

# News - Instructor Documentation

The News tool is an extremely powerful way to communicate updates, changes and new information to your users quickly and effectively. The News tool is typically located in the middle of the course home page. Since this is the first page that the user will see when they enter the course, the News tool is a great way to display pertinent information for your course.

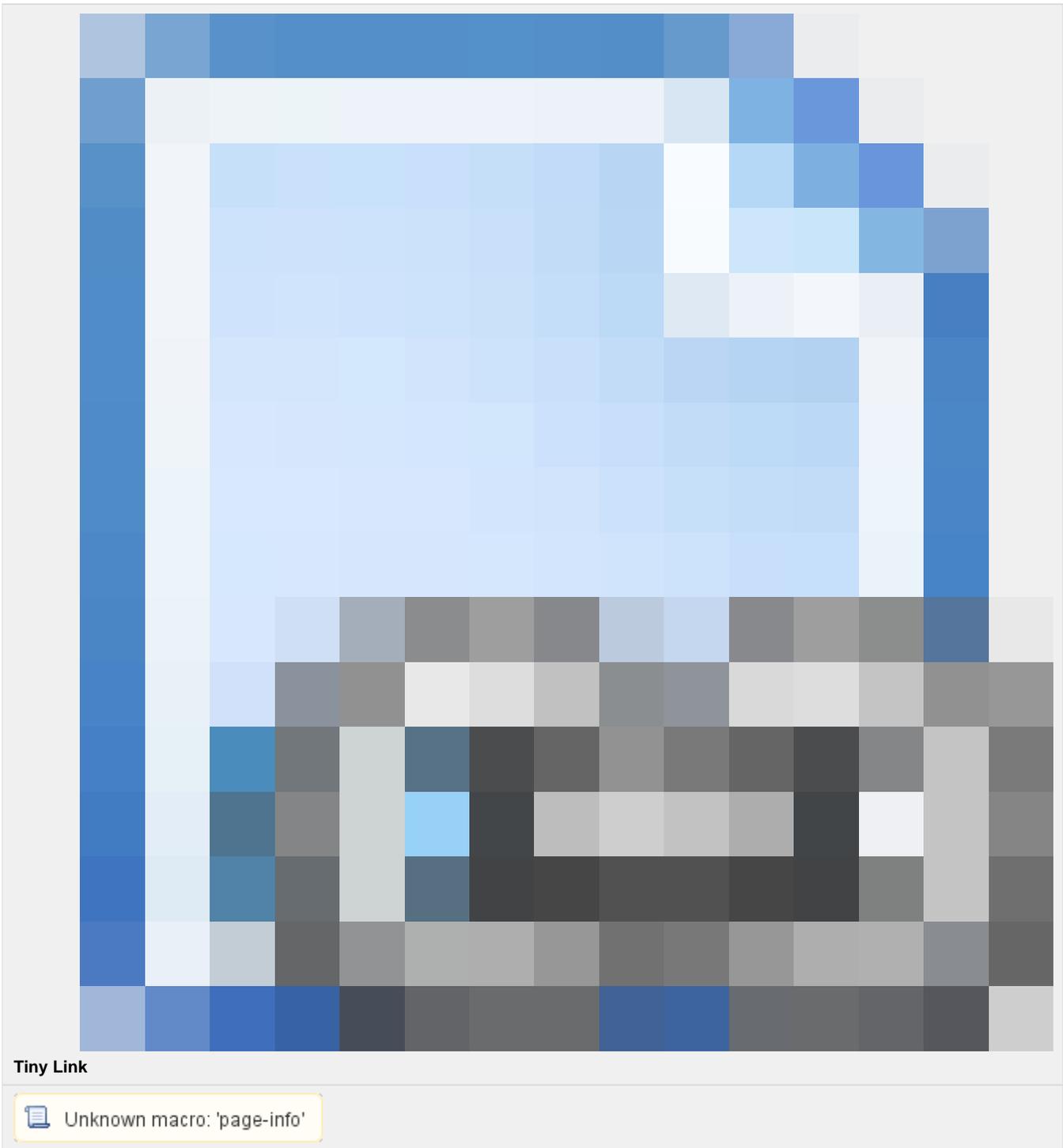
The News tool can also be updated regularly with:

- Interesting pictures, quotes, news stories, etc.
- URLs submitted by users which may be of general interest
- Online agendas outlining online weekly activities
- QuickLinks to various updated areas of course site (new content, survey, quizzes)

Because News is typically the first thing that a user sees upon logging into the course, it is recommended that News be updated regularly to keep your users engaged in your course.

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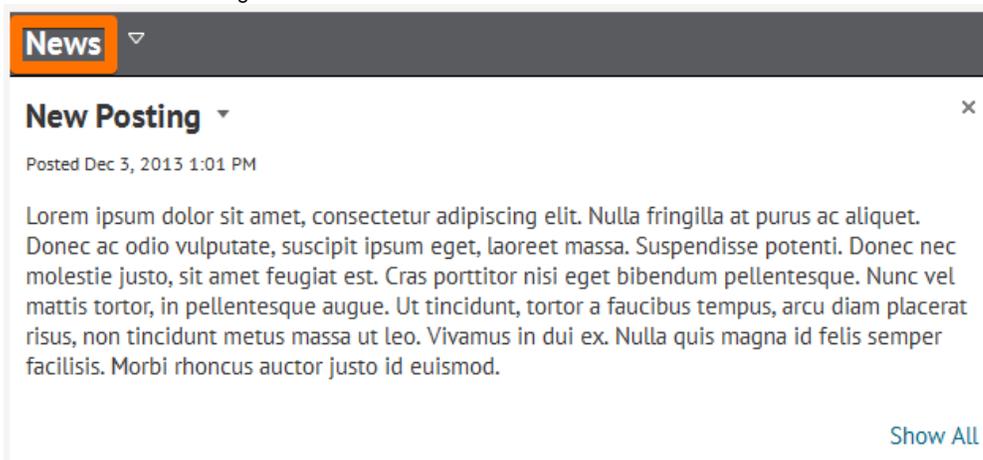


## 1. Accessing the news tool

There are two ways to access the news tool:

1. From your course home page

1. Locate the News tool widget and click News



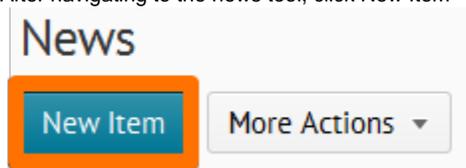
2. Through the course management page:
  1. On the navigation bar, click Edit Course



2. Click  News

## 2. Creating a news posting

1. After navigating to the news tool, click New Item



2. Type the news headline in the Headline field.
3. Type the news details in the Content field.
4. Select the news availability date using the Start Date and End Date drop-down lists or by typing the dates in with the keyboard.
5. By default, the date does not appear beside the headline. If you want the date to appear by the headline, select the Always show start date checkbox.
6. If you want to specify a removal date for your news posting, select the Remove News Item based on End Date checkbox and specify an end date. You and site administration can still see the posting after this date, but it will be invisible to users.
7. You can add attachments to your news posting, such as pictures or other files. To add an attachment, click the Add a File button in the Attachments section. In the new window, drag and drop your attachments into the specified box or click Upload to navigate to the necessary files to be uploaded. To add more attachments, click the Add button and repeat this step. For more details, refer to *Adding and deleting attachments to a news posting*.
8. Click Publish.

Your news posting appears on your course home page on the date that you selected. If you selected Show Start Date, the date of the posting appears beside the headline.

### 2.1. News item status (draft, published, or scheduled)

To make sure an instructor can do all the tweaking to date restrictions, release conditions, content formatting, and getting the headline just right before a news item gets posted News uses the concept of draft, published, and scheduled news items.

When a news item is in draft status (done by clicking Save as a Draft instead of Publish), an instructor can make edits, but the news item is not visible to students. When a news item is published, students can see it and it will generate events for notifications to be sent (depending on news item availability dates and any release conditions on the item). Scheduled News items are published news items with a future Start Date.

### 2.2. Adding a news posting for a future date

If you set a posting's start date to a date in the future, the posting will not be visible to users until that date. When the specified date (and time) arrive, users can then see the news posting. For example, if you wanted a news posting to appear first thing Monday morning, you could create it on Friday afternoon and specify a start date of Monday at 9:00 am.

## 2.3. Post-dated news items

Users with permission to see post-dated news will see those items in the News tool overview, they will not be displayed in the News widget. Click on the  **News** icon to enter the News tool overview.

## 3. Editing a news posting

### 3.1. Major vs. minor edits

We want instructors to be able to refine a news item, but that shouldn't impact students' notifications and dismissed news items. When you edit a news item, you will see a check box for major edits, that make the item visible again to any user who had dismissed it. And it generates "news item edited" event to trigger notifications (important for assignment changes and so on).

Leave it unchecked to update the news item without making the item reappear for users that dismissed it, and without triggering a notification (good for changes to end date, release conditions, or simple formatting).

1. By clicking the grey arrow next to the news item on either the news widget or the news tool, click the  Edit icon beside your news posting headline. The Edit Item page displays.
2. Make your required changes.
3. If desired, select the **This is a major edit. Restore this item for any users who have dismissed it.** check box to inform users of major changes and updates to postings they might have dismissed, ensuring those headlines reappear with current information.

Major edit - send a notification and restore it for those who dismissed it

4. Click Update.

For major edits, instructors might want to change the item's start date to "Now" so that when restored for users, it shows up at the top of any consolidated lists.

### 3.2. Adding and deleting release conditions

Release conditions allow you to associate a news item with other items in the learning environment. For example, you could require that users complete an assignment before they see a news item.

In the Release Conditions section, click either Attach Existing or Create and Attach.

See *Release Conditions User Guide* for more information.

### 3.3. Adding and deleting attachments to a news posting

You can add attachments to a News posting while you are creating or editing it.

#### 3.3.1.1. To add an attachment

1. In the Attachments section of the New Item or Edit Item page, click the Add a File button.
2. Drag and Drop the item in the specified box or click Upload and locate and attach the file.
3. Click Save.

#### 3.3.1.2. To delete an attachment from a news item

Click the  Delete icon next to the attachment that you want to delete.

## 4. Changing the order of news postings

1. On the main news page, click the More Actions button to enable the drop-down menu, click  Re-Order.

2. Select the new position for a news item using the Sort Order drop-down list beside its name. The positions of other folders or categories adjust accordingly.

Items display in ascending order.

3. Click Save.

## 5. Deleting a news posting

1. On your course home page, click on the News title to go to the edit News items page.
2. Click on the grey arrow next to the news item and click the  Delete icon beside the news item that you want to remove. To delete multiple items, select the items that you want to delete using the checkboxes at the left and then click the  Delete icon at the top of the list.
3. Click OK in the confirmation message.