Using VoiceThread - for Faculty

Should your students need additional support, please refer them to the “VoiceThread for Students” document.

Contents
What is VoiceThread? ........................................................................................................................................... 1
Link VoiceThread to a Blackboard Course .............................................................................................................. 2
Listen to a VT Presentation ........................................................................................................................................ 4
Comment on a VT ..................................................................................................................................................... 4
VT Home .................................................................................................................................................................. 5
Creating and Sharing a New VoiceThread .................................................................................................................. 5
Assignments ............................................................................................................................................................. 6
Accessibility ............................................................................................................................................................. 7
Online Help ............................................................................................................................................................ 7
Need more assistance? .............................................................................................................................................. 7

What is VoiceThread?
VoiceThread is a collaborative online tool that allows people to post media such as images, documents, and video and comment on them by webcam, microphone, telephone, text, and uploaded audio (MP3/WAV). This allows for a group discussion, analysis, or presentation around the shared media.

VoiceThread can be used to:

- Collaboratively produce group presentations
- Share videos, images, and documents and solicit feedback, questions, and/or analysis
- Gather perspectives on an idea or concept
- Build a sense of community and social presence in an online class

The square icons to the left of the poster indicate classmate and instructor feedback and questions.

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• Simulate cases, debates, and other situations
• Practice skills or work through a case
• Introduce class participants

Browse the [VoiceThread Library](#) to see example projects.

If you decide to use VoiceThread for a course activity or assignment, we suggest using it for a smaller ungraded activity earlier in the semester to help everyone become familiar with it. For example, before a class debate, you could use Voice Thread to provide lectures, or the class could use it to introduce themselves.

**Link VoiceThread to a Blackboard Course**

VoiceThread (VT) is fully supported in Chrome and Firefox browsers. Keep your browsers up to date.

GW has a campus license to VoiceThread, allowing faculty and students to share VoiceThreads with a class without requiring a separate account. Following the link from Blackboard will take you directly into VoiceThread. We suggest adding VoiceThread to your course as a main menu item so students can access the link from anywhere in the course.

• Go to the + sign to add a main menu item and select “Content Area.”
• Name it “VoiceThread” (or whatever label you want), and choose whether to make it available or unavailable to students. Click “Submit.”
• Select your new “VoiceThread” item from the main menu. The page will be blank.
• To add a link to VT, select “Tools>VoiceThread.”
• You can also add a VT link anywhere in your course this way, such as in your Weekly Sessions, under Assignments, etc.
Since this will be the link your students use to enter VoiceThread, the name should be “VoiceThread.” Add instructions for your students in the description. Explain what VoiceThread is and how you will be using it in the course. Below is some generic text that you are welcome to adapt.

**What is VoiceThread?**

VoiceThread (VT) is an online tool that allows us to converse using video, audio or text in response to images, documents, and videos. This allows for a group discussion, analysis, or presentation around the shared media. For video tutorials and troubleshooting, visit

*Using VoiceThread for Students*

*VoiceThread Troubleshooting*

Now you should have a link to VoiceThread in your course that looks like this. After clicking the VT link, wait a few seconds for the tool to load. Do not click ‘Launch’ as it will give you an error message.

Every time you create a VT link, you will need to choose the view you would like students to see when they click on the VT link.

We recommend you choose Course View, which displays all of the VT presentations shared with your course.
From the menu icon (three horizontal lines) in the upper left, you can sort the existing presentations in different ways.

Listen to a VT Presentation

Click to open a presentation. The comments, represented by avatars, play in the order in which they were created. Click on an avatar to jump to that user’s comment.

Use the arrows at the bottom right to navigate forward or back through the presentation.

Comment on a VT

To make a comment, hover over the grey half circle at the bottom center of the presentation window and click on the + sign.

The commenting options will appear and allow you to comment: by text, telephone, microphone, webcam, or uploading a file (see previous picture). If commenting by microphone or webcam your browser will prompt you to grant VT permission to access your camera and/or microphone. VT is most effective and engaging when comments are made by webcam or microphone. We strongly suggest that you require students to comment by video or voice and model this by doing it yourself. To delete a comment, hover over it and click the trash button.
VT Home

The VT Home page is the main administrative view for your VT account. It can be reached in Course View by clicking on the three-line Menu icon in the upper left corner and selecting “Go to VT Home.” Then, use the Menu icon again and select “Owned by me” to see all of the VTs you have created.

Creating and Sharing a New VoiceThread

At the top of the page when in VT Home, you will find the “create” button (see figure). Once you click on it, you will be asked from where you would like to add the media. You can upload photos, graphics, non-narrated slides, pdfs, videos, and more.

While your media is loading, VT will prompt you to add a title. The tab to the right of the Title/Description is Playback Options (see figure to right). Listed are the default settings, which you may change. However, do not check “Enable Comment Moderation.” Then click “Save.”
To add “comments” (or narration) to each slide, image, or other media, select “#2 Comment” and add your comments as described above.

When you are done commenting, close the window by clicking on the X in the upper right corner. Then, click the “#3 Share” to share it with your class. Choose your course name from the drop down list. Allowing your class to View and Comment should be selected (green) by default.

You can also share from the “VT Home” page by hovering over your VT and clicking share on the bottom of VT.

Please be aware that if re-using a VT for your course in a future semester, it must be explicitly shared with the course each semester. A link and instructions for VT will be copied with a course, but VTs themselves must be re-shared each semester.

Assignments
VoiceThread assignments can facilitate grading, but they do have some limitations.

- Navigate to where you would like to place your assignment.
- Create a new link to VT as explained above except this time, under Grading, check Enable Evaluation.
- Click on the assignment link that was just created
- Choose Assignment Builder

Choose the type of assignment, Create a Voicethread, Submit a Comment or Watch a Voicethread. For the Comment on a Voicethread Assignment, you can either create a VT or select an existing VT on which the students will comment.
To grade submitted VTs or comments, click on the assignment link and you will see a list of who has submitted and not submitted.

Limitations:

- There is only one grading option, 100 points.
- Only the grade is recorded in Bb Grade Center, not the comments.

Accessibility

VoiceThread Universal is a version of VoiceThread that is made for screen readers. From the standard site:

- Go to your VT Home page.
- Click on your email address in the top-right corner of the page.
- Select “Display Preferences” from the menu.
- Under the Accessibility section, select “VoiceThread Universal” from the menu.

Online Help

- How to instructions and videos
- General Troubleshooting

Need more assistance?

Should your students need additional support, please refer them to the “VoiceThread for Students” document.

Laurie Lyons  
lbl@gwu.edu  
202-994-8376

Linda Cotton  
cottonl@gwu.edu  
202-994-9172

Alison McGuire  
alisonmcguire@gwu.edu  
202-994-8127

Karen Foote  
foote@gwu.edu  
202-994-0338