

WebMentor LMS v8 Release Notes

VERSION 8.6 (RELEASED 10/21/2019)

WebMentor LMS version 8.6 includes one major enhancement (“Gamification”), plus bug fixes and performance improvements. Customers of Avilar’s hosted learning management service receive the updates automatically as they are deployed on the hosting servers. Licensed customers may contact Avilar Customer Support to arrange for upgrades to their installations.

GAMIFICATION

Points for Participation

An Organization may now choose to award “points” to Students for participating in a wide range of activities, including:

- **Assignment Completed** – points awarded for completing an assignment
- **Course Completed** - points awarded for completing a course
- **Course Passed** - points awarded for passing a course including completion and passing any tests
- **Course Rated** - points awarded for rating a course
- **Course Registration** - points awarded for registering for a course
- **Handout Accessed** - points awarded for accessing a handout
- **Logon** - points awarded for a student logon
- **Presentation Viewed** - points awarded for viewing a presentation
- **Study Group Post** - points awarded for posting in a study group
- **Study Group Read** - points awarded for reading a study group post
- **Survey Submitted** - points awarded for submitting a survey
- **Test Passed** - points awarded for passing a test

An Organization can choose which activities, if any, will generate points and can specify the number of points to be awarded for each activity. Activities for which points are awarded can be very specific, such as “Test Passed for course number WMDemo session 4 final exam” or very general, such as “Test Passed for ALL COURSES, ALL SESSIONS, ALL TESTS” with the full gamut of variations between the two extremes.

Rewards for Extraordinary Student Participation

An Organization can specify that students who have earned a specified number of points for participating in specific activities will receive “rewards”. The Organization may describe the reward however it likes and/or assign a “badge” that Students receive as part of the reward.

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Built-in Badge Library

WebMentor LMS now offers a built-in badge library containing several icons that can be used for rewards. An Organization may also choose to upload its own badge icons, if preferred.

Student Leader Board to Rank Students

A Student Leader Board is available to the Organization and its Administrators, Instructors and Students. The Student Leader Board displays the top twenty achievers in each activity for which the Organization awards points. It also displays the top twenty achievers in total points. By sorting, the bottom twenty achievers in each activity, as well as total points, can also be displayed.

You may click on the name of any Student who has achieved one or more “rewards” displayed in the Student Leader Board to see the rewards achieved by that student.

Benefit: Students are incentivized to achieve visible milestones and potentially to compete with themselves and others to accomplish goals.

SELECTIVE SSL SECURITY FOR COURSE RUNTIME ENVIRONMENT

WebMentor LMS has always supported both traditional HTTP and HTTPS environments on a server-wide basis; i.e., the server can be run either openly or securely. (NOTE: e-commerce transactions are ALWAYS processed securely, regardless of the overall server setting.) The v8.6 release allows the Course Provider to specify the SSL security setting on a course-by-course basis, if desired.

Benefit: You may choose to run the LMS through http for maximum server performance, and still launch specific courses using HTTPS for increased security within that course.

API ENHANCEMENTS

The web services application programming interface (API) has been extended.

- **AddOrganization()** – you may now specify whether or not the new Organization’s students may register themselves in Open and/or Private course sessions.
 - Field name: “Allow Open Session Registration”, Value: “true” or “yes” | “false” or “no” (default: “no”)
 - Field name: “Allow Private Session Registration”, Value: “true” or “yes” | “false” or “no” (default: “yes”)

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VERSION 8.5 (RELEASED 1/13/2018)

WebMentor LMS version 8.5 adds several enhancements most requested by customers. Customers of Avilar's hosted learning management service receive the updates automatically as they are deployed on the hosting servers. Licensed customers may contact Avilar Customer Support to arrange for upgrades to their installations.

This document describes the most important new features of this release.

COURSE CREATION TOOL - PRESENTATIONS

The Instructor role now provides features for creating basic course content directly within the LMS, without requiring use of external course authoring tools. An Instructor may create PRESENTATIONS in a variety of formats, and associate them with one or more course sessions. Students then view the presentations online, as part of that course, via links that appear in the course Syllabus tab.

Benefit: You may now create basic course content directly within the LMS.

Presentations can be created in one of two formats:

- Flash - Generates the presentation in Adobe Flash format. Using the Flash option allows you to have more control options but limits the type of files/features that can be included in the presentation.
- HTML - Generates the presentation in HTML format. Using the HTML option allows fewer control options but supports more types of files/features to be included in the presentation.

Note that you can change the format of the presentation any time before the presentation is saved.

For both the Flash and HTML formats, you may specify the width and height of the presentation display window, in pixels.

FLASH PRESENTATIONS

The following fields are only present when the Flash format is selected.

- Auto Play - Specifies whether to play the presentation automatically
- Controls Location - Specifies the location of the presentation controls
- Show Notes - Specifies whether the notes tab is present in the presentation control panel
- Show Outline - Specifies whether the presentation outline is present in the presentation control panel
- Show Search - Specifies whether the search tab is present in the presentation control panel

Flash presentations consist of one or more blocks of content, including:

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- Manually-typed text that can include HTML markup
- A text file that can include HTML markup
- A PowerPoint presentation
- A Flash file (.swf)

A Flash presentation may contain any number of Text blocks, Flash SWF blocks, HTML, and PowerPoint blocks and they may be arranged in any order to generate the desired slide presentation. Each presentation block may contain one or many presentation slides. A presentation block containing text or an HTML file generates a single slide. A presentation block containing a Flash SWF file generates a single slide in which the SWF is played. A presentation block containing a PowerPoint file generates the number of slides contained in the PowerPoint file.

HTML PRESENTATIONS

HTML presentations consist of one or more blocks of content, including:

- Manually-typed text that can include HTML markup
- A text file that can include HTML markup
- A PowerPoint presentation
- An assessment test, survey or quiz
- A PDF file (.pdf)
- A Word document (.doc)

An HTML presentation may contain any number of Text blocks, HTML and PowerPoint blocks, assessment tests, surveys or quizzes, PDF and Word documents and they may be arranged in any order to generate the desired slide presentation. Each presentation block may contain one or many presentation slides. A presentation block containing text or an HTML file generates a single slide. A presentation block containing an assessment test, survey or quiz generates a single slide. A presentation block containing a PowerPoint file generates the number of slides contained in the PowerPoint file.

You may specify notes for a presentation block. The block notes will be displayed when the slide or slides within the block are displayed.

COURSE CREATION TOOL - ASSESSMENTS

The Instructor role now provides features for creating ASSESSMENTS directly within the LMS, without requiring use of external course authoring tools. Once an assessment exists, an Instructor may associate it with one or more course sessions. Students then take the assessment(s) online, as part of that course, via links that appear in the course Syllabus tab.

Benefit: You may now create tests, quizzes, and surveys directly within the LMS. You may also associate the same assessment with multiple course sessions.

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ASSESSMENT TYPES

An Instructor may create four types of assessments:

- **Test** - A test is a *graded* assessment. Student test results are saved in the database and made available to the student, instructors and administrators in various reports.
- **Quiz** - A quiz is an *ungraded* assessment. Results are only available to the student as he or she takes the quiz. The results are NOT saved in the database.
- **Survey** - A survey is an *ungraded, opinion-gathering* assessment. Student responses are saved in the database and made available to the instructors and administrators in various reports.
- **Question Pool** - A question pool is a collection of assessment questions that you can use later to create a *pooled assessment*: a test created from one or more question pools.

For tests and surveys, you may specify the condition under which students can retake the test or survey:

- **Unlimited retakes** - There is no restriction on the number of times that a student may take the test or survey.
- **No retakes** - A student may take the test or survey only once.
- **Retake: *n* times** - A student may retake the test or survey the number of times specified in the input field.

You may optionally specify a passing grade for a test. If you specify a passing grade for a test, it will be used to determine the student completion status for any course to which the test is assigned.

You may optionally specify that the test is to be timed. The number of minutes that a student will have to complete the test will be counted down as the student takes the test. If a student does not complete the test in the allotted time, the test will be automatically submitted for grading.

A test may contain any number of seven different question types, plus any number of section headers. The section headers may be placed anywhere within the test. Optionally, you may include an image at the top of a question or section header which is displayed to the student in the question or section header.

The following question types are supported:

- Multiple Choice
- True/False
- Matching
- Fill in the Blank
- Select all that Apply
- Pick One
- Essay

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You may specify the number of points to be awarded when a student answers a question correctly. If the question type is Matching or Select All That Apply, you may specify that the points are to be awarded for each correct choice rather than the entire question.

Assessments may be assigned to one or more course sessions. Once assigned to a course session, the assessment is accessible to students via the course Syllabus screen.

You may randomize the order of the questions when they are presented to students. If you do not choose to randomize questions, they are displayed in the order in which they were created.

You may hide the individual question results when displaying the assessment results to a student. If the results are not hidden from the student, the individual question results from the assigned assessments are displayed to the student.

You may specify the date and time on which the assigned assessments become available to students. If you do not specify an availability date, the assessments become available to students immediately upon assignment.

COURSE SESSION “TIME TO COMPLETE” ENHANCEMENT

The course session “Time to Complete” feature has been extended to allow the time that a student has to complete a course to begin at one of the following occurrences:

- **From course registration** – the time in which a student has to complete the course begins when the student is registered in the course session. *This was the original setting, and remains the default.*
- **From first entry to course** - the time in which a student has to complete the course begins when the student first enters the course

If the start time for completion of a course is modified for an existing session, any student currently registered for the course session will be immediately affected.

Benefit: You may now choose to start the “time to complete” clock ticking when the student first launches a course rather than from when the student is registered in a course.

COPIED SUBSCRIPTION ENHANCEMENTS

If a subscription has one or more copies, the subscription number of each copied subscription is now displayed in the base subscription screen as Base Subscription for these Copies.

If the subscription is a copy, the subscription number of its base subscription is now displayed as Copied from Subscription.

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In previous releases of the LMS, clicking the **Change** button on a base subscription screen caused all fields in copied subscriptions to be set to their corresponding values in the base subscription. If you had made any changes to copied subscriptions at an earlier point in time, those changes would be overwritten by the values in the modified base subscription.

In v8.5, you may limit which fields will be modified in copied subscriptions when the base subscription is modified using the checkbox labelled **Update only modified fields in copied subscriptions (Change button only)**. If this checkbox is checked when you click the **Change** button, only fields that you are modifying in the base subscription are modified in the copied subscriptions — thereby preserving any unchanged values in the copied subscriptions. If this checkbox is not checked, all fields in copied subscriptions will be set to their corresponding values in the base subscription.

Note that when a base subscription (i.e. one having copies) is deleted, its copied subscriptions are not deleted and remain unchanged.

Benefit: You may now choose which changed properties of base subscriptions get pushed to any copies of the subscription. And the relationship between base subscriptions and any copies is now displayed.

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VERSION 8.4 (RELEASED 09/05/2017)

WebMentor LMS version 8.4 includes bug fixes and performance improvements only. Customers of Avilar's hosted learning management service receive the updates automatically as they are deployed on the hosting servers. Licensed customers may contact Avilar Customer Support to arrange for upgrades to their installations.

VERSION 8.3 (RELEASED 02/18/2017)

WebMentor LMS version 8.3 includes bug fixes and performance improvements only. Customers of Avilar's hosted learning management service receive the updates automatically as they are deployed on the hosting servers. Licensed customers may contact Avilar Customer Support to arrange for upgrades to their installations.

VERSION 8.2 (RELEASED 08/31/2016)

WebMentor LMS version 8.2 includes bug fixes and performance improvements only. Customers of Avilar's hosted learning management service receive the updates automatically as they are deployed on the hosting servers. Licensed customers may contact Avilar Customer Support to arrange for upgrades to their installations.

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VERSION 8.1 (RELEASED 2/17/2016)

The WebMentor LMS version 8.1 adds a small group of enhancements most requested by customers. Customers of Avilar's hosted learning management service receive the updates automatically as they are deployed on the hosting servers. Licensed customers may contact Avilar Customer Support to arrange for upgrades to their installations.

This document describes the most important new features of this release.

MULTIPLE CERTIFICATES PER COURSE

In prior releases, generating a course completion certificate overwrote any existing certificate, so that only the most recent certificate was available. In version 8.1, prior certificates are now saved and remain available.

Benefit: Students who repeatedly complete the same course as part of periodic recurring training now have access to all past certificates of completion.

"STUDY GROUPS"

Course conferences/forums have been renamed "Study Groups" to reflect current usage.

The Instructor Dashboard now gives instructors access their Organization conference, if one exists, and any study groups for courses to which they are assigned.

Benefit: Instructors may now participate in Organization conferences.

IMPROVE COURSE CATALOG SEARCH

Students may now search the course catalog by course number, or by keywords in course descriptions.

Benefit: Courses are easier to locate based on keywords in their descriptions.

RSS FEEDS

Instructors may include RSS feeds as course links. The RSS feeds appear in the Syllabus screen for the assigned course or courses. Students may view an RSS feed by clicking on the RSS link or icon.

Benefit: Students gain easy access to live course-related news updates.

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IMMEDIATE COURSE COMPLETION UPDATES

In prior releases, the LMS ran a batch processing job on a specific schedule (typically at the end of each day) to compute student course completions. In Version 8.1, student course completion is processed immediately upon successful completion of a course and the results are reflected in the Student Main Menu or Student Dashboard and the Course Virtual Classroom.

Benefit: Students receive immediate feedback about course completion in the Student Main Menu or Student Dashboard and the Course Virtual Classroom, without having to wait until the end of the day.

COURSE RATINGS IN SYLLABUS

“Course Ratings” are now displayed in the course Syllabus rather than in a separate tab.

Benefit: Student ratings and comments are visible directly from the course Syllabus.

WEB SERVICES API ENHANCEMENTS

WebMentor LMS now supports several new functions that may be invoked by other web-based applications using the Web Services API. See the *WebMentor LMS v8.1 API* document for more information.

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VERSION 8.0 (RELEASED 2/2/2015)

The WebMentor LMS version 8.0 release focuses primarily on usability and performance improvements. Customers of Avilar's hosted learning management service receive the updates automatically as they are deployed on the hosting servers. Licensed customers may contact Avilar Customer Support to arrange for upgrades to their installations.

This document describes the most important new features of this release.

NEW USER INTERFACES FOR ALL USER ROLES

All user roles now provide a modern dashboard after login, with streamlined and updated screen layouts throughout the system. Note that any Organization that wishes to continue using legacy user interfaces is free to do so.

Benefit: WebMentor LMS has always been browser-agnostic and easy to use. Users now have even easier access to product features on all types of browsers and platforms.

SEQUENCED SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions (course bundles) may now optionally specify the order in which students must take the courses within the subscription. The LMS will auto-register students in the next course in the sequence as they complete prior courses.

Benefit: A student's learning progress can be controlled within a subscription in much the same way it can be controlled in a curriculum, but without the full curriculum overhead.

"MANDATORY" VS. "OPTIONAL" COURSES AND SESSIONS

A course, or a subset of specific sessions, may be defined as being either "mandatory" or "optional" for an Organization's students. If a student is registered in any "mandatory" courses, those are made more prominent in the Student Main Menu or Dashboard (depending on the user interface style in use). By default, all courses are now "optional" unless specifically declared to be "mandatory".

Benefit: Organizations gain more control over the presentation of mandatory vs. optional courses to their students. Mandatory courses are identified as such and presented more prominently to students.

CLASSROOM "CATEGORIES"

An Organization may now define one or more arbitrary "categories" for their courses, and then use those categories to organize the presentation of courses in the Student Main Menu or Dashboard

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(depending on the user interface style in use). For example, an Organization might create a category called “New Hire Training” and put courses relevant to new employees into that category. Students then see the New Hire Training category in their dashboards containing the appropriate courses.

Benefit: Organizations gain more control over the presentation of courses to their students. Courses may be grouped together by topic or some other organizing principle.

VARIABLE COURSE PRICING BASED ON STUDENT ENROLLMENT FIELD

An Organization may now specify different prices for courses based on the value of a particular Student Enrollment Field. When the Course Catalog is presented to a Student, the Student then sees the prices appropriate for him or her.

Benefit: An Organization may now charge different prices for a course to different types of Students.

STUDENT AND INSTRUCTOR PROFILE IMAGES

The Student Profile and Instructor Profile now support optional photographs or images. If the Student or Instructor uploads an image to the LMS, that image is displayed on various Dashboards and screens.

Benefits: (1) The Student Dashboard is more personalized and welcoming. (2) Students may see photographs or images of their Instructors.

ADMINISTRATOR AND INSTRUCTOR PROFILE EDITING

Administrators and Instructors may now edit their own profiles. In previous releases, only the Organization was allowed to modify Administrator and Instructor profiles.

Benefit: Administrators and Instructor gain the authority to manage their own profiles.

ADMINISTRATOR AND INSTRUCTOR PROFILE EXTENSIONS

Administrator and Instructor profiles may now be extended with custom fields. In previous releases, Administrator and Instructor profiles contained only Name, Password, Phone, Fax and Email fields. Profiles may now be extended with additional fields to meet the needs of an Organization.

Benefit: Organizations may now create and use any number of extended fields in Administrator and Instructor profiles for data collection and reporting.

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STUDENT LOGON LOCKING

Administrators may now block a Student from logging into the LMS without affecting any of the Student's records, registration status, etc.

Benefit: A Student may be blocked from using the LMS until such time as access needs to be restored.

"RESET" OPTION ON COURSE INSTALLATION

When the Course Provider reinstalls a course that is already installed in the LMS, the Provider may now "reset" Students in that course. In previous releases, the options were: (1) to DELETE the previously installed course, which also deletes existing sessions and deregisters Students taking the course, or (2) to REPLACE the previously installed course, which left all course sessions and student progress tracking intact. REPLACE was only safe when a course's structure had not changed. If the course's structure changed after being reinstalled, then student progress tracking became unreliable, and safer option was to DELETE the previous version of the course and start fresh. Unfortunately, DELETE also deleted course sessions and deregistered students, so an Administrator would have to manually re-register students into the newly reinstalled course.

The RESET option automates that process by resetting student progress in the reinstalled course. Students who are registered in a course whose structure has changed as a result of reinstallation are forced to restart the course from the beginning so that their progress is tracked correctly.

Benefit: Administrators are no longer required to re-register Students manually into reinstalled courses whose structure has changed.

HYBRID ILT/WEBMENTOR AUTHOR COURSES

Instructor-led training (ILT) courses may now be paired with WebMentor course components for delivering online tests and surveys, and other online content created with WebMentor Author. Such a "hybrid" course is presented as a single course in the Course Catalog. When a Student registers for the course, a link to launch the online content appears in the course Syllabus.

Benefit: ILT courses may now offer companion online components.

WEB SERVICES API ENHANCEMENTS

WebMentor LMS now supports several new functions that may be invoked by other web-based applications using the Web Services API. See the *WebMentor LMS v8 API* document for more information.