

Oncourse: Using the Chat Room Tool

The Chat Room tool allows users to communicate in real time.

What is a Chat Room?

Chat rooms allow synchronous or real time communication for two or more users. In order for real time communication to occur, users must be logged on at the same time. Beware that connecting to Oncourse using a slow modem may cause serious delays in the appearance of chat messages.

Using the Chat Room as Instructors

The Chat Room tool allows for multiple rooms, giving an instructor or site owner power to create areas for specific kinds of chats - although only one of these rooms can be active at a given time. As long as there are messages stored in a named chat room, they will be saved so you can switch back to them in the future. These additional chat rooms can be created using the Options feature.

The power of the Chat Room tool is to allow users to communicate in real time, but because all messages posted to the Chat tool in Oncourse are archived and visible to students, it can also potentially function as a kind of discussion forum. Unlike discussion postings, there is no text editor for chat messages, and you cannot attach files to messages. It is generally used for less formal conversations than those posted in the Forums tool.

One potential use for the Chat Room tool is for instructors to maintain an Online Office Hours Chat Room for students' questions and answers. In addition, dispersed members can use the room as a space to have conversations across distances or to catch up with conversations they may have missed.

Using the Chat Room as Participants

All participants in a chat use The Chat Room tool in the same way, whether as course instructors/project owners or course students/project members.

1. To open the Chat Room tool, in the Menubar of the site, **click Chat Room.**
You will see the Chat Room tool interface. A blinking cursor in a blank text field near the bottom of the screen allows you to post messages that are displayed in the upper portion of the screen. A list of all users with the Chat Room tool open appears in a list along the right side of the window.
2. To add a message, in the Message field, **type: Hello!**
3. To post the message, click the Add message button, or press Enter.
After a few seconds, your posting appears in the list of messages on the screen.
4. To add another message, in the **Message field, type your message.**
5. To post the message, **click the Add message button.**

Deleting Chat Messages

As the site owner, you see a trash can icon next to messages. The default Chat Room permissions allow you to delete any message.

1. You can delete a message do so by **clicking the trash can icon.**
Also, you may clear all messages from a chat room.
2. **Click on Options** and then on **Clear History** under the appropriate chat room name.