Blackboard collaborate™
Voice Authoring
6.1

User Guide

Friday, March 02, 2012

Table of Contents

Chapter 1

Preface

Blackboard Collaborate Voice Authoring is a suite of applications that allows you to collaborate by recording and sharing voice content over the Internet.

Voice Authoring consists of the following 5 features:

- **Voice Board**: Post and listen to voice messages within discussion boards
- **Voice Presentation**: Annotate web pages with voice messages
- **Voice Podcaster**: Create or upload podcasts for user subscription
- **Voice Email**: Send and listen to voice content through email messages

You can create an unlimited number of instances of each Voice Authoring feature.

Purpose of This Guide

This guide is intended to give users of all level of privilege (see *Account Roles* on page 5 for an explanation of the different levels of privilege available in Blackboard Collaborate Voice Authoring) detailed information on the use of the Voice Authoring features.

This guide does not provide information on accessing or creating new Voice features, as that information varies significantly depending on your institution's implementation and integration with Voice Authoring. To learn more about creating or accessing Voice Authoring features through the Voice Manager or through your institution's Course Management System (CMS), refer to the appropriate guide:

Blackboard Collaborate Building Block for Voice Authoring User Guide

Blackboard Collaborate Moodle Integration for Voice Authoring User Guide

Blackboard Collaborate Vista/Campus Edition Powerlink for Voice Authoring User Guide

Blackboard Collaborate Voice Manager Guide

If you are an administrator of Voice Authoring and your institution does not integrate Voice Authoring with a CMS, refer to the Blackboard Collaborate Voice Manager Administrator Guide for information about administrator tasks.

Help and Other Resources

Community

We encourage Blackboard Collaborate users of all levels to join our Collaborati User's Group (https://www.coursesites.com/s/_Collaborati), a new community in which users can share their experiences, ideas, research, and best practices with their peers via forums and user-generated blogs.

Technical Support

Blackboard Collaborate technical support and the support Knowledge Base are available through the Support Portal:

http://support.blackboardcollaborate.com

Documentation and Training Materials

Documentation and training materials (for all Blackboard Collaborate products) are available on the On-Demand Learning Center, which can be reached as follows:

- ○ In your browser, enter the following address:

  http://www.blackboard.com/Platforms/Collaborate/Services/On-Demand-Learning-Center.aspx

Product Feedback

Blackboard Collaborate welcomes your comments and suggestions. If you have an idea for a new feature or enhancement, or would like to send other feedback, please send an email to BBCollaborateFeedback@blackboard.com.

Your feedback will be sent directly to our Product Management Team.

Chapter 2

Account Roles

Each user who accesses the Blackboard Collaborate Voice Authoring belongs to one of the following groups, each of which has its own set of access privileges:

- **Users:** have the lowest access privileges and receive access to specific Voice Authoring features; they are typically students.
- **PowerUsers:** can create and manage their own Voice Authoring features; they are typically instructors.
- **Administrators:** can create and manage all Voice Authoring features, Users, Groups, and the Manager itself.

If your institution integrates Voice Authoring with a Course Management System, your system role is determined by your institution role in your CMS and your role for each tool is determined by your CMS role in the course to which the tool is linked. If your institution does not integrate with a CMS, your system role is determined by an administrator through the Administration page of Voice Manager, and your role in each tool is determined by the creator of that tool.

For information on Administration features of Voice Manager, refer to the Blackboard Collaborate Voice Manager Administrator Guide.

Chapter 3

Voice Board

The Voice Board feature is a threaded, voice-based discussion board. While you may have used message boards before, Voice Boards take communication to another level by adding voice to an intuitive, conversational interface.

The Voice Board Window

The Voice Board window provides access to all of the topics and replies contained within it, as well as providing the tools for editing and creating your own topics and replies.
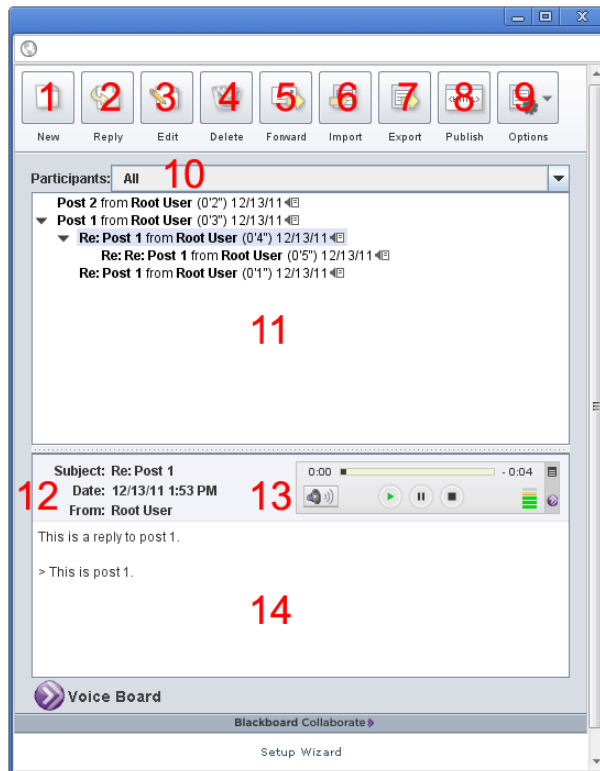
Table 5, 1: Voice Board Components

1	New	5	The Voice Board
2	Reply	6	Message header information
3	Options	7	The playback applet
4	Author Filter	8	Message text

Tip: You can resize a Voice Board by dragging the gray bar (above the message pane) up or down

Note: This screenshot reflects the options available to PowerUsers and Administrators. Depending on your role, you may have access to fewer privileges.

Voice Board Components.

1. **New**

Create new top-level topic. Refer to *Creating, Editing, or Replying to a Message* on page 10.

2. Reply

Reply to a selected message. Refer to *Creating, Editing, or Replying to a Message* on next page.

3. Edit

Re-record or alter the text of the selected message. Refer to *Creating, Editing, or Replying to a Message* on next page.

4. Delete

Delete the selected message(s). Refer to *Deleting a Message* on page 11.

5. Forward

Forward the selected message to an email recipient. Refer to *Forwarding a Message* on page 11.

6. Import

Import a sound file from your computer and add it to the board as a new top-level topic. Refer to *Importing Messages* on page 12.

7. Export

Save the selected message or the entire Voice Board as (a) sound file(s) on your computer. Refer to *Exporting a Message* on page 12.

8. Publish

Generate HTML code for imbedding a selected message in another website. Refer to *Publishing Individual Messages* on page 13.

9. Options

Options menu. Refer to *Voice Board Playback Options* on page 15 for more details.

10. Author Filter

Select an author to see only messages created by that participant. Refer to *Filtering Posts by User* on page 14.

11. The Voice Board

Contains a list of messages that match the author filter criteria. Click a message to select it and display it in the Message area below.

12. Message Header information

The date, subject, and author of the currently selected message.

13. The Playback Applet

The playback applet. Click the green triangle to listen to the selected message. Refer to *The Playback Applet* on page 44.

14. Text

Any text associated with the message. Refer to *Text Field* on page 20.

Creating, Editing, or Replying to a Message

Create New Thread   *Reply to Thread*   *Edit Message*

Clicking one of these buttons will open the Compose Message page in a new window.

Create a New Thread

To create a new thread, access the desired Voice Board by following the instructions in *Accessing Voice Boards*.

Click the **New** button to begin composing a message. A new Compose Message window appears. Proceed to *The Compose Message Window* on page 19 for more details on how to use this window.

When the message is complete, it will appear as the topmost post on the Voice Board.

The New button is always available for PowerUsers, but is only available to Userswhen the following privileges are set:

- Users are allowed to start new threads
- Discussion threads have not been made private

Refer to *Settings and Access Control* for instructions on changing these settings.

Reply to a Thread

To Reply to a thread, select the Message you wish to reply to and click the **Reply** button . A new Compose Message window appears. Proceed to *The Compose Message Window* on page 19 for more details on how to use this window.

When the message is complete, it will appear as the topmost message beneath the Message that was selected when you clicked Reply.

Edit a Message

To edit a message that you created, select the thread in the Voice Board and click the Edit button . A new window opens with the same Compose Message window that the original message was created in. Proceed to *The Compose Message Window* on page 19 for more details on how to use this window.

Deleting a Message

Entire threads, as well as single messages, can be deleted from a Voice Board at any time. This feature is only available to individuals with PowerUser privileges.

To delete a message or thread:

1. Select the desired message or thread in the top half of the Voice Board,
2. Click the **Delete** button 🗑 at the top of the Board. A confirmation prompt then appears, asking if you wish to delete the message.
3. Click the **Yes** button to delete the message. Deleting a thread also removes all associated replies. Click **No** to cancel.

> ✏ **Note:** Once deleted, messages cannot be recovered.

Forwarding a Message

A single message can be forwarded to an external email address in order to share this post with someone who does not have access to the Voice Board. PowerUsers always have the ability to forward messages. Users only have access to this feature if the privilege was granted within the feature's settings.

To forward a message:

1. Select the desired message or thread in the top half of the Voice Board,
2. Click the **Forward** button at the top of the Board. A new window then opens.
3. Specify the complete email address(es) of the individual(s) to whom you wish to send your message, separated by a comma or semi-colon.

   You can add optional text as a note to this forwarded message by clicking and typing in the large text field at the bottom of the window.
4. Click the **Send** button at the bottom of the window when you are ready to forward the message.

Emails are sent to the addresses specified, containing the following:

- All text associated with the Voice Board message
- Any text entered as a note in the Forward window

Forwarded messages contain links to listen to the audio from the post, as well as any associated text. Messages do not contain any attachments; all recorded messages reside on the Blackboard Collaborate Voice Authoring server.

Importing Messages

In addition to recording new messages, PowerUsers also have the ability to import content directly to a Voice Board. This includes pre-recorded audio files, single or multiple Voice Board messages, or even an entire Voice Board.

Supported formats include:

- **MP3**: Mpeg 1, layer 3 at 32, 44 or 48kHz (mono or stereo)
- **PCM/WAV**: 8bit or 16bit at 8, 11, 16, 22, 32, and 44 kHz (mono or stereo)
- **Ogg Speex** (NOT Ogg Vorbis): at 8, 11, 16, 22, 32, and 44 kHz (mono or stereo)
- **GSM/WAV**: 8, 11, 16, 22, 32, and 44 kHz (mono or stereo)
- **WVB**: Previously exported Voice Board file

To Import Content

1. Click the **Import** button at the top of a Voice Board. The Import window opens.

2. Browse for the file that you wish to import on your hard drive.

3. Select the desired file.

> **Note:** If you wish to place this content in a new thread, check the **Place content in a top-level "Imported Messages" thread** box at the bottom of the Import window.

4. Click the **OK** button at the bottom of the Import window. The Import Progress window appears as the file is uploaded. A confirmation message appears when the import is complete.

Exporting a Message

Voice Board content does not need to remain exclusively online. Single and multiple messages, top-level threads, and entire Voice Boards can be exported to your computer for preservation or for import to another Voice Board or Presentation. Exporting content allows PowerUsers to re-purpose course material every semester within new Voice Boards, as well as develop a repository of audio and text, which can be shared with others.

Voice Board content can be downloaded in the following formats:

- Blackboard Collaborate Voice Authoring (.wvb)
- Speex audio in archive (.zip)
- WAV audio in archive (.zip)
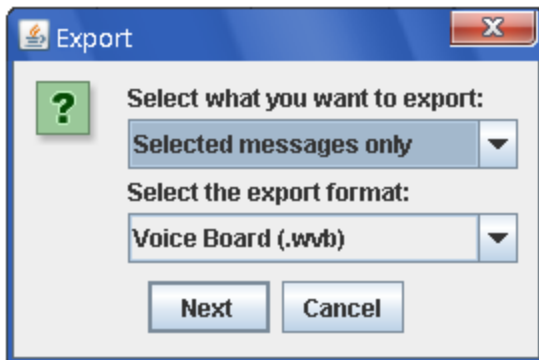- MP3 audio in archive (.zip)

Note: The Voice Archive (.wvb) file format is only playable within a Voice Board or Voice Presentation. It is recommended that you use this format if you plan to import content to another Voice Board or Voice Presentation.

To Export Content

1. Click the **Export** button at the top of a the window ![icon]. The Export window opens.

2. In the first drop-down menu, select the option for the content that you wish to export. The Selected messages only option only appears if at least one message was selected when you clicked the Export button.

3. Select the desired format from the Select the export format drop-down menu.

4. Click the **Next** button to select the download location of your choice.

5. Enter a name in the File Name field.

6. Click the **Save** button.

Tip: To export multiple individual messages, select the first desired message and then hold down either the shift key to select consecutive message or the Control key (Command key on Mac) to select non-consecutive messages and click the additional desired threads.

Publishing Individual Messages

Individual Voice Board messages can be published on the web by embedding them in websites. This feature is only available to PowerUsers.

To publish an audio clip,

1. Select the desired message from the top half of the Voice Board.

2. Click the **Publish** button at the top of the Voice Board [HTML]. The Export page opens in a new window.

3. (Optional) Review the recording by clicking the **Play** button in the Playback applet at the top of the window. For more information, refer to *The Playback Applet* on page 44.

4. This window also displays a large box containing Javascript. Copy and paste this code into an HTML page on your web site and the Voice Board post will display on that page.

> **Tip:** To be sure you get all of the code, click the text box anywhere to place a cursor in it, and then type Control+A (Command+A on a Mac). This should select all of the text in the box.

5. Optionally, click the **Save audio file** link to download a copy of the message in .wav format.

> **Note:** To enable playback on the webpage, the site's domain must be listed or added to the Blackboard Collaborate Voice Authoring server configuration file. Contact your Server Administrator for assistance.

Reordering Messages

Messages can be reorganized using simple drag-and-drop functionality. Drag the post of your choice above or below another post or thread and then drop it in its new location. To move a post so it becomes a reply of another post or thread, simply drag the post over the desired thread or message. Valid destinations are highlighted in yellow as your mouse moves over them. Entire threads, along with all replies, may also be relocated by dragging and dropping the thread to a new location using the same methods.

Filtering Posts by User

If you wish to view only the Voice Board posts by a specific user, you can use the filter by user feature.

To view only the posts by a specific user, click on the Filter by User field just over the Message board. In the drop-down list that appears, select the user's name.
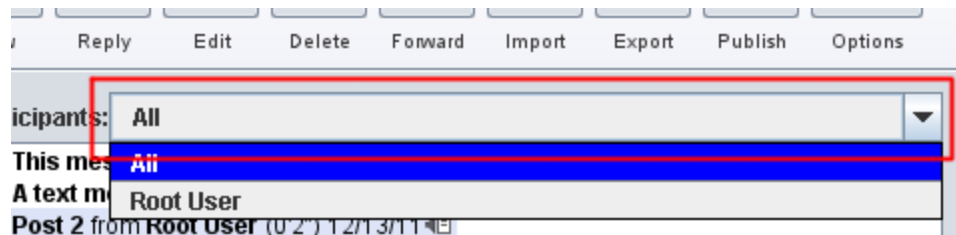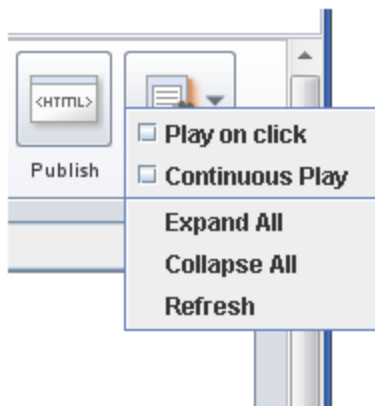
User names are listed in alphabetical order. When you select a user's name, all of his or her posts appear, sorted by post date, and the first post is automatically selected.

To view all posts again, select **All** from the Participants drop-down menu.

Voice Board Playback Options

Click the Options button to access additional playback and display settings.

Play on Click

The Play on Click feature makes it easier and more time-efficient to review posts. Rather than having to first select a message and then click the Play button, you can choose to have messages play automatically when clicked.

To enable this feature, click the **Options** button in the upper right-hand corner of a Voice Board and then select **Play on click**.

Continuous Play

Continuous Play allows students and instructors to listen to the entire content of a Voice Board, without the need to play each message individually. When Continuous Play is enabled, messages play from top to bottom, starting with the first message select and ending with the last message in the Voice Board. Only visible (non-collapsed) messages that contain audio will play. By default, all Voice Board threads are collapsed. If you enable Continuous Play before expanding any threads (manually, or via the Expand All feature), only top-level messages will play.

To Enable Continuous Play

1. Click the **Options** button.
2. Select **Continuous Play.**

To Review an Entire Board

1. Click the **Options** button.

2. Select **Expand All**.

3. Click the **Options** button.

4. Select **Continuous Play.**

5. Select and start the desired message from the top half of the Voice Board.

Expand and Collapse All

By default, Voice Board content is organized in single, collapsed threads. Expanding all threads allows you to view an entire Voice Board all at once. This feature is especially useful in conjunction with the Continuous Play feature.

To display all Voice Board content, click the **Options** button and then select **Expand All**.

To restore the Voice Board to its original, collapsed state, click the **Options** button, and select **Collapse All**.

Refresh

Each time you access a Voice Board, it loads the most up-to-date content. You can refresh the Voice Board applet at any time to review any updates made since it was launched (which can be helpful if you leave the Voice Board open for an extended period of time).

To reload a Voice Board, click the **Options** button and then select **Refresh**

The Playback Applet

The following indicators appear to the right of each message title:

- Messages with text (but with no audio recording) display a white paper icon ☐.

- Messages with audio (but with no text) display a black speaker icon ◄.

- Messages that contain both audio and text display both a speaker and a paper icon ◄☐.

Playing a Message

1. Click a message title in the top half of the Voice Board.

2. The playback applet for that message and any associated text will appear in the message pane at the bottom of the Board.

1. **Elapsed Time**

   Shows how many minutes and seconds of the current message are to the left of the tracker shuttle.

2. **Tracker Shuttle**

   The position of the black dot shows the relative proportion of the recording that remains to be played.

3. **Time Remaining**

   Shows how many minutes and seconds are to the right of the tracker shuttle.

4. **Playback Volume Adjuster**

   Click the playback volume button to open the volume slider. Move the arrow on the left of the slider up or down to adjust the volume.

5. **Play button**

   Click to begin playing the message at the time indicated by the tracker shuttle.

6. **Pause button**

   Click to pause playback. The tracker shuttle remains at the currently indicated time.

7. **Stop button**

   Click to stop playback. The tracker shuttle returns to the beginning of the message.

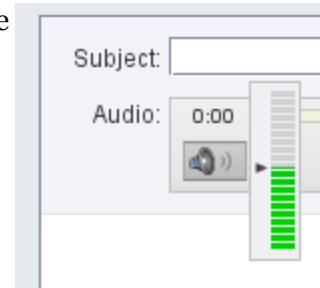8. **Recorded Volume Indicator**

   Shows the relative volume that the message was recorded at. If this indicator shows red bars, the volume might be excessive. High volume recordings may cause distortion or damage to your playback device.

9. **Options Menu**

   Click to open the options menu.

   To change your playback device, click the Options menu icon, in the upper right-hand corner of the applet, select **Audio Output**, followed by the device of your choice.

   To save a copy of this recording to your hard drive, refer to *Saving Message Audio* on next page.

> **Tip:** During playback (or when a message is paused), hold down your mouse button and drag the tracker shuttle to rewind or fast-forward to a particular point in the message.The Time Indicator on the left-hand side of the applet displays your current position; the indicator on the right shows remaining time.
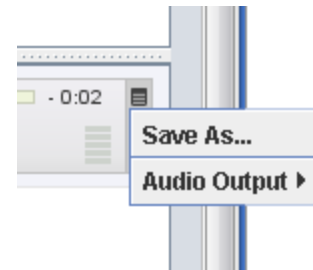
Saving Message Audio

Audio associated with any message can be downloaded to your hard drive.
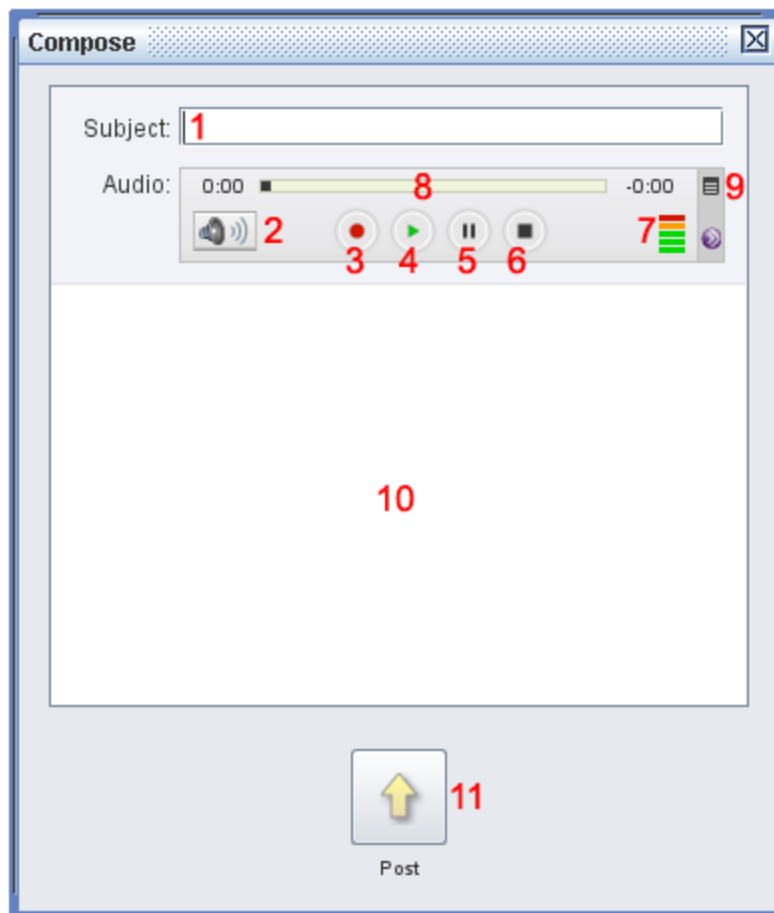
To Save Audio

1. Click the desired message from the top half of the Voice Board.

2. In the upper right-hand corner of the Audio applet, click the **Options** menu icon , followed by **Save as**. The save dialogue opens.

3. Navigate to the location you wish to save the file.

4. Use the **Files of Type** drop-down box to select the file format you wish to save. Messages can be saved as .wav, .spx, or .mp3. files.

5. Enter the desired name in the **File Name** box.

6. Click the **Save** button. The message audio is saved.
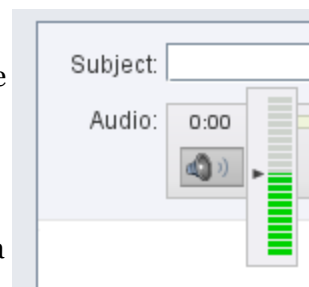
The Compose Message Window

1. **Subject**

   Enter a relevant title for your post in the Subject field. This field is required. It will appear as the title of your post in the Voice Board.

2. **Playback Volume**

   Click the playback volume button to open the volume slider. Move the arrow on the left of the slider up or down to adjust the volume.

3. **Record Button**

   Click this button to begin recording a message. If you are editing a previously recorded message, the new recording will completely replace the current recording. For more details on recording, refer to *Recording a Message* on next page.

4. **Playback Button**

Click this button to listen to a recording you have completed.

5. **Pause button**

Click this button to stop playback or recording without losing your current place in the message.

6. **Stop Button**

Click this button to stop recording or playback and return to the beginning of the message.

7. **Recording Volume Meter**

This meter displays the volume that the message was recorded at. Yellow or red indicates that the recording is very loud.

8. **Time Tracker Shuttle**

This shuttle displays the current progress of the message relative to its length. Click and drag the shuttle forward or backward to start playing at another time in the message.

9. **Options Menu**

Click the icon to open the options menu. Use this menu to change the output speakers or the input microphone for playback and recording. Also optionally disable audio filters. Generally, disabling filters is not recommended. For more information, refer to *Selecting a Microphone (Optional)* on the facing page.

10. **Text Field**

To enter text to accompany your recording, click and type in the large text field at the bottom of the Compose window. Typing a message is optional, but may provide helpful information (such as instructions or an assessment question for users), or text that complements your recording.

11. **Post Button**

When you are satisfied with your recording, and have entered a Subject (as well as any appropriate text), click the **Post** button at the bottom of the Compose window.

Recording a Message

Recorded messages are the core functionality of Voice Boards. To access the recording window, access a Voice Board and click on the New, Reply, or Edit button. For more information on these buttons, refer to *Creating, Editing, or Replying to a Message* on page 10.

Before recording your message, you may need to select a microphone to ensure the best quality recording.

Selecting a Microphone (Optional)

1. Click the **Option Menu** icon (small striped square), located in the upper right-hand corner of the Audio applet.

2. Select **Audio Input**, followed by the device of your choice

3. Select **Audio Filters.** By default, the two filters (Auto Gain to normalize voice and Noise Reduction to minimize background noise) are selected. You may enable/disable these as you see fit.

> **Note:** These settings are not preserved when you reload or change a Voice Board.

When you are ready, record your message.
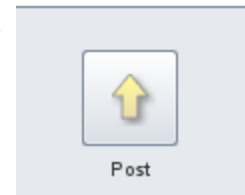
To Record a Message

1. Click the **Record** button ⬤ and speak into a microphone or headset connected to your computer to record your message.

2. Click **Pause** ⏸ to pause recording; click this button again to resume recording your message

3. Click **Stop** ⏹ when you have completed your message

4. Click **Play** ▶ to listen to your message. Click **Record** if you wish to re-record it.

> **Tip:** During playback or while a message is paused, click and hold the tracker shuttle and drag it to a new position to rewind or fast-forward to a particular point in the message.

When you have finished your recording and typed any desired text in the text field (refer to *Text Field* on previous page), click the Post button near the bottom of the window

Chapter 4

Voice Presentation

Voice Presentation allows you to present web content alongside voice messages. This provides a resource to create a vocal slide show, web tour, or review of any curricula across disciplines -- including web pages, images, and internet-based media.

The Voice Presentation Window

Note: This screenshot reflects the options available to PowerUsers and Administrators. Depending on your role, you may have access to fewer privileges.

1. **Create New Slide**

   Click to open the Compose Slide window and add a new slide to the presentation. *Creating and Editing Slides* below

2. **Edit Current Slide**

   Click to open the Compose Slide window and record a new audio message or edit the text or web site of the currently selected slide.*Creating and Editing Slides* below

3. **Comment on the Current Slide**

   Click to open the Comment window and record or type a reaction to the current slide. *Posting a Comment* on next page

4. **Delete**

   Click to permanently delete the currently selected slide. *Deleting a Slide* on page 28

5. **Options**

   Click to show the options menu. *Voice Presentation Options* on page 29

6. **Slide Navigator**

   Displays the order of slides and any comments on them. Click a slide or comment to display it.

7. **Playback Applet**

   Click Play to listen to any recorded content on the currently selected slide or comment. *Viewing a Slide* on next page

8. **Text**

   Displays any text associated with the current slide or comment.

9. **Visual Content**

   Displays any website or images associated with the current slide.

Creating and Editing Slides

New Slide

Edit Slide

Clicking the New Slide or Edit Slide buttons will open the Compose Slide button.

Creating a New Slide

To add a new slide, access the desired Presentation by following the instructions in *Accessing Voice Presentations*. Click the **New** button [icon], located in the upper left-hand corner of the Voice Presentation to create a new slide. The Compose Slide window opens. For more information on this window, refer to *The Compose Slide Window* on page 32.

Editing a Slide

To edit a slide, select the slide you wish to change and click the Edit Slide button [icon]. Proceed to *The Compose Slide Window* on page 32 for more information on how to use this window.

Posting a Comment

By default, both students and instructors have the ability to comment on slides -- however, this privilege may be disabled for students. To leave a comment, select the appropriate slide from the top half of the Voice Presentation, followed by the **Comment** button at the top of the applet. The process for posting a comment is similar to that of creating a slide, with three differences:

- Comments do not include a Subject or URL field.
- Text associated with the original slide appears at the bottom of the message.
- The title of a comment is always the name of the person who created it.

You can leave this text for reference, delete, or overwrite it. For complete details, refer to *The Compose Slide Window* on page 32.

Viewing a Slide

The following indicators appear to the right of each slide title:

- Slides with text (but with no audio recording) display a white paper icon [icon].
- Slides with audio (but with no text) display a black speaker icon [icon].
- Slides that contain both audio and text display both a speaker and a paper icon [icon].

To View a Slide, click a slide title in the slide navigator of the Voice Presentation. The slide text appears in the message pane at the bottom of the Presentation. Web content appears on the right-hand side of the window. The playback applet appears between the navigator and the text.

1. **Elapsed Time**

   Shows how many minutes and seconds of the current message are to the left of the tracker shuttle.

2. **Tracker Shuttle**

   The position of the black dot shows the relative proportion of the recording that remains to be played.

3. **Time Remaining**

   Shows how many minutes and seconds are to the right of the tracker shuttle.

4. **Playback Volume Adjuster**

   Click the playback volume button to open the volume slider. Move the arrow on the left of the slider up or down to adjust the volume.

5. **Play button**

   Click to begin playing the message at the time indicated by the tracker shuttle.

6. **Pause button**

   Click to pause playback. The tracker shuttle remains at the currently indicated time.

7. **Stop button**

   Click to stop playback. The tracker shuttle returns to the beginning of the message.

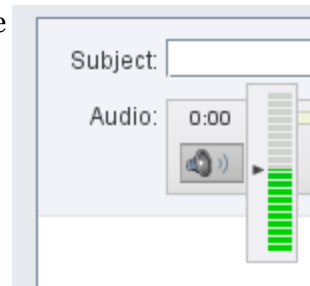8. **Recorded Volume Indicator**

   Shows the relative volume that the message was recorded at. If this indicator shows red bars, the volume might be excessive. High volume recordings may cause distortion or damage to your playback device.

9. **Options Menu**

   Click to open the options menu.

   To change your playback device, click the Options menu icon, in the upper right-hand corner of the applet, select **Audio Output**, followed by the device of your choice.

   To save a copy of this recording to your hard drive, refer to *Saving Message Audio* on next page.

Tip: During playback (or when a message is paused), hold down your mouse button and drag the tracker shuttle to rewind or fast-forward to a particular point in the message.The Time Indicator on the left-hand side of the applet displays your current position; the indicator on the right shows remaining time.
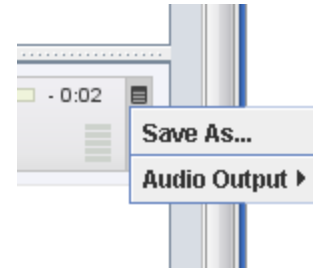

Saving Message Audio

Audio associated with any message can be downloaded to your hard drive.

To Save Audio

1. Click the desired message from the top half of the Voice Board.

2. In the upper right-hand corner of the Audio applet, click the **Options** menu icon , followed by **Save as**. The save dialogue opens.

3. Navigate to the location you wish to save the file.

4. Use the **Files of Type** drop-down box to select the file format you wish to save. Messages can be saved as .wav, .spx, or .mp3. files.

5. Enter the desired name in the **File Name** box.

6. Click the **Save** button. The message audio is saved.

Deleting a Slide

Slide "threads" (a slide plus its associated comments), as well as individual slides or comments, can be deleted from a Voice Presentation at any time. This feature is only available to individuals with at least instructor level privileges. To delete a slide, comment, or slide "thread:"

1. Select the appropriate item in the slide navigator.

2. Click the **Delete** button at the top of the applet. A confirmation dialogue will open, asking if you wish to delete this content.

3. Click the **Yes** button to proceed (deleting a slide "thread" will also remove all associated comments). Click **No** to cancel.

> **Note:** Once deleted, this content cannot be recovered.

Reordering Slides

Instructors can reorganize slides using simple drag-and-drop functionality. Drag the slide of your choice above or below another slide or thread. Drop the slide/thread in its new location.

To move a slide so it becomes a reply of another slide or thread, simply drag the slide to a slide or thread of your choice. A valid destination will be highlighted in yellow as your mouse moves over it.

Entire threads may also be relocated. Dragging and dropping a thread will move the top-level slide, along with all comments, to a desired new location using the methods described above. When reordering, all information within a slide or a comment (Title, Author, URL...) is preserved. However, the information displayed will depend on its place in the Voice Presentation:

- Slides display the Title and will launch the URL in the right-hand pane. The name of the Author is not displayed.

- Comments display the name of the Author. The Title and the URL are not displayed.

Voice Presentation Options

In addition to the standard Voice Presentation features, the Options button provides additional playback and display abilities to Users and PowerUsers. This button allows PowerUsers to import/export Presentation content.

Play on Click

The Play on Click feature makes it easier and more time-efficient to review posts. Rather than having to first select a message and then click the Play button, you can choose to have messages play automatically when clicked.

To enable this feature, click the **Options** button in the upper right-hand corner of a Voice Presentation and then select **Play on click**.

Continuous Play

Continuous Play allows students and instructors to review an entire Presentation's content (without the need to select each individual slide for playback). Slides play from top to bottom, starting with the first slide you select and ending with the last slide of the Presentation. Only visible (uncollapsed) messages with associated audio will play. By default, all Presentation threads are collapsed. If you enable Continuous Play before expanding these threads (manually, or via the Expand All feature), only top-level messages will play.

To Enable Continuous Play, click the **Options** button and select **Continuous Play.**

Expand or Collapse All

By default, Voice Presentation content is organized in single, and collapsed, threads. Expanding all threads simplifies review of an entire Presentation, especially when using the Continuous Play feature. To display all Presentation content, click the **Options** button and then select **Expand All**.

You may also restore the Presentation to its original state, which is useful if you only wish to review top-level threads via Continuous Play. To do so, click the **Options** button, followed by **Collapse All**.

Refresh

Each time a user accesses a Voice Presentation, it loads the most up-to-date content. PowerUsers and Users may refresh the Voice Presentation applet at any time to review any updates made to the Presentation since it was launched (helpful when leaving the Presentation open for a long duration, or to review posts due at a certain time).

To reload the Presentation, click the **Options** button and then select **Refresh**.

Importing Slides

In addition to recording new messages, instructors also have the ability to import content directly to a Voice Presentation. This includes pre-recorded audio files, a single or multiple Presentation message(s) / thread(s), or even an entire Voice Presentation.

Supported formats include:

- **MP3**: Mpeg 1, layer 3 at 32, 44 or 48kHz (mono or stereo)
- **PCM/WAV**: 8bit or 16bit at 8, 11, 16, 22, 32, and 44 kHz (mono or stereo)
- **Ogg Speex** (NOT Ogg Vorbis): at 8, 11, 16, 22, 32, and 44 kHz (mono or stereo)
- **GSM/WAV**: 8, 11, 16, 22, 32, and 44 kHz (mono or stereo)
- **WVB**: Previously exported Voice Archive file

To Import Content

1. Click the **Options** button.
2. Select **Import...** A new window opens.
3. Browse for the file on your hard drive.
4. Select the desired file.
5. Click the **OK** button at the bottom of the Import window. An Import Progress window appears as the file is uploaded and a confirmation message appears once the import has finished.

Exporting

Voice Presentation content does not need to remain exclusively online. Single and multiple slides, top-level threads, and entire Presentations can be exported to your computer for preservation or import to another Voice Presentation or Board. Exporting content allows instructors to utilize course material every semester within new Voice Presentations, as well as develop a repository of audio and text, which can be shared with other faculty members using Voice Presentation.

Voice Presentation content can be downloaded in the following formats:

- Voice Archive format (.wvb)
- Speex audio in archive (.zip)
- WAV audio in archive (.zip)
- MP3 audio in archive (.zip)

> **Note:** The wvb file format is only playable within a Voice Presentation or Voice Board. This format is recommended if you plan to import content to another Presentation or Board.

To Export Content

1. Click the **Options** button
2. Select **Export...**A new window opens.
3. Use the **Select what you want to export** drop-down menu at the top of the window to choose the desired content.
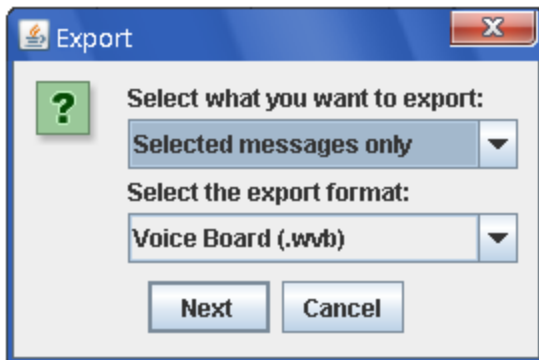
4. Use the **Select the export format** drop-down menu to determine your desired data output.
5. Click the **Next** button to select the download location of your choice.
6. Enter a name in the **File Name** box.
7. Click the **Save** button at the bottom of the window.

> **Tip:** To export multiple individual slides, select the first desired message and then hold down either the shift key to select consecutive message or the Control key (Command key on Mac) to select non-consecutive messages and click the additional desired threads.

The Compose Slide Window

The content of Presentations is created and played back as slides. Slides consist of a recorded message, text, and visual components, or any one or two of the three. Regardless of content, they are created through the Compose Slide window. For information on accessing this window, refer to *Creating and Editing Slides* on page 25.

1. **Subject**

   Enter a relevant title for your post in the Subject field. This field is required. It will appear as the title of your post in the Voice Board.

2. **URL**

   Enter the web address for your visual media following the http:// prompt. You may point to any content that is web-based (for example, a PDF or Flash file), not just web sites.

   > **Note:** The URL field only accepts addresses that begin with http:// or https://

3. **Playback Volume**

   Click the playback volume button to open the volume slider. Move the arrow on the left of the slider up or down to adjust the volume.

4. **Record Button**

   Click this button to begin recording a message. If you are editing a previously recorded message, the new recording will completely replace the current recording. For more details on recording, refer to *Recording a Slide* on next page.
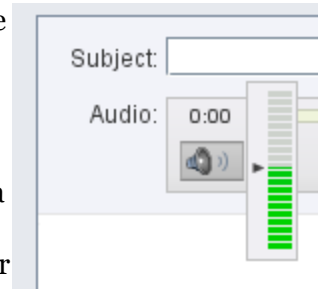
5. **Playback Button**

   Click this button to listen to a recording you have completed.

6. **Pause button**

   Click this button to stop playback or recording without losing your current place in the message.

7. **Stop Button**

   Click this button to stop recording or playback and return to the beginning of the message.

8. **Recording Volume Meter**

   This meter displays the volume that the message was recorded at. Yellow or red indicates that the recording is very loud.

9. **Time Tracker Shuttle**

   This shuttle displays the current progress of the message relative to its length. Click and drag the shuttle forward or backward to start playing at another time in the message.

10. **Options Menu**

    Click the icon to open the options menu. Use this menu to change the output speakers or the input microphone for playback and recording. Also optionally disable audio filters. Generally, disabling filters is not recommended. For more information, refer to *Selecting a Microphone (Optional)* on page 21.

11. **Text Field**

    To enter text to accompany your recording, click and type in the large text field at the bottom of the Compose window. Typing a message is optional, but may provide helpful information (such as instructions or an assessment question for users), or text that complements your recording.

12. **Post Button**

    When you are satisfied with your recording, and have entered a Subject (as well as any appropriate text), click the **Post** button at the bottom of the Compose window.

Recording a Slide

Recorded messages are the audio content of Voice Presentations. To access the Compose Slide window, access a Voice Board and click on the **New Slide**, or **Edit Slide** buttons. For more information on these buttons, refer to *Creating and Editing Slides* on page 25.

Before recording your message, you may need to select a microphone to ensure the best quality recording.

Selecting a Microphone (Optional)

1. Click the **Option Menu** icon (small striped square), located in the upper right-hand corner of the Audio applet.

2. Select **Audio Input**, followed by the device of your choice

3. Select **Audio Filters.** By default, the two filters (Auto Gain to normalize voice and Noise Reduction to minimize background noise) are selected. You may enable/disable these as you see fit.

> **Note:** These settings are not preserved when you reload or change a Voice Board.

> **Tip:** During review, you may wish to change your playback device to hear how your message sounds through different devices.

When you are ready, record your message.

To Record a Message

1. Click the **Record** button and speak into a microphone or headset connected to your computer to record your message.

2. Click **Pause** to pause recording; click this button again to resume recording your message

3. Click **Stop** when you have completed your message

4. Click **Play** to listen to your message. Click **Record** if you wish to re-record it.

> **Tip:** During playback or while a message is paused, click and hold the tracker shuttle and drag it to a new position to rewind or fast-forward to a particular point in the message.

When you have finished your recording, typed any desired text in the text field (refer to *Text Field* on page 33), and added any desired visual content (refer to *URL* on page 32), click the Post button near the bottom of the window

Chapter 5

Voice Podcaster

Blackboard Collaborate Voice Authoring Podcaster is a complete, start-to-finish podcasting application. It allows you and your students to author vocal recordings and distribute them over the Internet using syndication feeds. All .mp3 files are hosted on the Voice Authoring server, which also automatically creates the RSS feed. Users can play messages directly within Voice Podcaster, download audio from the feed, or subscribe using their preferred RSS reader.

The Voice Podcaster Window
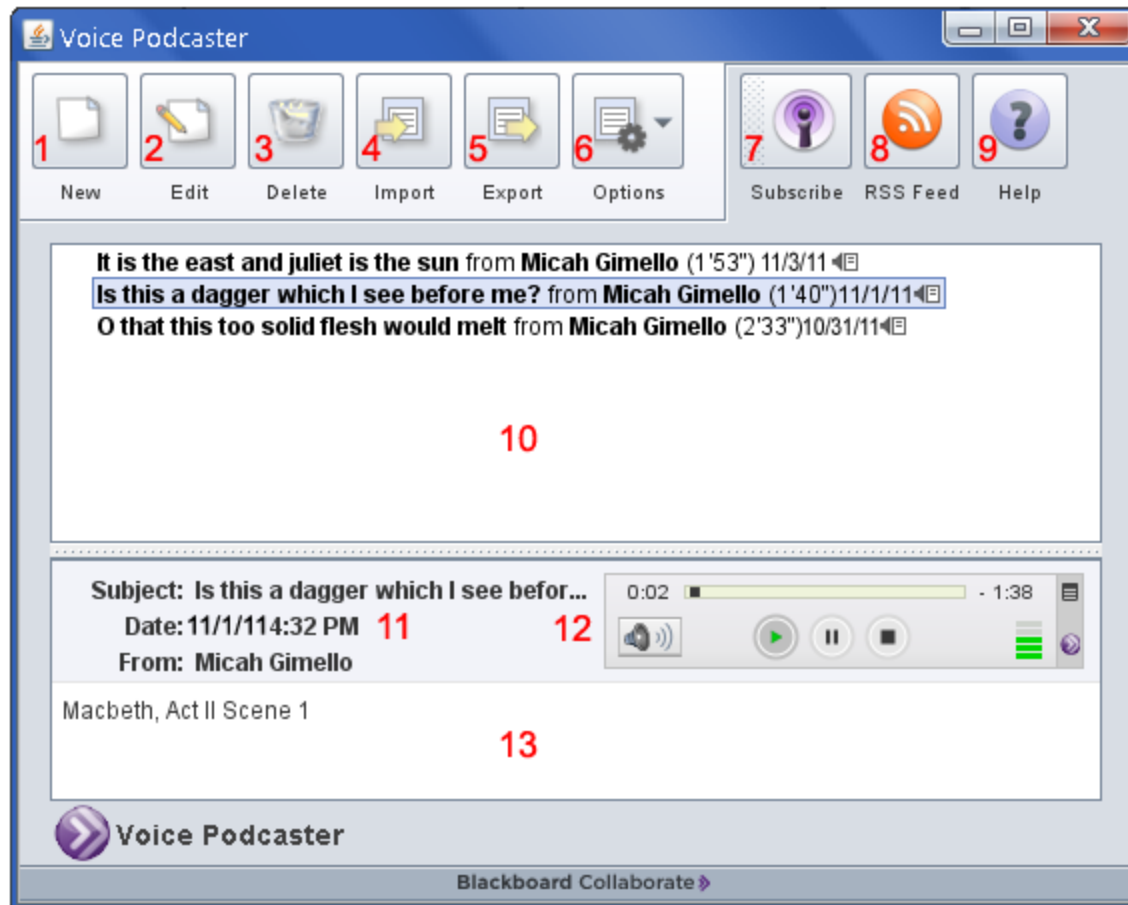
✓ **Note:** This screenshot reflects the options available to PowerUsers and Administrators. Depending on your role, you may have access to fewer privileges.

---

1. **New**

   Click to open the Compose window and post a new episode of this podcast. Refer to *Creating a New Podcast Episode* on next page.

2. **Edit**

   Select an episode of the podcast and click the **Edit** button to re-record it or change the text associated with it. Refer to *Editing an Episode* on page 41.

3. **Delete**

   Select an episode and click **Delete** to remove it permanently. *Deleting a Message* on page 41.

4. **Import**

   Click to upload a sound file from your computer as a new episode of the Podcast. *Importing Episodes* on page 42.

5. **Export**

   Click to open the Export dialogue. To export a single episode, select it and then click Export. Refer to *Exporting Episodes* on page 42.

6. **Options**

   Click to enable or disable Continuous Play or Play on Click. Refer to *Podcaster Playback Options* on the facing page.

7. **Subscribe**

   Click to subscribe to this podcast in your computer's default podcaster, or drag the button and drop it into your podcast player's library. Refer to *Subscribing to Podcasts* on page 43.

8. **RSS Feed**

   Click to open a new webpage with the Real Simple Syndication address of this podcast. Refer to *Subscribing to Podcasts* on page 43.

9. **Help**

   Click for short, simple instructions on how to subscribe to this podcast. Refer to *Subscribing to Podcasts* on page 43.

10. **Podcast Episode List**

    A complete list of the episodes in this podcast. Click the title to select one.

11. **Episode information**

    Vital information about the currently selected episode.

12. **The Playback applet**

    Click play to listen to an episode. Refer to *The Playback Applet* on page 44.

13. **Text**

    Notes associated with the currently selected podcast. Refer to *Text Field* on page 48.

Creating a New Podcast Episode

Click the **New** button [ ], located in the upper left-hand corner of the Voice Podcaster, to add a new episode to this podcast. By default, this option is available only to instructors, but may be enabled for students within the feature's settings. When you create a new message, the Compose window appears, which allows you to add a recording to the message. Refer to *The Compose Message Window* on page 47 for more information.

When a new message is posted, subscribers are notified of a new episode and it may be downloaded to their device immediately.

Editing an Episode

Select an episode and click the **Edit** button at the top of the Voice Podcaster to re-record that episode or change the text associated with it. A new window opens. Refer to *The Compose Message Window* on page 47 for more information.

Editing is only available to individuals with PowerUser level privileges, who may edit any message (including messages from other instructors and any student).

> **Note:** The new recording will be downloaded by new subscribers or by any current subscriber who re-downloads it, but current subscribers will not be notified of the changes. Current subscribers who have already downloaded the episode will still have access to the unedited version until they update their podcast.

Deleting a Message

Individual episodes can be deleted from the Voice Podcaster at any time. However, users who have already downloaded the episode will retain it on their device until they delete it. Users who subscribe to a Voice Podcaster after any of its content has been deleted will not be able to download deleted content.

Deletion is only available to individuals with PowerUser level privileges.

To delete a message, click the desired message in the top half of the Voice Podcaster, followed by the **Delete** button. A confirmation prompt will appear, asking if you wish to delete the message. Click the **Yes** button to delete the message. Click **No** to cancel.

Podcaster Playback Options

In addition to the standard Voice Podcaster features, the Options button provides additional playback abilities to students and instructors.

Play on Click

The Play on Click feature makes it easier and more time-efficient to review posts. Rather than having to first select a message and then click the Play button, you can choose to have messages play automatically when clicked. To enable this feature, click the **Options** button and then select **Play on click**

Continuous Play

Continuous Play allows students and instructors to review all Voice Podcaster messages at once (without the need to select each individual message for playback). When Continuous Play is enabled, messages play from top to bottom, starting with the first message you select and ending with the last message posted. To enable Continuous Play, click the **Options** button and select **Play on Click**.

Importing Episodes

In addition to recording new messages, instructors also have the ability to import audio in order to create a new episode. The pre-recorded audio files must be 10 MB or less in size, and use one of the following audio formats:

- **MP3**: Mpeg 1, layer 3 at 32, 44 or 48kHz (mono or stereo)
- **PCM/WAV**: 8bit or 16bit at 8, 11, 16, 22, 32, and 44 kHz (mono or stereo)
- **Ogg Speex** (NOT Ogg Vorbis): at 8, 11, 16, 22, 32, and 44 kHz (mono or stereo)
- **GSM/WAV**: 8, 11, 16, 22, 32, and 44 kHz (mono or stereo)

To Import Audio

1. Click the **Import** button at the top of the Voice Podcaster. A new window opens.

2. Browse for the file on your hard drive.

3. Select the desired file.

4. Click the **OK** button at the bottom of the Import window. An Import Progress window appears as the file is uploaded and a confirmation message appears once the import has finished.

Exporting Episodes

Episodes can be exported directly to a sound file on your hard drive. Voice Podcaster content can be downloaded in the following formats:

- Voice Archive (.wvb)
- Speex audio in archive (.zip)
- WAV audio in archive (.zip)
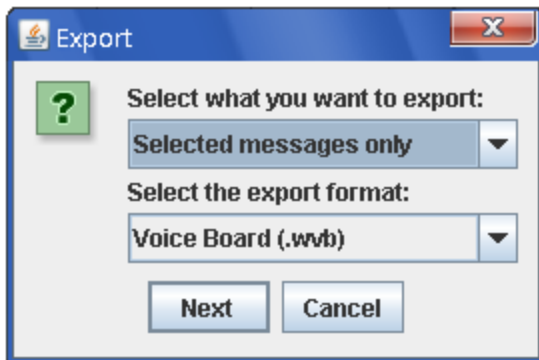- MP3 audio in archive (.zip)

Note: The Voice Archive (.wvb) file format is only playable within a Voice Board, Voice Presentation, or Voice Podcast. It is recommended that you use this format if you plan to import content to another Voice component.

To Export Content

1. Click the **Export** button at the top of a the window ⊞. The Export window opens.

2. In the first drop-down menu, select the option for the content that you wish to export. The Selected messages only option only appears if at least one message was selected when you clicked the Export button.

3. Select the desired format from the Select the export format drop-down menu.

4. Click the **Next** button to select the download location of your choice.

5. Enter a name in the File Name field.

6. Click the **Save** button.

Tip: To export multiple individual messages, select the first desired message and then hold down either the shift key to select consecutive message or the Control key (Command key on Mac) to select non-consecutive messages and click the additional desired threads.

Subscribing to Podcasts

There are three ways to subscribe to an instance of Voice Podcaster:

- Click the **Subscribe** button to subscribe to this podcast in your default podcast reader application.
- Drag the **Subscribe** button into any podcast reader application (such as iTunes or Juice).

- Click the **RSS Feed** button; a new window opens. Copy the URL that appears in the address bar and paste it into your preferred podcast reader application.

Once a user subscribes, his or her podcast reader application automatically downloads new messages created within a Voice Podcaster instance.

> **Note:** Subscriptions only apply to a single instance of Voice Podcaster. If your course utilizes more than one Voice Podcaster, students must subscribe to them each individually.

The Playback Applet

The following indicators appear to the right of each message title:

- Messages with text (but with no audio recording) display a white paper icon .
- Messages with audio (but with no text) display a black speaker icon .
- Messages that contain both audio and text display both a speaker and a paper icon .

Playing a Message

1. Click a message title in the top half of the Voice Board.
2. The playback applet for that message and any associated text will appear in the message pane at the bottom of the Board.

1. Elapsed Time

Shows how many minutes and seconds of the current message are to the left of the tracker shuttle.

2. Tracker Shuttle

The position of the black dot shows the relative proportion of the recording that remains to be played.

3. Time Remaining

Shows how many minutes and seconds are to the right of the tracker shuttle.

4. **Playback Volume Adjuster**

   Click the playback volume button to open the volume slider. Move the arrow on the left of the slider up or down to adjust the volume.

5. **Play button**

   Click to begin playing the message at the time indicated by the tracker shuttle.

6. **Pause button**

   Click to pause playback. The tracker shuttle remains at the currently indicated time.

7. **Stop button**

   Click to stop playback. The tracker shuttle returns to the beginning of the message.

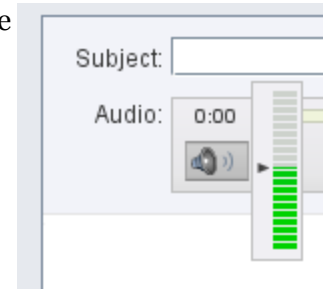8. **Recorded Volume Indicator**

   Shows the relative volume that the message was recorded at. If this indicator shows red bars, the volume might be excessive. High volume recordings may cause distortion or damage to your playback device.

9. **Options Menu**

   Click to open the options menu.

   To change your playback device, click the Options menu icon, in the upper right-hand corner of the applet, select **Audio Output**, followed by the device of your choice.

   To save a copy of this recording to your hard drive, refer to *Saving Message Audio* below.

> **Tip:** During playback (or when a message is paused), hold down your mouse button and drag the tracker shuttle to rewind or fast-forward to a particular point in the message.The Time Indicator on the left-hand side of the applet displays your current position; the indicator on the right shows remaining time.
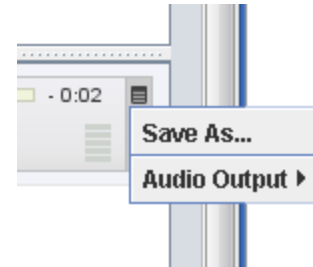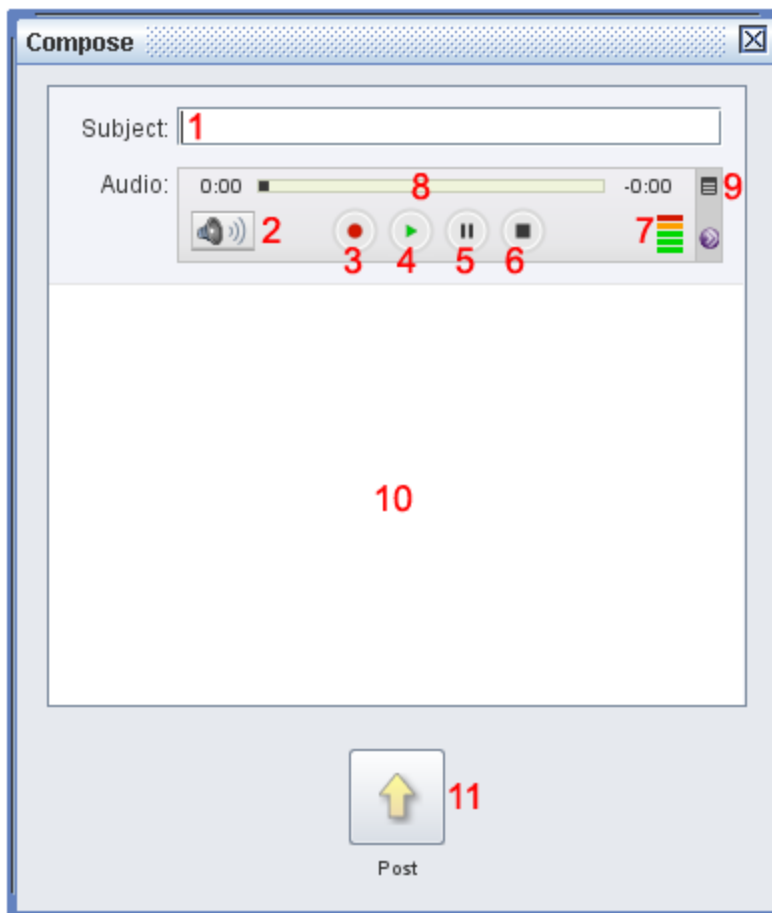
Saving Message Audio

Audio associated with any message can be downloaded to your hard drive.

To Save Audio

1. Click the desired message from the top half of the Voice Board.

2. In the upper right-hand corner of the Audio applet, click the **Options** menu icon , followed by **Save as**. The save dialogue opens.

3. Navigate to the location you wish to save the file.

4. Use the **Files of Type** drop-down box to select the file format you wish to save. Messages can be saved as .wav, .spx, or .mp3. files.

5. Enter the desired name in the **File Name** box.

6. Click the **Save** button. The message audio is saved.

The Compose Message Window

1. **Subject**
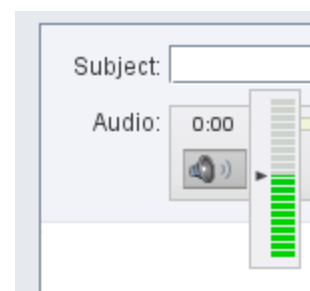
   Enter a relevant title for your post in the Subject field. This field is required. It will appear as the title of your post in the Voice Board.

2. **Playback Volume**

   Click the playback volume button to open the volume slider. Move the arrow on the left of the slider up or down to adjust the volume.

3. **Record Button**

   Click this button to begin recording a message. If you are editing a previously recorded message, the new recording will completely replace the current recording. For more details on recording, refer to *Recording an Episode* on next page.

4. **Playback Button**

   Click this button to listen to a recording you have completed.

5. **Pause button**

   Click this button to stop playback or recording without losing your current place in the message.

6. **Stop Button**

   Click this button to stop recording or playback and return to the beginning of the message.

7. **Recording Volume Meter**

   This meter displays the volume that the message was recorded at. Yellow or red indicates that the recording is very loud.

8. **Time Tracker Shuttle**

   This shuttle displays the current progress of the message relative to its length. Click and drag the shuttle forward or backward to start playing at another time in the message.

9. **Options Menu**

   Click the icon to open the options menu. Use this menu to change the output speakers or the input microphone for playback and recording. Also optionally disable audio filters. Generally, disabling filters is not recommended. For more information, refer to *Selecting a Microphone (Optional)* on the facing page.

10. **Text Field**

    To enter text to accompany your recording, click and type in the large text field at the bottom of the Compose window. Typing a message is optional, but may provide helpful information (such as instructions or an assessment question for users), or text that complements your recording.

11. **Post Button**

    When you are satisfied with your recording, and have entered a Subject (as well as any appropriate text), click the **Post** button at the bottom of the Compose window.

Recording an Episode

Recorded episodes are the core functionality of Voice Podcaster. To access the recording window, access a Voice Podcaster and click on the New or Edit buttons. For more information on these buttons, refer to *Creating a New Podcast Episode* on page 40or *Editing an Episode* on page 41.

Before recording your message, you may need to select a microphone to ensure the best quality recording.

Selecting a Microphone (Optional)

1. Click the **Option Menu** icon (small striped square), located in the upper right-hand corner of the Audio applet.

2. Select **Audio Input**, followed by the device of your choice

3. Select **Audio Filters.** By default, the two filters (Auto Gain to normalize voice and Noise Reduction to minimize background noise) are selected. You may enable/disable these as you see fit.

> **Note:** These settings are not preserved when you reload or change a Voice Board.

> **Tip:** During review, you may wish to change your playback device to hear how your message sounds through different devices.

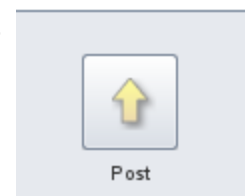When you are ready, record your message.

To Record a Message

1. Click the **Record** button ● and speak into a microphone or headset connected to your computer to record your message.

2. Click **Pause** ❙❙ to pause recording; click this button again to resume recording your message

3. Click **Stop** ■ when you have completed your message

4. Click **Play** ► to listen to your message. Click **Record** if you wish to re-record it.

> **Tip:** During playback or while a message is paused, click and hold the tracker shuttle and drag it to a new position to rewind or fast-forward to a particular point in the message.

When you have finished your recording and typed any desired text in the text field (refer to *Text Field* on previous page), click the Post button near the bottom of the window
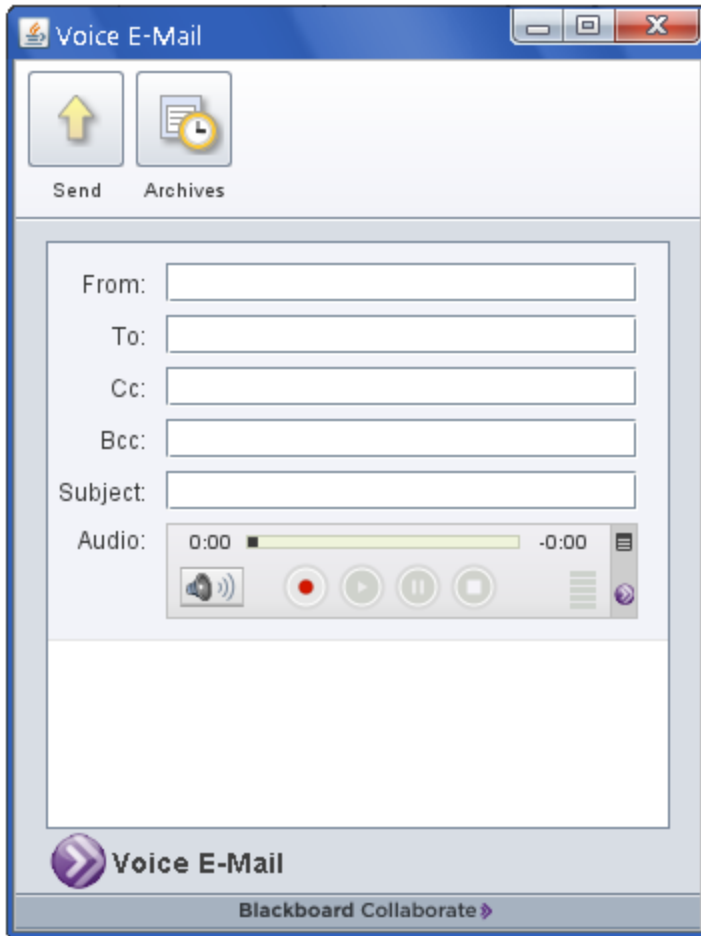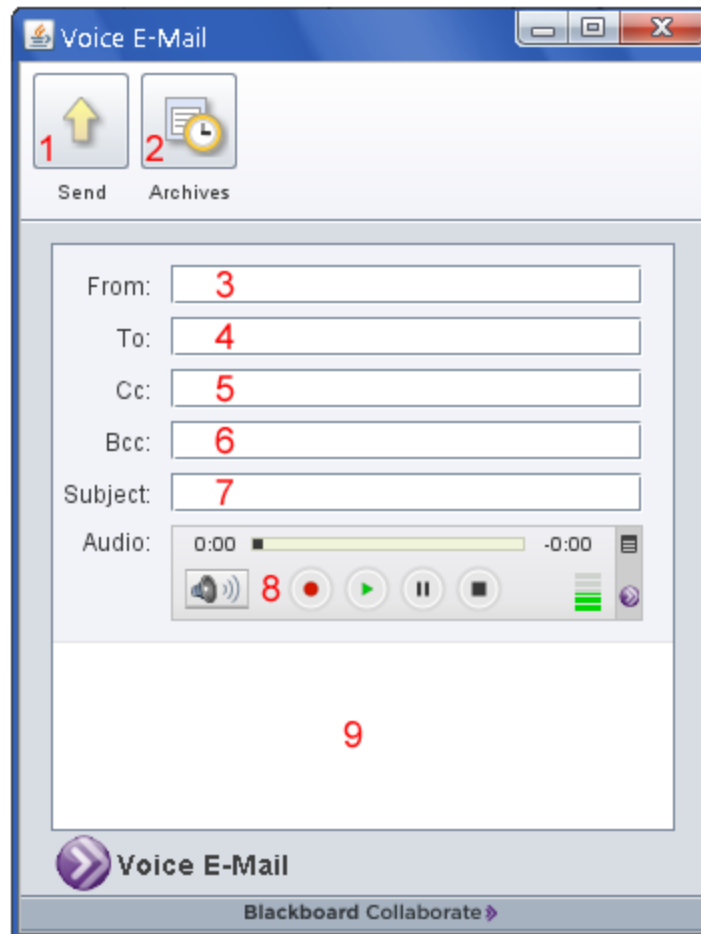
Chapter 6

Voice Email

You have likely composed thousands of email messages and they have all had one element in common – text. How often has tone been misconstrued because of this? Voice Email adds the emotion and candor, mood, expression and inflection of human voice to electronic, asynchronous correspondence.

The Voice Email Window

1. **Send**

   Click to send the email to all recipients when you have finished composing it.

2. **Archives**

   Click to open the archive associated with this form. Refer to *Archives*.

3. **From**

   Type in this field to edit the address that recipients will see as the sender of the email message. This is also the address that email replies will be sent to. If this field was hidden, it will not be visible. If it was disabled, it will not be editable. Refer to *Settings* for more details on hiding or disabling fields.

4. To

Type in this field to edit the addressees that this email message will be sent to. If this field was hidden, it will not be visible. If it was disabled, it will not be editable. Refer to *Settings* for more details on hiding or disabling fields.

5. CC

Type in this field to edit the addressees that this email message will be sent to. If this field was hidden, it will not be visible. If it was disabled, it will not be editable. Refer to *Settings* for more details on hiding or disabling fields.

6. BCC

Type in this field to edit the addressees that this email message will be sent to. If this field was hidden, it will not be visible. If it was disabled, it will not be editable. Refer to *Settings* for more details on hiding or disabling fields.

7. Subject

Type in this field to edit the subject of the email that will be sent. If this field was hidden, it will not be visible. If it was disabled, it will not be editable. Refer to *Settings* for more details on hiding or disabling fields.

8. The Recording Applet

Click the red circle button to record your message. Refer to *Recording a Voice Email* below.

9. Body

This text will comprise the body of the email. If this field was hidden, it will not be visible. If it was disabled, it will not be editable. Refer to *Settings* for more details on hiding or disabling fields.

Recording a Voice Email

The core function of Voice Emails is to allow you to send your own voice as a prerecorded message to anyone with an email address. Use the recording applet to create your message.

Before you record, you may need to adjust your microphone for the best quality recording.

Selecting a Microphone (Optional)

1. Click the **Option Menu** icon (small striped square), located in the upper right-hand corner of the Audio applet.

2. Select **Audio Input**, followed by the device of your choice

3. Select **Audio Filters.** By default, the two filters (Auto Gain to normalize voice and Noise Reduction to minimize background noise) are selected. You may enable/disable these as you see fit.

> **Note:** These settings are not preserved when you reload or change a Voice Board.

> **Tip:** During review, you may wish to change your playback device to hear how your message sounds through different devices.

When you are ready, record your message.

To Record a Message

1. Click the **Record** button ⏺ and speak into a microphone or headset connected to your computer to record your message.

2. Click **Pause** ⏸ to pause recording; click this button again to resume recording your message

3. Click **Stop** ⏹ when you have completed your message

4. Click **Play** ▶ to listen to your message. Click **Record** if you wish to re-record it.

> **Tip:** During playback or while a message is paused, click and hold the tracker shuttle and drag it to a new position to rewind or fast-forward to a particular point in the message.

When you are satisfied with your message as well as any body or subject text you wish to and are able to modify, click the **Send** button ⬆ in the upper left hand corner

> **Note:** Once a message has been sent, its recording cannot be modified.

Voice Email Receipt

An email will be sent to the specified addresses, containing all text associated with the Voice Email message.

If the message you sent contains audio, the email will also contain:

- A link to access a web page containing the playback applet, the title of the Voice Email, and a link to save the audio file.

- A text address for the page mentioned above
- Reply links, if enabled within the feature's settings

The message will not contain any attachments, only text (and links); all recorded messages reside on the Voice server and are never sent via email.

Viewing Archives

Voice Email archives are captured as posts within a "read-only" Voice Board, accessible only to instructors. Archives are specific to each Voice Email form.

To Access Archives

1. Launch the Voice Email applet of your choice.
2. Click the **Archives** button in its upper left-hand corner. A new window opens and a Voice Board applet loads.

Archives are grouped based on date. Click the arrow to the left of the date stamps to reach the individual messages (accessible by year, then month, and finally day). The controls of this Board are the same as any standard Voice Board, and contain a sub-set of its features most essential for reviewing archives. For more information on Voice Boards and their functions, refer to *The Voice Board Window* on page 7.

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