In this short slide show we'll cover some of the basic concepts of Blackboard Collaborate Ultra.
Collaborate is a Web-Conferencing tool. It supports live, two-way communication over the internet, allowing the exchange of audio, image, and video information. It supports unstructured discussion, but its tool set emphasizes giving presentations and lectures. Optionally, Collaborate sessions can be recorded and the recordings made available to participants and to others.
A successful Collaborate session requires that all participants have a stable internet connection in the broadband range or higher. Lower-capacity home networks and cellphones using a cellular network or weaker WiFi may cause degraded video or audio, or may not be able to maintain a connection to the session at all.
Some of the kinds of things a presenter can do in a sessions include walking through and talking over slides in a slideshow, describing still images shared with others, marking up a live white-board, with or without an underlying image, and sharing an active screen on the presenter’s computer, such as a spreadsheet word-processing display.
A Collaborate session provides text-based chat communication as well as audio-, video-, and image-sharing. A participant can indicate a pending question by clicking on a raise-hand tool or give simple responses to polling questions. The moderator, usually the instructor in a Blackboard course, can designate presenters, ask and respond to questions, mute individual participants, and the like.
Collaborate can record videos that can then be shared with participants or with others. It is not, however, a full-featured video editing suite, and instructors wishing to produce professional instructional videos will need other software tools. Collaborate can easily be used for ad hoc video conferencing, but can't fully replace tools like Skype or Google Hangouts because it emphasizes pre-scheduled sessions rather than interaction on demand.
The basic unit of interaction with Collaborate is a Session. A session has a scheduled date, time, and duration, and likely a designated title or theme. Session options, such as the default role of most participants or whether participants can share media, are usually set before the session begins. A session can also be pre-loaded with media to be shared.
All the users within a session are called PARTICIPANTS. One or more of the participants might be designated as a PRESENTER, the individual with presentation controls at a particular point in time. The MODERATOR has control over the entire session and the participants in the session. From the perspective of a course in Blackboard Learn, the moderator is usually the instructor. Students are participants, and optionally the instructor might designate one student at a time to be the presenter.