Blackboard Crocodoc Inline Grading Is Being Discontinued

Blackboard’s current inline grading and commenting is being discontinued. A system upgrade is under review to support a new version of this feature. Until that upgrade is implemented, we recommend that Turnitin assignments be used in Blackboard course sites instead of Blackboard Assignments. Using Turnitin assignments will allow instructors to leave comments, feedback, and grading information on student paper submissions as well as providing access to Turnitin Originality reports.

Please see the following Turnitin support page for detailed information on how to create and use Turnitin assignments in your Blackboard course sites:

Turnitin assignments in Blackboard
Turnitin GradeMark interactive tutorial

Bb Support: Frequently Asked Questions

What is the change, and why is Blackboard making it?

Box Inc. - the provider Blackboard uses to support the Inline Grading capability - made a decision to discontinue availability of the Crocodoc API, which is the service Blackboard Learn uses for the current implementation of Inline Grading feature. As a result, we have decided to update this capability to leverage the New Box View API, which will allow the feature to continue to work in supported Blackboard Learn releases after January 15th, 2018, which is the end of life date for the Crocodoc API.

What will happen to the Inline Grading user interface for a specific Learn instance that is not upgraded to a version that uses the New Box View service as of January 15th, 2018?

On January 15th, 2018, the Crocodoc service will no longer accept new documents nor allow users to access previously submitted documents. The Crocodoc experience will likely present users with a “service no longer available” screen in place of the document being requested. Blackboard is actively working with Box on an appropriate experience for users requesting documents from Crocodoc after January 15th, 2018, and Blackboard will provide an update when more details are available.

Will there be an outage or downtime when transitioning between the Crocodoc API and the New Box View API?

Due to the transitional nature of moving from one service to another, it is possible that Blackboard Learn will require an outage period or moratorium relating to Crocodoc usage to prevent data loss during the transition. As we finalize the implementation approach, we will provide more information on this topic.

What happens to client data previously submitted to Crocodoc if a Learn instance is not upgraded to a version that uses the New Box View API before the Crocodoc EOL?

On January 15th, 2018, the Crocodoc service will no longer accept new documents nor allow users to access previously submitted documents. However, the client data associated with that instance will still exist in either the Crocodoc or New Box View database. Blackboard is working with Box on an appropriate strategy for retaining and accessing Crocodoc client data after the Crocodoc EOL date, and Blackboard will provide an update when more details are available.

What will happen if, after we upgrade to a supported version that includes the New Box View API, an instructor goes into an old course and opens a student assignment submitted to Crocodoc?

Client data that exists in Crocodoc will be accessible in the New Box View service after upgrade. The exact implementation and user experience details are still being determined. Blackboard will provide an update when more details are available.
Will the new Inline Grading feature be able to toggle between the New Box View API and Crocodoc API (so we can install it and not immediately enable the New Box View API while working on change management) or will the shift to the New Box View API be "all-at-once?"

No, transitioning to the use of the New Box View API for the Blackboard Learn Inline Grading feature will be "all at once." This will occur when a client upgrades to one of the supported versions of Learn for which the Inline Grading capability is updated to work with the New Box View API. Any changes in the way the Inline Grading capability works due to changes to the New Box View API will be fully documented by Blackboard and included in our release notes.

How long will existing submissions and annotations remain available?

Blackboard is working with Box on an appropriate strategy for retaining Crocodoc client data after the Crocodoc EOL date, and Blackboard will provide an update when more details are available. It is important to note that all original student submissions are stored in Learn in addition to being sent to Crocodoc for conversion and display within the Inline Grading interface. Learn course archives contain original student submissions only, a known limitation.

When a Blackboard course is archived, will the inline feedback via the New Box View API be archived?

The current plan for the integration with the New Box View API includes the ability to archive annotations and feedback provided within the document when a course is archived. This would be an improvement over the current functionality of Crocodoc, which does not include annotations on documents when courses are archived. The technical feasibility and implementation details of this specific use case are still being investigated, and Blackboard will provide an update when more information is available.

Is there going to be a different look/workflow for instructors and students using Inline Grading with the New Box View API?

We are finalizing the design and implementation of the Inline Grading feature using the New Box View API. The feature will work in largely the same way it does today, and the design/workflow will be largely unchanged. However, because the New Box View APIs are not exactly the same as the Crocodoc APIs, there will be some changes to the Inline Grading feature, and we will document those fully once the implementation is complete. Some expected benefits of the New Box View service are annotation capabilities for students, localization for the UI, and a significantly expanded number of supported document types.

When will we be able to see how the Inline Grading feature using the New Box View service will look and work within our systems?

You will be able to see the Inline Grading feature using the New Box View API when we provide the update to one of our supported releases, and you choose to install it on a test or staging environment.

Will the New Box View integration allow Instructors to modify other markers' annotations?

While this may be possible with the New Box View API, the first implementation of the New Box View API in place of Crocodoc will not support this scenario. Blackboard may consider adding this ability in the future.