Blackboard Learn SaaS Evaluation - Background and Benefits

Background

Missouri State University's Learning Management System (LMS), Blackboard Learn, has three available deployment options:

- Self-hosted
  - Customer provides and manages the hosting hardware/software and is responsible for application updates and upgrades.
- Managed Hosting
  - Blackboard provides and manages the hosting hardware/software and is responsible for application updates and upgrades.
- SaaS
  - The Application is cloud-hosted and managed by Blackboard

NOTE: All deployment options require that the customer have staff available to administer the application.

Missouri State University's current Blackboard Learn deployment is self-hosted.

The Managed Hosting option was previously investigated, and found not to be a good solution for the University.

Identified Benefits of the Blackboard Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) deployment option

- Increased stability. All customers are using the same version of the software in the same hosting environment, and this standardization results increases system stability and allows for quicker bug fixes when needed.

- Increased Performance. System performance is able to scale to meet demands during times of peak usage, such as the beginning of the semester, midterm, and finals week.

- Increased Uptime and Availability. Upgrades, patches, and security updates can be deployed with minimal downtime and disruption.

- Increased Innovation. Enhancements and new features are delivered more frequently, with an improved change management process.

- Improved use of Staff Time. The Application is cloud-hosted and managed by Blackboard, allowing MSU staff to focus more time on faculty initiatives and high-impact teaching and learning activities, rather than on maintaining hosted hardware/software.