

# Using Moodle to Create Online Book Clubs

<http://moodle.org>

*Moodle is a software package for producing internet-based courses and websites, guided by a social constructionist framework of education. Moodle tools emphasize group work, collaboration, communication, sharing, activities, and critical reflection. [U of MN]*

Hennepin County Library uses Moodle software to create book clubs for adults, teens and school-age children. Our most success has been with school-age children.



## **Technical Needs:**

- Software must be loaded on local server to work
- Hardware requires Windows 98, ME, NT, 4.0, 2000, or XP for PCs and Mac OS X for Macs, and a 56k V.90 modem or better Internet connection
- Though Firefox browser is recommended by Moodle, HCL has not experienced errors using Internet Explorer 7. Note that HCL does not use all the functionality of Moodle in online book clubs.
- You might need additional hardware/software or browser plug-ins if you use streaming media, interactive media, or other content in your book club

## **Structure of Club:**

- Take registrations for the club that include the e-mail addresses necessary to create user profiles for logging in
- Create basic user profiles for members ahead of time “behind the scenes,” especially useful if you host a children’s book club
- Send out e-mail to participants with log-in, profile set-up (they can add photos, change passwords, etc.), and some basic navigation information prior to the book club
- Include synchronous (real time) activities such as a live chat and asynchronous (drop in) activities such as discussion forums and quick polls
- Five day long clubs with different questions and activities for each day work well; under Administration > Settings > Format > select Topics Format
- See if you can include the author of the book in a live chat; if that is not possible, collect comments/questions to e-mail to the author and share the answers online

## **Tips:**

- Use lots of images to create visual interest
- Unlock a new day’s activities each day so members will find something new to do every day
- Choices – use for creating Quick Polls
- Forums – use for discussing questions
- Live Chat – use as a synchronous activity that allows members to interact in real time
- Link to related websites that include information, games, or other “cool” stuff

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- Provide ways for members to build relationships
- Include information about your own library and related activities in the News section
- Send two e-mail reminders two weeks, and one week before club starts
- Send daily e-mail reminders with log-in information during the book club week

## **Resources:**

- Moodle Software Support, <http://moodle.org/support/>
- University of Minnesota Moodle User Guides, <http://www1.umn.edu/moodle/instructor/guides/>