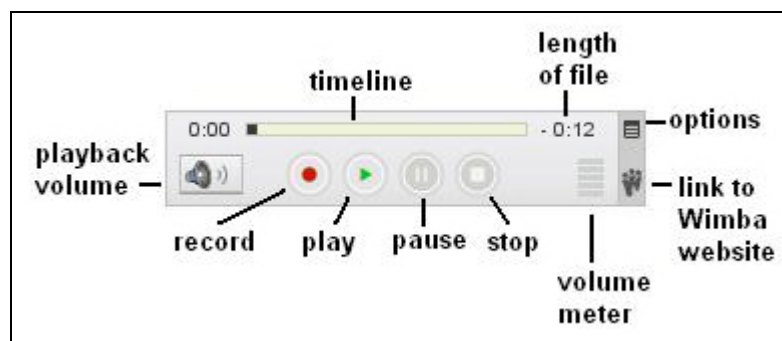


Using Voice Tools in Blackboard

Voice Tools is a suite of tools that allows you to present content and communicate with your students using audio recordings within Blackboard. Using a simple interface like the one below, you and your students can record and listen to recordings without additional software. You need to have Java installed on your computer for the record/play widget to appear and allow pop-ups from the site hunter.wimba.com. You can produce and listen to the recordings using external or built-in microphones and speakers on your computer. A **Setup Wizard** guides you through a series of tests to ensure that your computer is ready.



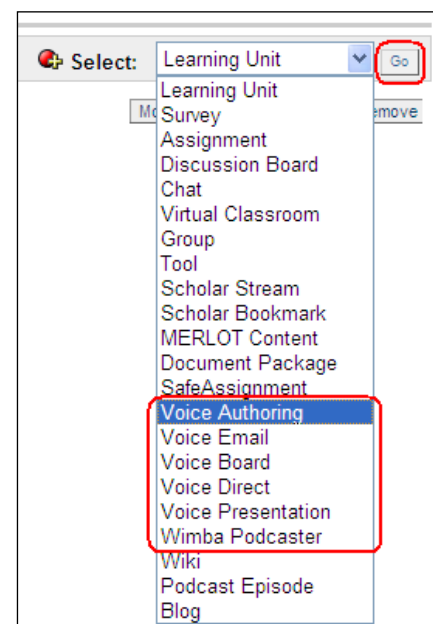
Voice Tools is a Blackboard building block made by a company called Wimba. All the Wimba **Voice Tools** are asynchronous except for **Voice Direct**. You can find all the tools, except for **Voice Announcements**, in the **Select** drop-down menu which appears to the right of the screen in a content area. Select the tool and click on the **Go** button to add it.

Voice Tools that facilitate presentation of content include:

- **Voice Announcements,**
- **Voice Authoring,**
- **Voice Presentation.**

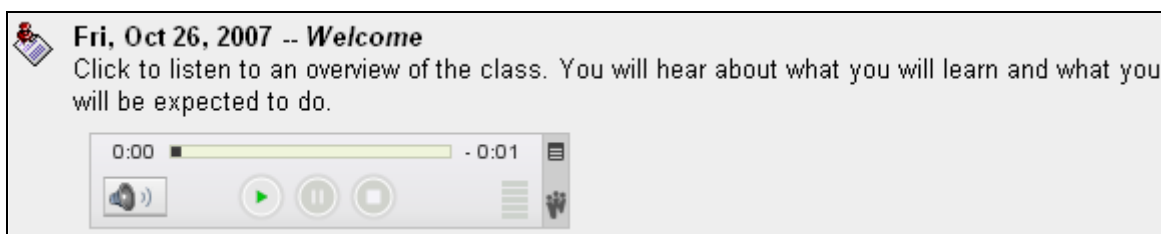
Voice Tools that facilitate communication and collaboration include:

- **Voice Email,**
- **Voice Board,**
- **Voice Direct,**
- **Wimba Podcaster.**



Voice Announcements

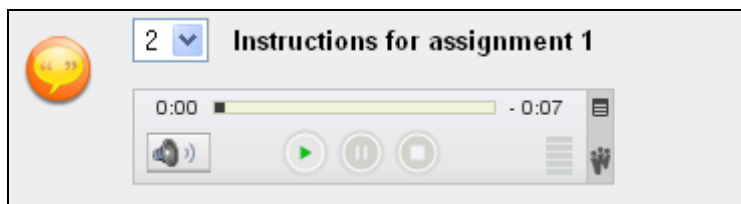
Use **Voice Announcement** to record and post announcements that combine text and voice. Voice announcements appear in the same location of your course site as the traditional written announcements. Audio announcements may sound warmer and more personal. You might use this tool to offer an overview of your course or introduce weekly assignments. It could make a difference for online and blended courses where face-to-face contact is reduced. Voice announcements can be created by clicking **Voice Announcement** in the **Course Tools** area of the **Control Panel**.



Note: To change a voice announcement, you must delete the original and create a new one.

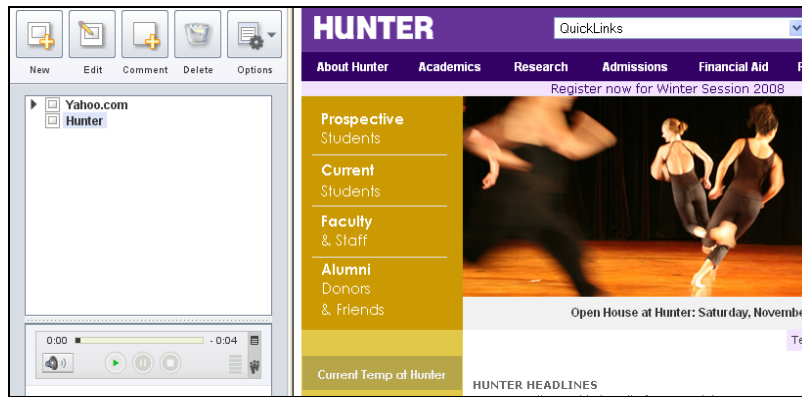
Voice Authoring

Use **Voice Authoring** (formerly **Voice Recorder**) to record and post messages for your students in specific content areas of your course. Voice recordings can combine text and voice. You might use this tool to present course content or give instructions for assignments. You could also record course content which students may benefit from listening to multiple times, such as the explanation of a difficult concept or the solution to a complex problem. You can create a voice item from the **Select** drop-down menu which appears to the right of the screen in a content area. A short video tutorial can be found at <http://www.wimba.com/assets/videos/VoiceRecorder/VoiceRecorder.html>.



Voice Presentation

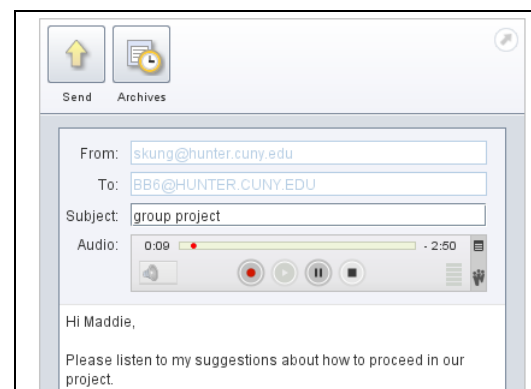
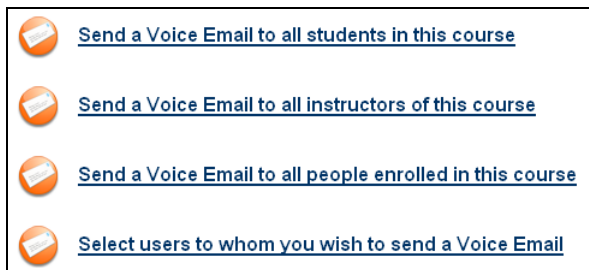
Voice Presentation allows you to create a narration which can be played while your students view a live webpage in the right frame of the browser window. You might use this feature to give tours of websites and point out content relevant to your courses. You can create narrations of several web pages and allow your students to play them one after the other. This tool also allows students to add comments after the narration of each website. You can create a voice presentation from the **Select** drop-down menu which appears to the right of the screen in a content area. A short video tutorial can be found at <http://www.wimba.com/assets/videos/Presenter/Presenter.html>.



Note: One problem with **Voice Presentation** is that it only works if the website allows itself to be placed inside a frame. Some sites like the New York Times and the US Census Bureau will always open in new browser windows so **Voice Presentation** will not work in these cases. Another potential problem with the use of this tool is that it always calls up live web pages. Your recorded narration may no longer be appropriate if the content of the webpage changes.

Voice Email

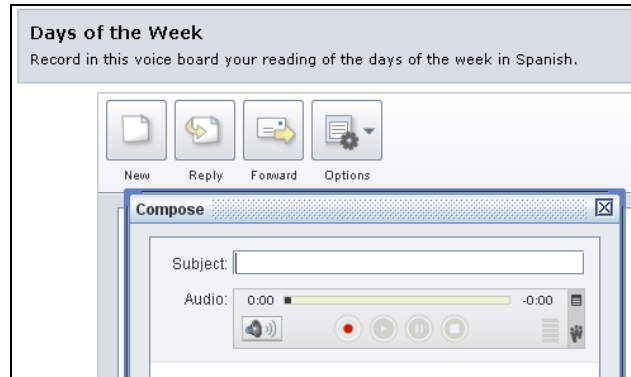
Voice Email allows you to exchange audio messages with members of your class. Emails are sent to the addresses stored in Blackboard, usually your recipients' Hunter email addresses. **Voice Email** appears both in the **Communications** area and in the content areas of your Blackboard course site. You compose a voice email by recording a message with the recording widget. When you send it out, your recipients receive an email message with a link. Clicking on the link takes them to a web page where they can play or save the audio file. To respond to a voice email with a voice message, they would need to go into their Blackboard course sites and record a new message.



Voice Board

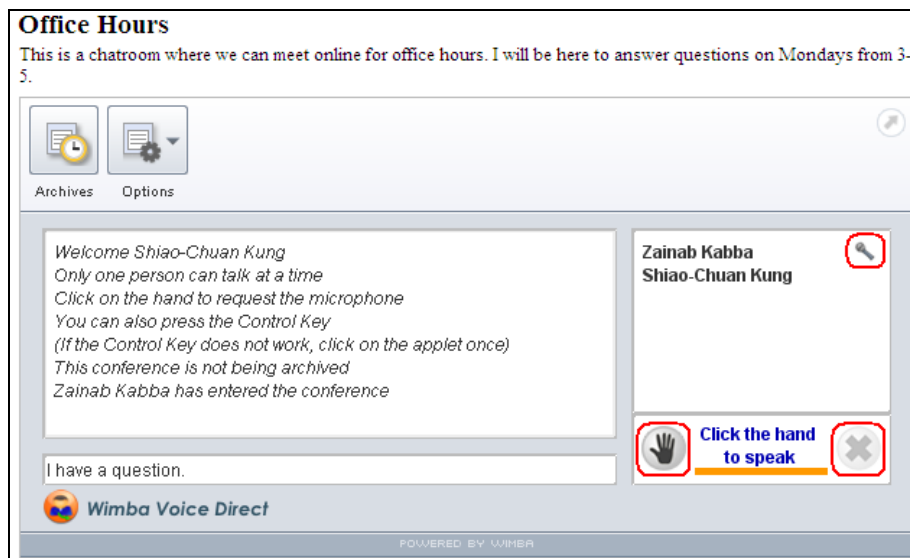
Voice Board allows you to post voice and text messages in threaded discussion boards. You can add voice boards to any content area of your course. You might want to create different voice boards for different discussion topics. You could use voice boards to discuss course-related

content, to share student-created content or to allow practice in foreign languages. Using a **Voice Board**, students may record, reply to and forward audio posts. You can specify the quality and maximum length of the audio files that students are able to record. The maximum length of a recorded post is 20 minutes and largest file that can be uploaded is 10 MB. **Voice Board** appears both in the **Communications** area and in the content areas of your Blackboard course site. A short video tutorial can be found at <http://www.wimba.com/assets/videos/VoiceBoard/VoiceBoard.html>.



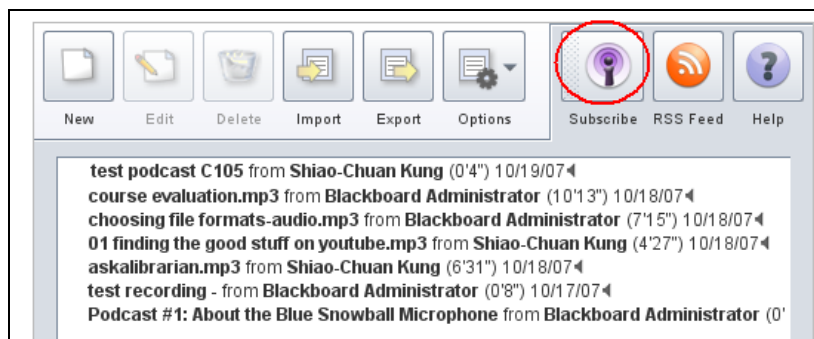
Voice Direct

Voice Direct allows you and your students to interact synchronously in a voice chat room. The list of all participants currently in the chat room appears on the screen but only one person can talk at a time. A person who wants speak must click on the icon of a hand and wait for his or her turn. He or she will get a turn when the previous speaker releases the microphone by clicking on the **X** icon. Instructors can change turn-taking by assigning the microphone to a specific student. Participants can also exchange text messages. All interactions in a chat room can be archived. You might use this tool to hold online office hours or to allow students in different physical locations to work collaboratively in real time. You can create rooms for different purposes or assign them to different groups. Voice chat rooms can be created from the **Select** drop-down menu which appears to the right of the screen in a content area.



Wimba Podcaster

Wimba Podcaster allows you and your students to record and import audio files that become podcast episodes. These episodes can be sent out in a podcast feed which can be subscribed to using a podcatcher such as iTunes. A button with the “subscribe with iTunes” icon allows a simple way to subscribe using iTunes. Subscribing to a podcast means that when a new episode is released, it will get downloaded automatically to your computer. You can then listen to it on your computer or copy it to an MP3 player. Podcast files are portable—once downloaded, you can listen to them at your leisure at a location without Internet access. You might create podcast episodes to elaborate on concepts introduced in class, to offer weekly reviews, or to preview content to be covered. Your students can create podcast episodes with summaries of readings or proposed questions to be discussed in class. Similar to **Voice Board** posts, the maximum length of a podcast episode is 20 minutes and largest file that can be uploaded is 10 MB. **Wimba Podcaster** appears both in the **Communications** area and in the content areas of your Blackboard course site. A short video tutorial can be found at <http://www.wimba.com/assets/videos/Podcaster/Podcaster.html>.



Keep in mind

Audio files in voice discussion boards, email messages and podcast episodes can be downloaded to local computers. Therefore, they can be shared with people outside the class. When you and your students are recording and uploading files, consider the implications of publishing electronic media, obtain appropriate permissions and abide by copyright laws and ethical practices.

Getting additional help

If you have further questions, please email bb@hunter.cuny.edu or contact the [Technology Resource Center](#) (C104 Hunter North) at 212-650-3358. Wimba’s manual with step-by-step instructions can be found at http://www.wimba.com/assets/resources/BBv3_4_UserGuide.pdf. For assistance designing learning activities that incorporate **Voice Tools**, please contact one of ICIT’s educational technologists at edtech@hunter.cuny.edu.