Changing versions for Blackboard Collaborate  (August 2015)

August 2015: UAS has adopted a (new and improved!) version of Collaborate (Webmeeting) but because of the short time frame before the start of Fall semester you will have the option of using either the old version or the new this semester. For Spring semester the old version will no longer be available. As of now portfolio webmeetings will use the old version only. The only known issue with using the new version is that all users must do a one time installation of a “Launcher” program in order to attend meetings.

The major difference between the two:

Old Version:
You access the old version through the existing “Webmeeting” and “Webmeeting Archives” buttons that were created when Fall semester course sites were created. When you click on “Webmeeting you see an image like that to the right.

The major drawback to the old system is it has a number of Java Security issues, can’t load PowerPoints on certain versions of Mac OS and with more recent Java updates the chat text becomes smaller and smaller. It might be expected to continue to have Java problems as students update their Java during the semester.

Fixes to some of these issues are found here: http://uas.alaska.edu/helpdesk/coursework/webmeeting/

New Version:

With all the issue with the old version the new version is recommended except for one problem – students (and instructors) will need to do a one time installation of a program – students who are trying to attend your class on a computer for which they don’t have administrative access will not be able to attend your live sessions. They will need a local IT person to do the one time installation of the “Launcher” program.

Advantages of the new version:

The use of the “Launcher” program removes any dependence on Java versions, Mac users can load powerpoints again, there will be no issues as Java is updated during the semester, Recordings can be saved as mp4 movies (and edited), you can create more than one room including shared rooms between different classes, and more!

It is recommended you find out from your students whether any will have issues installing the Launcher for the new version. (They are prompted to install it when they click the “Join Room” button shown above.)

The actual appearance of the Blackboard Collaborate meeting room is virtually identical for the two versions so there should be no learning curve associated with using the new version.

To see the new version you can go to the Blackboard Collaborate test room found on this page https://blackboard.secure.force.com/publickarticleview?id=kA770000000CblWW

For updates and instructions on how to switch from the old to the new version go to:
http://www.uas.alaska.edu/idc/webmeeting

Direct your students to http://uas.alaska.edu/helpdesk/coursework/webmeeting/