

## **A beginner's guide to learning and teaching with *CSU Interact* tools**

This guide provides a brief introduction to the nature and potential purpose of the various tools available within *CSU Interact*. More detailed information is available from the [CSU Interact Staff Support site](#) as well as those listed with specific tools. Tools in subject sites are either “fixed” (appear by default) or “elective” (can be selected).

### **Announcements**

The Announcements tool can be used to format and post class announcements about matters such as class-related events, rescheduled meetings, and/or assignments. In addition to being listed in the Announcements tool window, recent announcements also appear on the subject site Home page. There is an option to advise all class participants by email that an announcement has been posted.

Announcements is a fixed tool in subject sites. [User instructions for Announcements.](#)

### **Blog**

A blog is an online journal in which individuals can write entries, ordered by date. Blog entries can be made visible to all the other members of the site, or to the public, restricted so that they are only visible to teaching staff and the author.

A blog can be used for a learning diary or reflective journal. Students writing dissertations can be asked to blog to keep their research supervisor informed of progress. A blog can also be very helpful for researchers working on a collaborative project. Individual researchers can use it as a research diary, keeping track of their progress, and reading entries by their colleagues.

Blog is an elective tool in subject sites. [User instructions for Blog.](#)

### **Calendar**

The Calendar tool allows subject coordinators and others with authorisation to post items in a calendar format. It is worth noting that any calendar item can have multiple attachments; links can be made from items in the calendar to other files – for example, link to lecture or lab notes from a calendar entry.

Scheduled events from all of the sites to which you belong appear in as a collective in your personal Calendar in your My Workspace section of *Interact*. The calendar can be viewed in a range of formats within *CSU Interact* or it can be printed as a PDF.

Calendar is a elective tool in subject sites. [User instructions for Calendar](#)

## Chat Room

Unlike the CSU Forum tool which facilitates asynchronous text-based communication, the Chat Room tool facilitates synchronous text-based communication. This means that chat sessions occur in real time, therefore, arrangements must be made in advance to meet in the *CSU Interact* chat room at a specific time.

Chat is an elective tool in subject sites. [User instructions for Chat](#)

## EASTS

EASTS is a CSU developed Electronic Assignment Submission Tracking System that can, as its name suggests, be used to submit assignments to the University. It is currently available for most Distance Education subjects via a link within the tool menu on *Interact* subject sites, and from within the 'Lecturers Office' quick link section of [my.csu](#)- see 'Electronic Assignment Management'. The EASTS also allows Subject Coordinators to access electronically submitted files. More information is available at the [EASTS website](#). EASTS is a fixed tool in Distance subject sites.

## Evaluation

The online evaluation survey system is used to administer CSU subject evaluations each time they are offered. These surveys are completed by students, and provide feedback to staff on the learning and teaching experience of these students. The surveys can be customised by staff to suit their teaching situation. For more information on the evaluation system click on the 'Help' link within the [Evaluation survey site](#). Evaluation is a fixed tool in subject sites.

## Forum

All *CSU Interact* subject sites have an online asynchronous forum that enables students and teaching staff to post, read and reply to messages from other members of the subject site. The CSU [learning and teaching site](#) has a number of resources that provide advice on how forums can be used and [managed](#) in the learning and teaching context. For technical information on how to use the forums click on the 'Help' link within the main and management sections of your subject forum. Forum is a fixed tool in subject sites.

## Group email

The Group email tool allows email to be sent to the entire class using a single email address. Messages sent using the Group email tool are archived and searchable on the subject worksite. Sending messages to students via email can help to ensure that the whole class receives important communications that could be missed on a busy or lengthy forum.

Group Email is an elective tool in subject sites. [User instructions for Group Email](#)

## Modules

The Modules tool is a lesson builder tool that allows authors to publish learning sequences that can be created by using a built-in online editor, by linking to web pages, or by uploading learning objects or documents of various formats. (It is to be renamed before 2008 in order to avoid confusion with modules used in distance education packages.) Content is created in Modules and Sections, and can

contain embedded multimedia files or links to multimedia resources. Content is easily editable – in 2008 the editor will contain a mathematical equation editor. Modules can easily be exported as zip files to import into other sites, or to save to a backup location.

Modules is an elective tool in subject sites. [User instructions for Modules](#)

## **News**

The News tool uses RSS to bring dynamic news to your worksite. RSS is a data format used to syndicate news on the web. It allows continuously updated content from a remote news site (eg ABC Breaking News) to appear in your site. You can add more than one News feed when you set up the site, or indeed at a later time.

News is an elective tool in subject sites. [User instructions for News](#)

## **OASIS**

The OASIS (*Online Assessment Submission Information System*) allows subject coordinators to create online multiple choice tests/activities for their subjects. Designing good multiple choice tests tends to take time and effort however they can be very effective when applied appropriately. The enhanced reporting functions of OASIS enable the generation of results on screen or in a spreadsheet. See the [OASIS website](#) for advice on online assessment as well as system management and technical assistance.

OASIS is an elective tool in subject sites. [User instructions for OASIS](#)

## **Polls**

The Polls tool is a simple tool for anonymous voting. Users can vote for one or more of any number of answer options. The structure of the vote is governed by a maximum and minimum number of options that may be selected. You can choose when results are available to voters: immediately, after voting, after the closing date, or never. Participants may only vote once per poll.

Polls is an elective tool in subject sites. [User instructions for Polls](#)

## **Resources**

The Resources tool provides a flexible space for lecturers to upload and manage subject resources. These files could be Word documents, PDFs, and PowerPoint slides, but may also include images, video clips, and even web links. This flexibility means that Resources can be used as more than just a repository for files. With a little creativity, this tool can be used to facilitate engaging activities. The Resources tool can also be used to create and edit both HTML and text files. Up to 10 files can be uploaded at once. New and existing files can be organised in folders. As it was the case with the Announcements tool, students can be notified via email that new subject materials have been added to the site.

Resources is a fixed tool in subject sites. [User instructions for Resources](#)

## Site Stats

Site Stats is an elective tool for showing site usage statistics. The tool presents statistical information in two screens:

Overview: summary information about site visits and activity;

Reports: exportable reports about site visits, tool and resource activity.

Site Stats is an elective tool in subject sites. [User instructions for Site Stats.](#)

## Test Centre

Test Centre enables the creation and management of a variety of tasks such as online tests and anonymous surveys. Questions are added to question pools which in turn are used to create assessments. It supports diagnostic, formative and evaluative assessment. It is recommended that it not be considered as a means of conducting summative assessment.

Test Centre is an elective tool in subject sites. [User instructions for Test Centre.](#)

## Web content

The Web Content tool allows you to display other websites inside your subject's *CSU Interact* frame. You can use Web Content links for the most important or most commonly used online resources for your subject. Links to these sites will appear as buttons on the *CSU Interact* toolbar on the left side of the screen. These may include a link to the library reserves for the subject, or other important online resources. Online resources which are not needed as frequently can be placed in Resources instead of in Web Content items. By providing these links you add value to your subject site, and also increase its level of integration.

Web Content is an elective tool in subject sites. [User instructions for Web Content](#)

## Wiki

The Wiki is a tool that allows anyone with the appropriate permissions to read, create, and edit web pages (open editing). Students can use Wiki pages to work on producing a document or other projects as a team. A big advantage to the user is that Wiki pages can be quickly edited and saved, and the results seen straight away: there is no delay waiting for changes and page edits to be updated. Given this, the Wiki tool can be used to facilitate collaborative learning, group interaction, sharing and distribution of knowledge and expertise, and exchange of ideas.

Wiki is an elective tool in subject sites. [User instructions for Wiki](#)

More detailed information on using *CSU Interact* tools for teaching and learning can be found on the [CSU Interact Staff Support site.](#)