

Open Textbooks

Using Open Textbooks in Blackboard
and printing options on campus



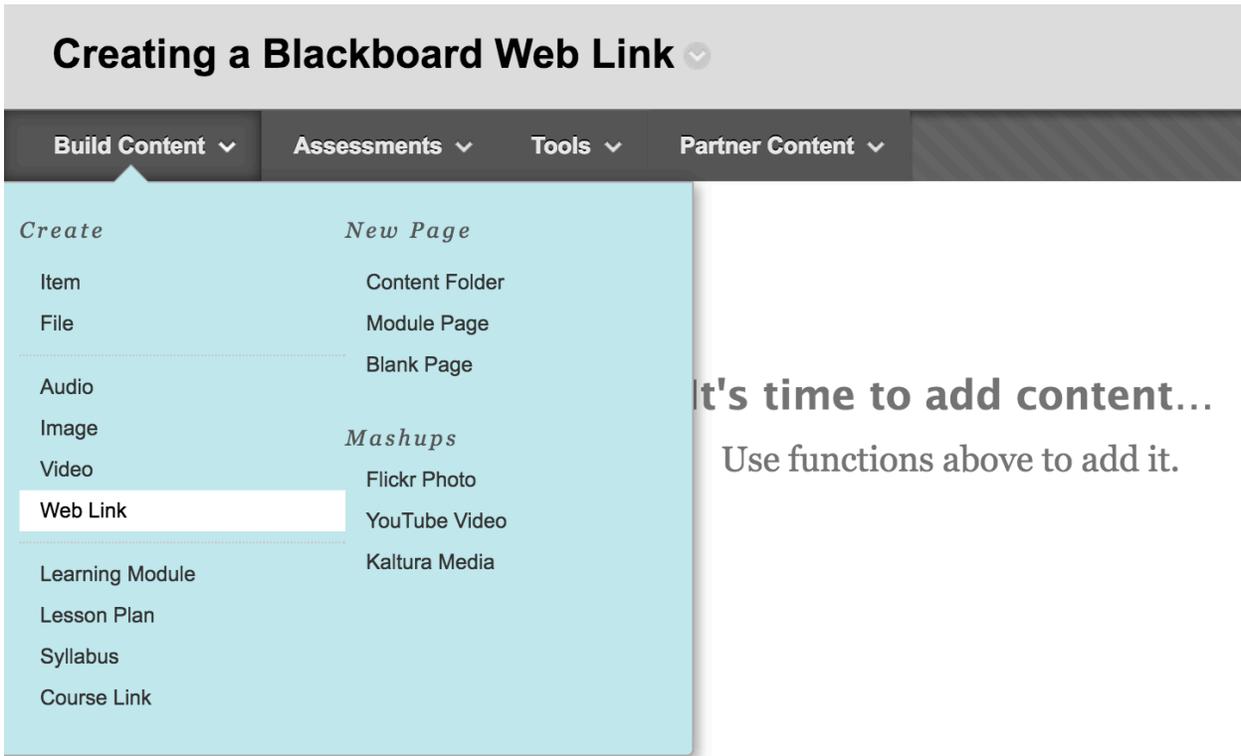
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Rhode Island College
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Open Textbooks - web site

Open textbooks that are delivered as a web site may be the most natural delivery method for use with Blackboard. They can be opened within the current Blackboard location or they can be forced to open in a new window.

Creating a Blackboard weblink

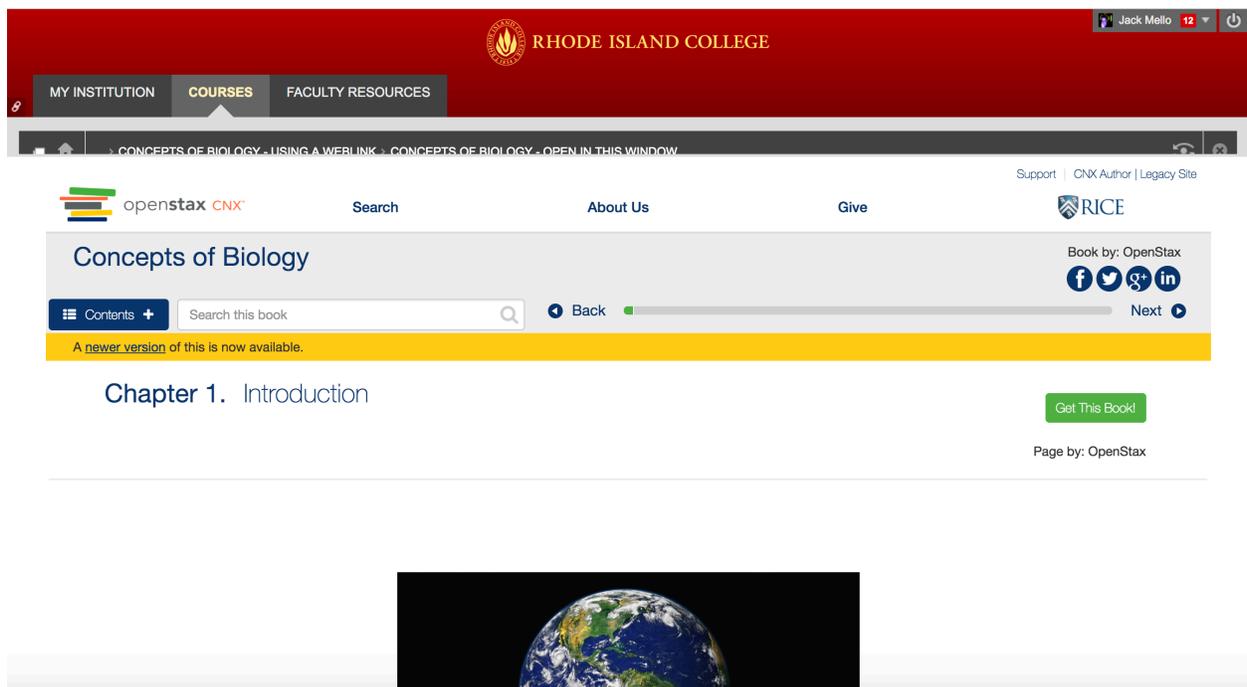
The method of adding an open textbook as a web site is to enter a Blackboard Content Area and use the **Build Content** menu. The **Web Link** menu item is where you add the URL of the textbook and choose whether to open in the current Blackboard window or open the textbook in a new window.



Current Window vs New Window

In most cases opening a textbook weblink into a new window is going to provide a better user experience. The advantage of using this method is that it allows the user to continue to browse Blackboard without closing the newly opened textbook.

Opening a textbook in the current window obscures Blackboard navigation making it hard to view the Blackboard content while viewing the textbook.



The screenshot displays a Blackboard course page for Rhode Island College. The top navigation bar includes 'MY INSTITUTION', 'COURSES', and 'FACULTY RESOURCES'. The course title is 'CONCEPTS OF BIOLOGY - USING A WEBLINK - CONCEPTS OF BIOLOGY - OPEN IN THIS WINDOW'. The OpenStax 'Concepts of Biology' interface is embedded, showing a search bar, a 'Get This Book!' button, and the chapter title 'Chapter 1. Introduction'. A yellow banner indicates 'A newer version of this is now available.' The page is partially obscured by a red header for Rhode Island College and a navigation bar. A large image of Earth is visible at the bottom of the page.

You can also see that the textbook itself is not designed to operate in the available space offered in the sample Blackboard course

Open Textbooks - PDF

The Adobe PDF format is lowest common dominator in open textbooks. The PDF format has been around since the late 1980's. It's suitable for both printing and viewing on screen. The format allows markup of the document including highlighting and adding comments.

My reference open textbook that I used for comparison was [Concepts of Biology](#) from OpenStax.

Link to the Open Textbook provider

The most straightforward way to provide a download link to an Open Textbook is to simply link to the provider of the textbook. This could be a part of the syllabus provided to students. This enables them to easily select the format they want use:

Get this title

 [View online](#)

 [Download a PDF](#)

 [Order a print copy](#)

 [Bookshare](#)

 [Download on iBooks](#)

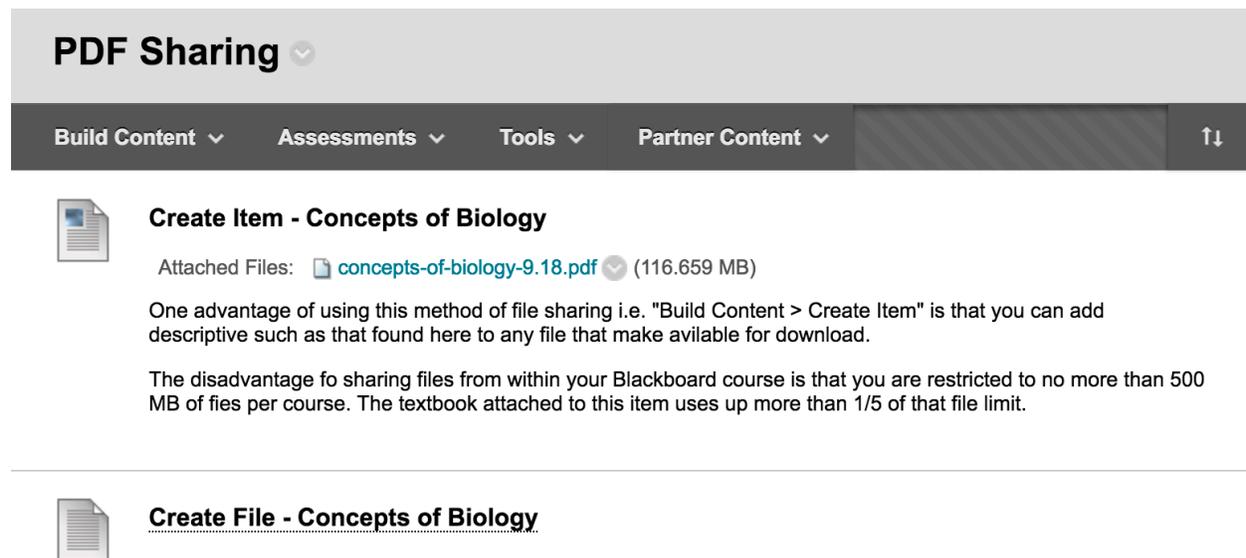
Using Blackboard to host the PDF

There are two easy ways to add a PDF textbook to a Blackboard course. The two options are found in the **Build Content** menu. They are:

- Create Item
- Create File

The primary difference between them is that **Create Item** allows you to add descriptive text as well as allowing attachment of more than one file to the Blackboard item. The user has the option of clicking the link to view the PDF or right clicking the link to download it for later review.

On the other hand, the **Create File** option only allows adding a single file which can only be a clickable link.



The screenshot shows the Blackboard interface for PDF sharing. At the top, there is a header "PDF Sharing" with a dropdown arrow. Below this is a navigation bar with several menu items: "Build Content" (with a dropdown arrow), "Assessments" (with a dropdown arrow), "Tools" (with a dropdown arrow), "Partner Content" (with a dropdown arrow), and a "Share" icon (two arrows pointing up and down). The main content area is divided into two sections. The first section is titled "Create Item - Concepts of Biology" and features a document icon. Below the title, it lists an attached file: "concepts-of-biology-9.18.pdf" (116.659 MB). The text below the file states: "One advantage of using this method of file sharing i.e. 'Build Content > Create Item' is that you can add descriptive such as that found here to any file that make available for download." and "The disadvantage fo sharing files from within your Blackboard course is that you are restricted to no more than 500 MB of fies per course. The textbook attached to this item uses up more than 1/5 of that file limit." The second section is titled "Create File - Concepts of Biology" and also features a document icon.

The one major limitation to adding PDF textbooks to Blackboard in this way is the size limitations for each course. Each Blackboard course is limited to holding 500 MB of content. As a way of comparison **Concepts of Biology** is 125 MB. This means that this one document used 1/5 of your total course space.

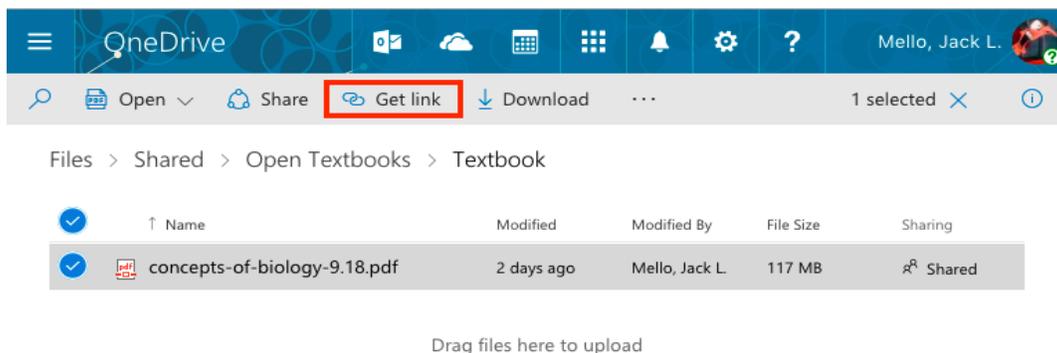
Using OneDrive to host the PDF

An alternative to hosting or embedding your PDF files within Blackboard is to use the OneDrive storage that is part of your Office 365 account provided by the college.

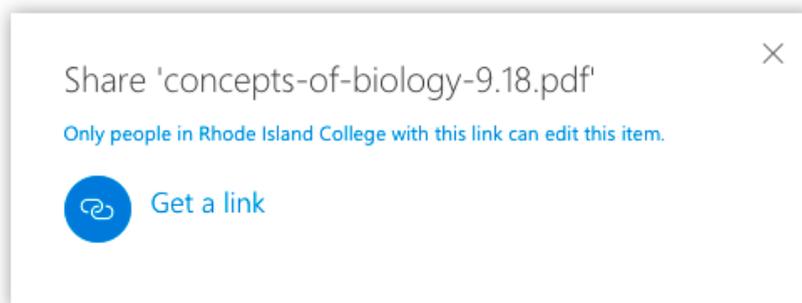
Your OneDrive account provides 1TB of storage, much more than that provided by any of the available free services.

Sharing the file from OneDrive

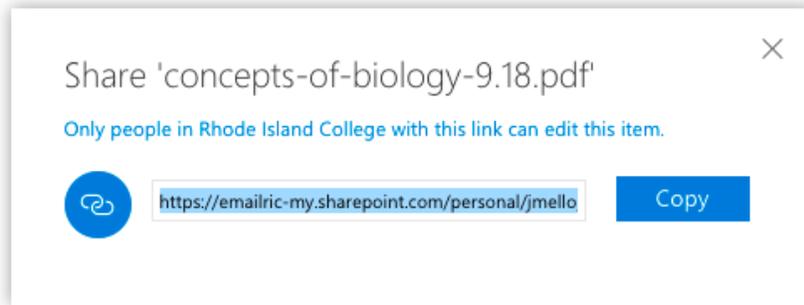
Once you have uploaded a file to your OneDrive account you can select the file for sharing with your students:



After selecting the file click on the **Get link** button



click the **Get a link** button



Copy the highlighted link

Once you have copied the OneDrive link you can return to your Blackboard course and add the PDF as a weblink.

Open Textbooks - ePub

The ePub format is much newer than the PDF format with which we are so familiar. The ePub format was designed to create ebooks. Adobe PDF was created at a time when print was the dominate method of distribution.

In this new age of the web and electronic publications ePub has some unique characteristics. The most important feature worth noting is that the text in an ePub is flowable. This means that the text will adjust its layout based on the size of the screen being used. The text is also capable of being resized without having to pan and zoom the way you would if viewing a PDF on phone for example. This is especially useful for anyone with restricted vision.

One limitation is that ePub files, generally speaking, cannot be viewed in a web browser. This means they have to be downloaded for students to view them. Fortunately, ePub is widely accepted format and viewable on a wide range of devices. It's not tied to any one company's products, rather, most companies offer support for reading ePub formatted books.

Open Textbooks - iBooks

My example Open Textbook [Concepts of Biology](#) is also available in iBook format:

Get this title

 [View online](#)

 [Download a PDF](#)

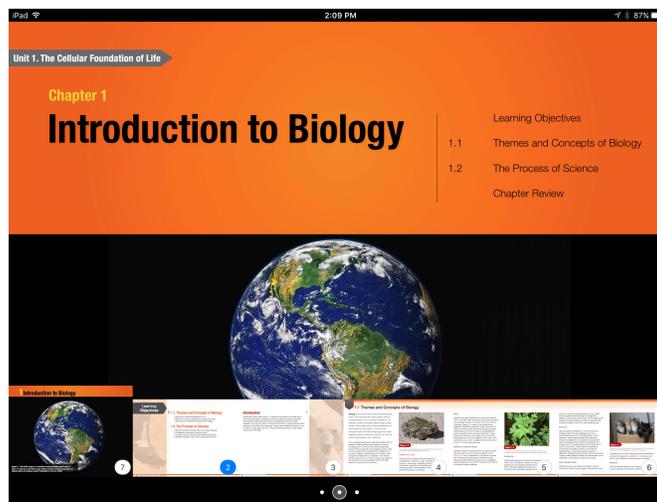
 [Order a print copy](#)

 [Bookshare](#)

 [Download on iBooks](#)

The iBook format is one of the two formats that is not free. Fortunately, the iBook version is much cheaper (\$6.99 as of this writing) than the paper format. In addition, the student would also need an iPad (or Macintosh) in order to view the textbook.

The iBook format stands out due to its high level of interactivity. It's easy to navigate and offers interactive quizzing and other features. Sharing it from Blackboard uses a [Web Link](#) like a normal web site



Concepts of Biology viewed on an iPad

Print Open Textbooks

Open textbooks printed by the publisher, such as OpenStax, can be ordered through the bookstore. Open textbooks can also be printed anywhere – on campus or off.

- You can print a full textbook or just the chapters you need.
- You can reorder the textbook to fit your syllabus.
- It is best practice to include the front matter, title pages, CC license page, appendix, index, etc.

Printing on Campus

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- It is best practice to include the front matter, title pages, CC license page, appendix, index, etc.

Pricing

Printing:	Black and white: 5 cents per page Color: 25 cents per page
Finishing:	Binding: 45 cents Or Three-hole punch: free
Bookstore Markup:	25%

Selling through the Bookstore

Process

- Bring a **printed** copy of the textbook, exactly as you would like it to be copied and bound, to the bookstore to Michelle, the bookstore manager or Lindsay, who manages textbooks.
- Provide the following information:
 - Professor's name
 - Course number and section number
 - Number of copies to print
 - Finishing instructions

Deadline

Book Store order deadline, see Administrative Calendar:
www.ric.edu/administration/adminCalendar.php

Cost to Students

Printing cost + markup

Purchasing Directly from Publishing Services

Process

- Bring a **printed** copy of the textbook, exactly as you would like it to be copied and bound, to Publishing Services
- Provide the following information:
 - Professor's name
 - Course number and section number
 - Number of copies to print
 - Finishing instructions

Deadline

Two – three weeks before needed

Cost to Department

Departments are billed the printing and finishing costs with no markup