

Introduction to Drake's Portal

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A portal is a secure, customizable environment which provides information, communication and online services.

Users login and are presented with screens containing information relevant to their particular role. For example, a student will see information relevant to their being:

- a member of the Drake community (such as campus events),
- a student in a particular school or college (such as the school/college's calendar), and
- an individual (such as their courses, grades and financial aid information).

The Drake portal (BlueView) is different from the **Drake website** in an important way. The website is available to the public, and presents the same pages to everyone. The portal, by contrast, is restricted by a login, and during the process of login the portal system identifies what information should be presented to that particular user, depending on their role(s) and on the customization they have done.

One of the advantages of the Drake Content Management System (CMS) is that content entered into the Drake CMS can be sent to the public website or the BlueView portal or both. Once both systems are fully implemented at Drake, it is expected that the primary role of the website will be for external audiences (particularly prospective students) while the primary role of the portal is to facilitate easy access for members of the Drake community to a variety of targeted university information services and resources.

User Access

BlueView accounts are created automatically for users in the Drake Community, both on- and off-campus, who are then able to access the portal at <http://blueview.drake.edu>.

BlueView is a web-based environment, and provides a single login to many other (web-based) Drake systems. In general, non-web-based systems cannot be incorporated in BlueView, and require their own user id and password.

Portal Roles and Tabs

Users are assigned to different roles within BlueView, based on the information about them stored in DUSIS. The initial roles are Faculty, Student, Employee and Alumni. Users will see Tabs (Pages) with channels relevant to them personally. Some people may have a combination of these roles and so see several tabs. For example, a Faculty member is also an employee and so will see the Faculty and Employee tabs, and may see the Alumni tab if they are Drake graduates.

All users will see a Guide (help) tab, a Campus Life tab and a Library tab, and all except Alumni will see the Home tab. Alumni will go directly to the Alumni tab. In addition, all users will see icons which give them direct access to MyDUSIS, Webmail, Calendars and Groups, among others.

Each of the tabs will have a formal Tab Owner, who has final control over the channels that appear under that tab. In practice, it is expected that Tab Owner will delegate the task of monitoring the tab. Most tabs will have channels from a variety of organizational sources.

Channels

A portal channel is a customizable method for publishing information to a tab, and appears in a rectangular box on the tab. Examples of channels might be student grades, a calendar, Registration tools and Sodexo Dining Services. Initially, the user sees channels which the Tab Owners believe should be required ("locked") for all users with that role. There are other channels available to a particular role which can be selected by the user from the approved channel list available on the Guide tab. New channels can be authorized by the Portal Leadership Committee.

Specific individuals are designated as Channel Owners, who are responsible for the overall quality of content in the channel. They would also authorize other individuals to act as Content Creators for that channel. (In practice, it is expected that Channel Owners would delegate the actual performance of these tasks to someone in their units.) The list of channels is shown on the Guide tab.

There will be a locked "Announcements" channel into which people authorized by Marketing and Communications can send announcements. Announcements will go to users with specific attributes or who are members of a particular Group. Users cannot opt out of receiving these announcements, but can delete messages they do not want without needing to open them. They may also be able to remove themselves from groups whose announcements they do not want to receive.

E-Mail

The email client used within the portal will be our current web mail. This runs within a channel, and so users can see the headings of new messages. This client must be used for sending messages when using the Groups function.

Users who use other mail clients (e.g. Eudora) may do so, but they will need to access these clients outside BlueView because they are not Web-based. All email clients are using the same Drake email server, and so messages can be sent from any client and received by any client. Users should **not** have Inboxes open in more than one client at a time. Doing so runs the risk that the server will become confused, and lock up the open inboxes.

Many distribution lists will be imported into BlueView. Messages can still be sent to targeted individuals in their "Announcements Channel". Some of the lists will become Groups, some optional and some required. Users can opt out of optional lists from which they do not want to receive announcements. Some distribution lists (e.g. school/college lists used by the Dean's Offices to communicate with their own students) will remain obligatory. All lists are updated daily.

Calendaring

BlueView allows users to establish calendars for a variety of purposes: University calendar, Fine Arts calendar, Soccer calendar, etc. Each user can subscribe to the calendars they want, creating their own "calendar set". There may also be calendars they are required to have in their set (e.g. a dean may want all of a school's students to see the school calendar). In addition to seeing these calendars, a user can enter items on a personal calendar as a reminder of their own activities.

Information from all the calendars in a user's set can be merged and presented to the user as a single calendar. The portal has an icon on every page to connect the user to their personal set of calendars.

BlueView has the capability of synchronizing calendars with some mobile devices. The specifics of this are under investigation.

Group Management

BlueView permits the formation of Groups. Each group has its own homepage, e-mail list, calendar, announcements channel, message board, chat room, access links, shared files, posted articles, and photographs. Groups can be either public or restricted. Groups and group categories are listed in the Groups index on the Guide tab, unless the group leader (see below) has a reason for keeping its existence unknown to non-members.

A BlueView user can request the creation of a group with a particular purpose or membership. Group Managers in each unit have the responsibility to grant or deny such requests. If a request is granted, the requester becomes the Group Leader, accepting specified responsibilities for running the group.

Course Management

BlueView contains a number of course management tools: syllabus creation and the group functions (see above). These tools are available to the faculty who wish to use them.