

## Proposed new features for Bodington v2.6



The next version of Bodington is due for release in June/July 2005. This will be a much 'larger' release than the previous version with lots of new functionality.

It is proposed that the new release (v2.6) will contain the following new features.

### *For the Learners and Teachers*

#### RSS / Atom Feeds / Blogs

It will be possible to render an RSS<sup>1</sup> (0.9, 1.0 and 2.0) / Atom feed as a resource. This is achieved via the standard resource creation pages. This will also allow Weblogs (aka 'blogs') to be displayed within a room.

<a href="#">Education &gt;</a>	
	<a href="#">BBC Education UK &gt;</a> Latest item from the BBC Educational News online
	<a href="#">Stephen Downes' OL Daily &gt;</a> Stimulating thoughts in the educational sphere from the Online Learning Daily.

The ≥ symbol indicates the route to manage a resource.

It will also be possible to put a special news-feed feed onto the front 'login' page.

#### Visual Access Control Management Interface

A new facility has been added which allows all users to see who can visit this resource.

Name	Groups	Permissions											
		see	view	edit	record	review	post	mark	create	upload	manage	administer	sysadm
System Administrator <small>(sysadmin)</small>	<a href="#">/testarea/pault/</a>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Stuart Lee <small>(stuarl)</small>	<a href="#">campus.dept.oucs.ltqgroup.vle.team</a> , <a href="#">campus.dept.oucs.staff</a>	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Paul Trafford <small>(pault)</small>	<a href="#">/testarea/pault/</a> , <a href="#">/testarea/pault/</a> , <a href="#">campus.dept.oucs.ltqgroup.vle.team</a> , <a href="#">/testarea/pault/oucs/</a> , <a href="#">campus.dept.oucs.staff</a>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	
Paul Davis <small>(pauld)</small>	<a href="#">campus.dept.oucs.ltqgroup.vle.team</a> , <a href="#">campus.dept.oucs.staff</a>	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	

For larger groups just the group access is displayed.

<a href="#">campus_course.pemge1.a.all</a>	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
<a href="#">campus.dept.oucs.staff</a>	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

#### Notifications Now Fixed

The problems with notifications have now been fixed. Users have a choice of email notification options, including what email address to use.

<sup>1</sup> RDF Site Summary (RSS) is a lightweight multipurpose extensible metadata description and syndication format. RSS is an XML application, conforms to the W3C's RDF specification and is extensible via XML-namespaces and/or RDF based modularization.

- Never send me Email notifications.
- Frequency  Send me Email notifications no more than once a week.
- Send me Email notifications no more than once a day.

Address

[change now](#)

## Text-block Resource

It is now possible to add a block of text to a page in much the same way as one currently adds a heading.

### A new section [>](#)

This allows a bunch of text to be added to the heading description, which can be used to break up different areas of one site, e.g. by allowing grouping of relevant rooms by year or week of course.  
The text can be on a number of lines.

## Image-block Resource

In much the same way as above, an image from a URL or uploaded file can be displayed within the resource menu.

## Timed Release of Resources

It is possible to specify a start date and finish date between which a resource will become available to learners.

## HTML 'Widget' Editor

This simple interface will allow anyone to add web-like styling to the text they input for their pages. You will be able to highlight text, click on a button (e.g. bold, italic, etc.) and the web coding (HTML) will be inserted for you!

## Quicklinks

It is possible to link directly to either an external web address or an internal resource within Bodington. In the latter case, if the resource is moved then the quick-link will update itself.

## Easybuilder

This is a wizard to help in the construction of complex suites of rooms. The wizard is customisable for different groups and will help ensure a consistent design to Bodington resources. It:

- Allows simpler creation of a collection of resources
- Allows custom templates at a group level
- Supplies default values for resource creation (e.g. name, title, description)
- Displays a map of resources during creation
- Adds keyword searching to the search tool
- Automates uploading a file and creating a quick link to it
- Allows a JavaScript HTML editor to be included in any template (for developers)

## User Interface

There has been a redesign of user interface for import, create, move, copy and managing. The help text is now optional and the input boxes are larger.

## **New Discussion room**

Its is now possible to integrate new discussion board (MVNForum<sup>2</sup>); this can optionally replace the current default resource.

## **Announcement Resources**

Announcement tool is used for announcements! Text is displayed at the top of the resource list and "Where you can go from here" changes to "Please read the following Announcement". The tool includes the option of switching text display on or off.

## **Bookmarks Resources**

The Bookmarks tool displays a list of URLs beneath the tool in the resource list. This can be used to link to files uploaded into this resource and has the advantage that the resource can be sorted along with the other resources so that uploaded files do not appear at the bottom of the resource list. This also includes a quick method for linking to uploaded files.

## **Bug Fixes**

A variety of bug fixes including:

- enhancements to the notification system,
- correct display of dates with timed release of resources,
- 'tool tip' (hover text) for Firefox browser,
- better error messages in various areas
- manage uploaded files interface problems
- inconsistent naming of discussion rooms / group communications rooms
- resources may now begin with an underscore
- stepped display across screen when resources do not have a description is now fixed
- Internet Explorer peekaboo bug now has a workaround.

## ***For the Systems Administrators***

### **Internationalisation**

Bodington will be capable of simultaneous multilingual support. This means that users can choose in which language to view content, independent of other users of the system. Language switching is immediate and independent of browser settings.

### **Localisation**

Bodington will ship with a default set of localised templates. The default language will be UK English. On demand localisation is supported for Bodington Resources. Each Resource, regardless of when it is created, will have a "Translate" function that will allow a trusted user to translate the Resource via the browser. The new translation is immediately available to all users of the target language.

### **Improved Resource Searching**

A series of optimisations will be added to Bodington to give faster searching when retrieving resources from the database.

### **Configurable Time-out for Guest users**

The default login mechanism Bodington used to have a fixed time-out period of 30 minutes; this time period is now configurable and can be set by the system administrator.

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<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.mvnforum.com/mvnforumweb/index.jsp>

## **Single Sign On (WebAuth)**

A configuration option will be added to allow Bodington to be integrated with an Apache WebAuth institutional single sign on solution. This allows users to access a basket of Web Resources via one central login page. The user's session can be configured to last the best part of the day and once logged in, it will not be necessary to re-enter usernames and password to access other similarly protected systems.

## **LDAP authentication**

Bodington will be able to delegate authentication to multiple LDAP servers. There is an XML configuration file in which you can specify as many servers as desired (to allow for downtime etc.) The configuration is fully customisable to suit local LDAP schemas.

## **Automatic account creation**

When using LDAP authentication, automatic account creation can be enabled. This lets users who already have institutional accounts, in, for example, Novell eDirectory, to automatically login to Bodington and have an account created there and then. Group membership rules can be applied to the LDAP DN of the user to automatically enrol them in required groups for access to resources.

## ***For the Developers***

### **Ant Build**

A sophisticated `build.xml` file has been implemented to help with development, validation and deployment.

### **Log4J Logging**

The old logging (`java.util.logging`) has been replaced with `log4j` as it is more acceptable in a servlet container. It allows multiple Bodingtons to run in the same container without the logging conflicting.

### **Removal of Dependency on Crimson Parser**

Bodington used to rely on the Crimson parser which is old, unsupported and has been superseded by functionality now available within the JDK.

### **Context Listener**

Alleviates the need to always run the setup servlet and implements the servlet specification in a more standardised way.

### **Tomcat 5.5 / Java 1.5**

Bodington now runs on the latest version of Tomcat (version 5.5). This in turn can run on the latest version of Java (JDK 1.5). As well as performance improvements, this also allows for superior monitoring and management capabilities inherent in the platform.

### **Installation and Setup Servlet Improvements**

This provides more intelligent guessing of the default Bodington properties which streamlines the overall installation process.

### **Improved Template Compilation**

The error reporting when compiling templates during development time is better and its integration with the ANT build tool has generally been improved.

## Improved Configuration

`web.xml` or `context.xml` can be used to specify default Bodington properties which makes installation easier.

## HSQldb Implementation

Bodington will now work with the Hypersonic SQL database<sup>3</sup>. This is useful because HSQldb runs 'in memory' and does not have to be installed separately. It allows unit testing to be used during development and also provides for an easy-install 'evaluation' version of Bodington to be distributed.

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<sup>3</sup> See <http://hsqldb.sourceforge.net/>