microsoft Word:**



*Figure 4: Google Docs Toolbar*



*Figure 5: Microsoft Word Toolbar*

# Toolbar Breakdown

It’s important to get familiar with the Google Docs toolbar. *Let’s cover a few of the tools!*



*Figure 6: Rename your file by clicking “Untitled Document”*



*Figure 7: Print, Undo/Redo, Format Painter*



*Figure 8: Zoom, Format, Font Tools*



*Figure 9: Font Size, Bold/Italics/Underline, Font Color*



*Figure 10: Hyperlink, Alignment, Line Spacing*



*Figure 11: Bullets, Decrease/Increase Indent, Clear Formatting*



*Figure 12: Create a Table by Clicking Insert and Hovering Over Table*

# Copying Content into Blackboard

Now the moment we have all been expecting – **copying content from Google Docs into Blackboard’s text editor.**



*Figure 13: Table with Formatting in Google Docs*



*Figure 14: Copy from Google Docs*



*Figure 15: Pasted Table in Blackboard*

As you can see, the content that was pasted from Google Docs into Blackboard looks **exactly the same.** The **formatting was preserved** using this method.

# Conclusion

Hopefully, as a result of this handout, you have become familiar with the basic tools of Google Docs. If you need help or support, **please do not hesitate to contact me**. I can be reached at megan.jones@eku.edu and (859) 622-3422. Thank you!