



Enhancing Your Course Using Online Communication

Canvas offers a variety of communication tools to help you connect with your students and keep them engaged. Even if you meet with your students face-to-face two or three times a week, you'll likely want to send them information outside of class time—reminders about upcoming assignments, announcements, schedule changes, etc.

In this article, we'll compare two Canvas communication tools, Conversations (Inbox) and Announcements. We'll explore how to use the tools to support teaching and learning in your courses and consider the impact of Notification Preferences.

	 Conversations (Inbox)	 Announcements
What Is It?	System-wide tool for sending messages directly to individuals, groups, or roles in one or more courses. Located on the Global Navigation menu, Conversations are course-independent. >> Watch a video overview	Course tool for posting messages to everyone in a course. Located on the Course Navigation menu, announcements are course-specific. They are generally used to post public information, like a bulletin board. >> Watch a video overview
How Might I Use It?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Send a personal message to someone in your course. ✓ Send a message to members of a course project group. ✓ Reply to messages from others in your course. ✓ Filter messages by course or type. ✓ View and reply to assignment submission comments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ At the beginning of an academic term, post a welcome message, with or without A/V comments. ✓ Remind students about upcoming assignments and events. ✓ Notify students of class cancellations. ✓ Share resources with students that will help them achieve course objectives.
Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conversations stay in Canvas. They are not sent to an email account, but a notification may be delivered an individual's email address, depending upon the recipient's Notification Preferences in Canvas. ▪ Conversation messages to students are preserved in Canvas, while emails sent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You may set the course Home page to display announcements. ▪ You may write Announcements in advance and delay posting until a future date. ▪ Canvas sends notifications of announcements according to each student's Notification Preferences.

	<p>from an instructor's email account must be manually tracked by the instructor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To send email directly to WUSTL email addresses, use WebFAC Email. 	
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Notification Preferences

Notifications of Conversation messages and Announcements (and other course activities) may be delivered via email or text (SMS) messaging, depending upon a Canvas user’s [Notification Preferences](#). By default, notifications are set to “Notify Me Right Away” for Conversations and Announcements, but a user may change these settings at any time.

Notification Preferences are unique to each Canvas user, whether student or instructor. Preferences are applied uniformly across all courses. For example, if a student changes the Announcement notification setting, from “Notify Me Right Away” to “Send Daily Summary,” announcements in *all* of the student’s courses are sent in a daily summary.

Be sure to [check your own Notification Preferences](#). If you have specific communication expectations for your students, be sure to explain them at the beginning of the semester so students adjust their Notification Preferences accordingly.

By posting Announcements and sending Conversation messages with an awareness of how notifications function, you can help ensure your students stay informed and engaged.

Source: Canvas Doc Team. (Apr. 19, 2017). [What are Announcements?](#); Canvas Doc Team. (Apr. 19, 2017). [What is Conversations?](#)

Related articles:

- [Video Overview of Notification Preferences](#)
- [How do I add an announcement in a course?](#)
- [How do I use Conversations as an instructor?](#)
- [How do I send a message to a user in a course in Conversations as an instructor?](#)

<p>Canvas Feature Development Process</p> <p>Canvas welcomes ideas from participants of the Canvas Community and routinely incorporates submitted ideas into the company’s product development plan. Ideas may be submitted by instructors, system administrators, and educational leaders like you. For details, read the article Canvas Feature Development Process.</p>	<p>Canvas Support</p> <p>Remember, Canvas offers technical support 24 hours per day, 7 days per week to all faculty, staff, and students. Phone Canvas Support directly at 1-833-639-7629, or click the Help button on the Global Navigation Menu in Canvas to start an instant-message chat session.</p>
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