D2L Quickguide: Homepages and Widgets

Overview

The "Course Home" page is the first page that you and your students will see when you enter your course. It is comprised of boxes of content called widgets. (See Figure 1 for a description of the default widgets.) You can add, remove, and customize these widgets, as well as create custom widgets, which can contain any information, multimedia, or quicklinks you want to display to students as soon as they enter your course. You can also set your homepage to display another section of your course or an external website instead of widgets.

How to Access Homepages and Widgets

From any page in your course, click **Course Admin** in your course navigation bar, and then click **Homepages** under the "Site Setup" heading.

In This Guide

Creating a New Course Homepage
Making a Homepage Active
Using Custom Widgets

For more D2L resources, go to http://cte.siu.edu/idblog/instructor-resources/d2l-resources-instructors/.

Creating a New Course Homepage

The default course homepage is shared university-wide and cannot be edited directly by instructors. You must create a copy of the default course homepage and edit the copy.

1. Click **Course Admin** on the right side of the course navigation bar. The "Course Administration" page will open.

2. Click 🖼 **Homepages** under the "Site Setup" heading.

3. Click the dropdown arrow beside "Course Default", then select 📄 **Copy** (Figure 2). A new homepage called "Course Default – Copy" will appear.

4. Click **Course Default - Copy**. The "Edit Homepage" page will open.

5. Enter a name for your homepage (required).

6. Enter a description for your homepage (optional).

7. Select an option in the "Type" section:

   - **Widget-based** (default option): The homepage will display widgets. See the next section, "Change Widgets," for more information about setting up a Widget-based homepage.

Announcements: Allows you to write course announcements that students see as soon as they enter your course.

Updates: Automatically shows course activity you have not looked at yet. For example, you will see a notification for unread Discussion posts and ungraded Assignments, and students will see a notification when you have entered feedback.

Events: Shows any events you have entered or deadlines and start dates you have selected to show in the calendar.
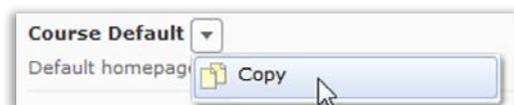
Figure 1

Figure 2

- **Tool:** The homepage will display a specific tool for your course, i.e., Content, Dropbox, etc.

- **External URL**: The homepage will display a page from an external website.

8. Click **Save**.

Note: Your new homepage will not appear in your course until you make it active. See the instructions for activating a homepage in the "Making a Homepage Active" section.

Change Widgets on a Homepage

You can add, delete, or move the widgets that appear on your homepage, as well as change the way widgets are grouped on your homepage.

1. Click on the title of a homepage you have created.

2. Click **Change Layout** if you want to change the layout of your widget-based homepage (Figure 3). "Two Equal Panels" is the default option. The "Widgets" section, which appears below the "Layout" section, will reflect the new layout that you select.

3. Add, remove, or move widgets from the sections on your homepage:

- To add widgets, click **Add Widgets** in the section where you want to add more widgets (Figure 4). You will see a list of all of the widgets available. Select the checkboxes next to the widgets you want to add to the selected area, and then click **Add**.

Note: See the "Using Custom Widgets" section below for directions on creating your own widgets.

- To remove a Widget, hover over the widget you want to remove. An **X** will appear in the top right corner of the widget. Click the **X** (Figure 5)**.**

Note: Deleting a widget does not remove it from the system. You will still have access to the widget if you want to re-add it to your homepage or copy it to another course.

- To move a Widget, click and hold the widget you would like to move, and then move your mouse to your desired location (Figure 6). (A gray bar will indicate the location to where the widget is being moved.)

4. Click **Save and Close** when you are done making changes.

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5

Figure 6

Modify a Widget's Display Settings

Some widgets, including the Events, News, Calendar, Updates, and Picture Library widgets, have specific display settings you can access. These settings allow you to control how much content is displayed in the widget.

1. Go to your course homepage.

2. Click the ▼ drop-down arrow next to the widget you want to modify, and click **Customize this Widget** (Figure 7). The "Customize Widget" dialog box will open.

> **Note**: If the **Customize this Widget** option does not appear when you click the drop-down arrow next to the widget's title, it means there are no display options for this widget.

3. Enter the number of items you want the widget to display in the "Maximum Items" field.

4. Select the checkbox in the "Remove Items" section and enter a value for the number of days you want the system to keep items.

5. Click **Save**.

Customize Widget Appearance

You may want to modify the appearance of your widget if you want to visually emphasize a particular widget or apply a distinct visual style to your homepage.

1. Go to your course homepage.

2. Click the drop-down arrow next to the widget you want to modify, and click **Style this Widget** (Figure 8). The "Widget Settings" dialog box will open.

3. Customize the widget titlebar appearance.

> **Note**: Changes you make to the widget's titlebar will preview at the bottom of the dialog box. The system will also provide you with feedback regarding whether the settings you select meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) (Figure 9). It is recommended that your formatting meets these standards.

4. Customize the widget's border settings.

5. Click **Save** when you are done making changes.

Making a Homepage Active

When you have finished editing your homepage, you must set it as active on the main "Homepages" page.

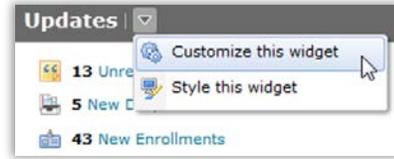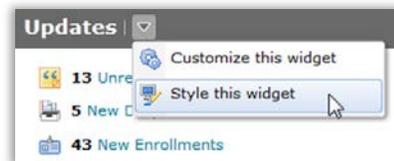1. Click **Course Admin** on the right side of the course navigation bar.
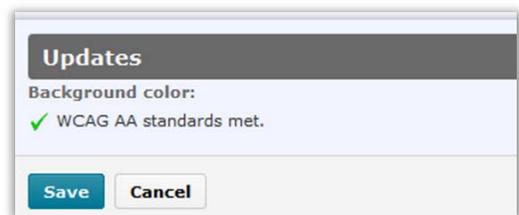

Figure 7

Figure 8

Figure 9

2. Click ▦ **Homepages** under the "Site Setup" heading.

3. Click the drop-down arrow for the "Active Homepage" menu (Figure 10); a list of all homepages available for your course will appear.

4. Click the name of the homepage you want to make active.

5. Click **Apply**.

Note: After you have set your homepage as active, any changes you make to the homepage will be immediately visible to students.
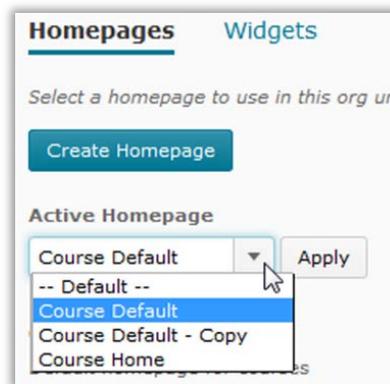

Figure 10

Using Custom Widgets

You can create custom widgets that will display on your course's homepage. You must first create the widget in the "Widgets" section of the **Edit Course** area, and then you can add it to your homepage in the "Homepages" section. (See the "Change Widgets" section for information about adding widgets to a homepage.)

Create a Custom Widget

1. Click **Course Admin** on the right side of the course navigation bar.

2. Click **Widgets** in the "Site Setup" section.

3. Click **Create Widget** (Figure 11). The "Edit Widget" page will open with the "Properties" tab displayed.

4. Enter a name for the new widget (required).

5. Enter a description (optional).

Note: This description appears in the "Manage Widgets" page and is not visible to students.

6. Click the **Content** tab (Figure 12).

7. Enter the content you want to display in the widget. This can be text, images, links, or content embedded from an external website. (See the "HTML Editor Quickguide" for more information on creating content in D2L.)

8. Click **Save and Close**.

Figure 11

Figure 12

Edit a Custom Widget

1. Click **Course Admin** on the right side of the course navigation bar. The "Course Administration" page will open.

2. Click **Widgets** in the "Site Setup" section.

3. Click the 🖉 pencil icon next to the widget you want to edit. The "Edit Widget" page will open with the "Properties" tab displayed.

4. Make changes to the widget in the Properties and Content tabs, as applicable.

5. Click **Save and Close** when you are done making changes.

Delete a Custom Widget

1. Click **Course Admin** on the right side of the course navigation bar. The "Course Administration" page will open.

2. Click **Widgets** in the "Site Setup" section.

3. Click the 🗑 trashcan icon next to the widget you want to delete. A confirmation dialog box will open.

4. Click **Delete.**

Note: Deleting a widget removes it from all homepages created within the course.