

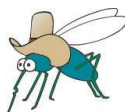
Texas Blackboard Users Group

Through The Years: A look back at where we came from

Here is the history of how T-BUG developed. T-BUG is a combination of two user groups; Texas Blackboard Users Group and WebCT Texas Users Group. The WebCT Texas Users Group began back in 2000 by the University of North Texas, and continuing through 2002, the WebCT Texas conference was born. The attendance was 167, 260, and 140 consecutively. There were five preconference workshops for 2000 and 2001 and six for 2002. In 2001 there was a post conference event for individuals going through WebCT training certification. 2000 and 2002 had 36 concurrent sessions while 2001 had 38, which included instructional design, multimedia, support/training, and system administration tracks to name a few. Three vendors were present in 2000, which increased to six in 2001 and again to eight in 2002.

In the fall of 2003 after a hiatus of almost a year, a group of WebCT Vista users gathered at North Harris to share their WebCT experiences with Blackboard personnel. From that meeting came the rebirth of the WebCT Texas Conference. Volunteers from nine different Texas institutions agreed to form a steering committee and have a conference the following fall. Tammy Hoskings was the chair of the committee.

On October 6-8, 2004 the WebCT Texas Conference was held in Houston at the University of Houston (the host institution) Hilton Hotel, where 225 participants came together from all across Texas as well as from other states. The keynote speaker was Carol Valone, then President and CEO of WebCT. There were 32 concurrent sessions presented by WebCT users and 6 pre-conference workshops. We had 9 vendors participate in the exhibit hall with 4 of them doing a vendor presentation. The Thursday night event was a "Night on the Town" in downtown Houston.



This same year the first Texas Blackboard Users Group (T-BUG) conference was held on November 4 and 5, 2004 at Texas Woman's University (TWU) in Denton, TX. Ninety-seven people registered. The program included keynote speakers Todd Gibby, who was the Senior VP of Sales for Blackboard, Inc. at the time, as well as Dr. Darcy Hardy, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Executive Director of the UT TeleCampus. The two-day event included eight concurrent sessions presented by Blackboard users, as well as hands-on sessions hosted by Blackboard representatives.

The steering committee structure for WebCT Texas Users Group proved to be a great way to plan the conference, so this approach was followed every year. On October 5-7, 2005, the conference moved to San Antonio's Wyndham Hotel with University of Texas San Antonio being the host and Kendall Tew as the chair. Approximately 225 participants joined us for the conference. We had Jeffrey Noyes, CIO from UT San Antonio, as our Welcome Speaker and Chloe Morrow, Director of WebCT Product Management, as our Keynote Speaker. We had 40 concurrent sessions with 8 pre-conference workshops, which were conducted by WebCT users across Texas. We had 8 vendors participate in the exhibit hall, with 4 conducting a vendor presentation. The Thursday night event was a "Night on the Riverwalk" in San Antonio.



The next month the second annual T-BUG conference was also held at TWU, on November 4, 2005. That year's event drew in a slightly smaller crowd of 87. The keynote speakers were Todd Gibby and Jessica Finnefrock, also of Blackboard, Inc. Blackboard users from around the state and representatives from Blackboard, Inc. made a total of eight presentations. The conference ended with a Blackboard Listening Session where participants were encouraged to ask questions to the Blackboard representatives who attended. Blackboard had just announced its intention of merging with WebCT the month before.

Shortly after the 2005 WebCT Impact Conference, the merger of WebCT and Blackboard was announced.



The Plaza Hotel in College Station was our destination for the 2006 WebCT Texas Users Group Conference held on October 4-6 with Texas A & M University hosting the event and Rhonda Blackburn chairing the committee. The anticipation of the joining of WebCT and Blackboard was a focus for this conference and served as a time of transition for the WebCT Texas Users Group (this is the last year for WebCT Texas) with 250 participants, which were local, national and international. We had Pierce Cantrell, CIO and Associate Provost at TAMU as our Welcome Speaker the first morning, while the keynote was a joint presentation by Rhonda Blackburn (TAMU), Dan Peters (Blackboard), and Adrian Alleyne (Blackboard) the following day. There were 32 concurrent sessions and 8 pre-conference workshops conducted by WebCT users. 11 vendors participated in the exhibit hall with 8 of them conducting vendor presentations. The Thursday night event was dinner at the Kyle House, a historic house in downtown Bryan, with the Valley Junction, a bluegrass band, as entertainment.



Following that year In 2006, T-BUG was hosted on November 9 and 10 by the University of Texas in Austin. The theme was "Discover, Collaborate, Educate."

On November 14-16, 2007, the Conference, hosted by Greenhill School in Dallas' DoubleTree Hotel and chaired by Chris Bigenho, marked the first joint user's group conference for Blackboard and WebCT users. The steering committee structure was preserved from the WebCT Texas days with 11 institutions participating. There were 250 participants who had the opportunity to attend 32 concurrent sessions and 8 pre-conference workshops, which were conducted by users across Texas and beyond. 10 vendors participated in the exhibit hall with 7 of them conducting vendor presentations. The Thursday night event was a Casino Night at the hotel with food, music,

dancing, gambling, and tons of fun. Jose Antonio Bowen, Dean for the Meadows School of the Arts at Southern Methodist University, ended the conference with a wonderful keynote address.



The conference drew approximately 133 registrants from across the state and boasted 22 break-out sessions, as well as a Blackboard Listening Session and a student panel. The student panel gave four UT students the opportunity to share their experiences learning online and to give feedback on technology in the classroom. The conference keynote speakers were Karen Gage of Blackboard, Inc. and Dr. Kevin Lemoine, who served on the THECB.

T-BUG 2008 Houston, Texas October 17-18



The 2008 TBUG conference, “Bright Ideas for Blackboard Users,” was October 17 and 18 at the Crowne Plaza in Downtown Houston. It was hosted by Houston Community College, University of Houston, Texas Woman’s University, University of Texas at Dallas, Greenhill School and University of Texas Medical Branch. Preconference sessions were held on October 16 in the Houston Community College Administration Building. Throughout the conference, participants enjoyed a wide variety of presentations, speakers and entertainment, including a live Zydeco band, a Zydeco dance instructor and a caricature artist for the final night’s entertainment. The keynote speaker was Dr. Joel Thierstein, Executive Director of Connexions at Rice University. This conference had 10 exhibitors and 167 registrants. The turnout was tremendous, considering that Hurricane Ike hit Texas a few weeks before, causing damage in and around Houston.



Visiting the East Texas area, the 2009 TBUG Conference was hosted by Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches. Playing off of the local slogan “The Oldest Town in Texas” and the release of the new version 9, the theme was “Best of the Old, Best of the New”. Preconference sessions were held October 14 on the SFA campus and regular conference activities were held October 15-16 in the Fredonia Hotel where halls were decorated with a special display of the Nacogdoches Then and Now photo collection. An opening reception highlighted 10 vendor exhibits and music was provided by a local jazz ensemble. The 128 registrants took part in 5 preconference sessions and over 36 breakout sessions. Thursday’s “Night on the Oldest Town in Texas” included shopping and guided tours of the Old Time String Shop, the Columbia Geospatial Center, the Old University Building, the SFA Art Center, and finally dinner and dancing back at the hotel with DJ Mike Floyd providing music. The final keynote was presented by SFA’s Dr. David Kulhavy also known as “Dr. Bug” and focused on keeping the fun in learning.