Quickstart Guide to VoiceThread

An online audio and video discussion tool

VoiceThread is an online commenting platform that allows users to create slideshows of media (images, videos, audio recordings, documents, etc.) and to comment upon those items in a variety of ways. Comments can be text, audio or video. If your computer is equipped with a webcam or built-in microphone, recordings can be made directly on the website and associated with presentation slides. Users can also add audio feedback via telephone or by uploading media files. VoiceThread is useful for hosting multimedia discussions on images and video, for sharing online lecture presentations, or for tutoring.

VoiceThread can be accessed via Blackboard or Canvas simplifying the process of giving students access to the tool, but it must first be added to your course site.

Adding Voicethread to Blackboard

1. Make sure you are in **Edit mode**. The toggle for this is found just above the main content window, to the right.
2. In the upper-left hand corner of the main course site menu, place your cursor over the small + icon and select **Tool Link**.
3. Enter VoiceThread in the **Name** field and select **VoiceThread** from the **Type** dropdown.
4. Check the box labeled **Available to Users** and click **Submit**.
5. VoiceThread can also be added as a link within a content page, such as the Course Materials page, of your site. On a content page, open the **Build Content** menu and click **VoiceThread**. Provide a name of the link and check off the checkbox labeled 'Open in New Window', and then click Save to add the link to your page.
   Note: once the link to VoiceThread is established, you may have to navigate again to your course site.

Adding VoiceThread to Canvas

Add VoiceThread via the Modules page

1. Navigate to the "Modules" area of you course.
2. Find the module to which you'd like to add VoiceThread, and click the "Add Content" button.
3. Select "External Tool" from the menu.
4. Select "VoiceThread" from the list of tools.

Add VoiceThread via Assignments

1. Create a new assignment.
2. Name the assignment and write a description if you choose.
3. Under Submission Type, select External Tool.
4. Click on the Find button.
5. Click on VoiceThread.

VoiceThread Setup

When accessing VoiceThread from your learning management system (Blackboard or Canvas), you will be presented with several options:

Course View - display all threads associated with the course.
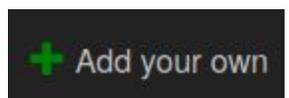**Individual View** - display a single thread
Home - display a home page displaying all threads and courses the student is associated with.
Assignment Builder - create a graded assignment, requiring students create, comment upon, or view a thread.

Choose **Course View** to add a link to a general VoiceThread page for your course. After you are familiar with VoiceThread, you may be interested to try Assignment Builder which takes students to graded VoiceThread activity.

Using VoiceThread

The initial VoiceThread course site does not yet contain any threads, so you should be presented with a largely black screen. In the upper right-hand corner of the screen find the link titled **Add your own**. In the resulting popup window, select **Create a new VoiceThread.**
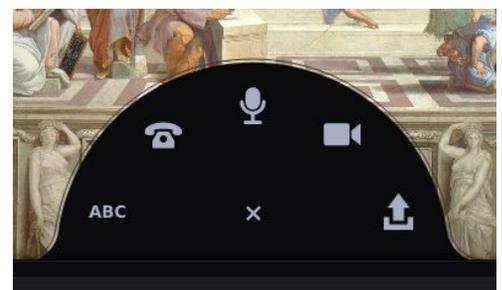

Discussion in VoiceThread is centered on a media, such as images, video, and audio. A discussion can also be based on a series of slides, such as a Powerpoint presentation.

- Click the **Add Media** link or drag and drop a media file onto the page.
- Give the new thread a title and, optionally, a description, then click **Save**.

After this image has been submitted, click **Share and return to course** to return to the course page within VoiceThread. You should now see one tile, corresponding to the item you just uploaded. Hover your cursor over this tile and click the **Play** button.
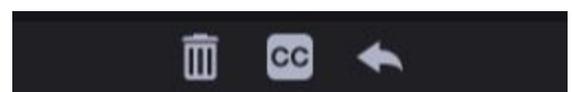
The resulting page is the commenting interface for this media item. Click the comment icon near the bottom of the screen to expose a semi-circular menu. Five comment types are available:

Text comments, audio recordings via **telephone**, **audio recordings** in the web browser, **video recordings** in the web browser, and **audio or video file upload**. After a comment is added to the page, the comment is added to one of the margins to the left or right. A comment can be **replied to** by clicking on a comment icon (usually depicted with the initials of the commenter) and clicking the left-facing arrow button.

To return to the main VoiceThread gallery, click the X button in the upper right-hand corner of the screen.

Keep in mind that each item in your VoiceThread gallery can be a sequence of media items. If you upload a Powerpoint presentation, the series of items will consist of the slides in the presentation. If you upload images, audio recordings, or videos, they can be sequenced and grouped together in this way, perhaps grouping them together by assignment or by week, for example.

More information about using VoiceThread is available on the VoiceThread website at:

https://voicethread.com/howto/

If you have any questions about using VoiceThread, please feel free to reach out to the Educational & Classroom Technologies group in the McGraw Center for Teaching and Learning at **mcgrawect@princeton.edu**.