Dear Henk, Willem and Patrick

I appreciate the opportunity to have met with you as representatives of the Benelux user group. As promised I did further research on some of the items that we discussed and put together the following summary below.

I look forward to staying in touch over the coming months to ensure these requests are receiving attention from Blackboard. Again, I hope to be an advocate for your institutions and represent the interest of the Benelux region when it comes to these product changes.

**Prefix** (Tracking number: A5-123661)

The issue regarding name prefixes is not a simple fix. To clarify the issue here is an example:

In the Dutch language pack, a name such as Leonardo da Vinci, the “Middle Name” field is translated as “da” (Prefix) but the name displays as “Leonardo Vinci”. Adding special-case code to handle this adds more complexity to the code-base, as it contains many touch points.

However, having a separate “prefix” user info field would be much better (and desirable), since even in an English language pack, someone may be named “Leonardo da Vinci”. An extra field will take considerable time to implement, but it’ll be much more seamless than treating the middle name as the prefix. Previous attempts to resolve it have created unstable and unpredictable results with extremely complex code.

I spoke to our products team and while I cannot commit to a release date, this is something that we are going to address in a future release. I will continue to advocate on behalf of the Benelux User Group regarding this issue since as you noted it has such a large impact on the European clients of Blackboard.

**Mashups** (Tracking number: BER-4372)

Mashups in assessments have been resolved in 9.1 and there is a button on the WYSIWYG editor, also known as the VTBE, on the third line it is the last button. This button will allow for the integration of content from Flickr, SlideShare and YouTube. The editor has been updated and is the same throughout 9.1.

I am pleased to say that we are adding the Mashup functionality within the assessment tool in 9.1.
Course Level Search (Tracking number: BER-4796)

Course level search capability is a request we have seen from several of our clients in the past and while we agree that it is an important feature, it has not been added to our current product roadmap. We recognize the importance of this feature, especially for our CE/Vista clients that are considering an upgrade since it is part of that product.

Student View (Tracking number: BER-1928, BER-2432, BER-3072)

Regarding Student View, while we understand that a high fidelity student view for instructors is important, it is also not currently on the product road map. In order to meet some of the more critical features that we are developing, we determine inclusion of enhancements to our roadmap based on a variety of items and we continue to review these on a constant basis.

Portfolios

I would be happy to address your concerns regarding Portfolios once we receive your list of software defects.

WebDav (Tracking number: AS-139362, AS-139896, BER-4491)

There are a variety of reasons that explain why WebDAV is currently not working as well as it used to. Part of this is the evolution of browser popularity outside of Internet Explorer and certainly there are issues with how Microsoft supports the WebDAV technology. Fixing the pains with WebDAV is not a single solution due to the complexity of the situation brought on by multiple WebDAV clients and changes from Microsoft’s support of this technology.

Here is how we are going to approach resolving the WebDAV issues:

First, 9.1 will have a completely revamped WebDAV server that should resolve many issues and improve overall stability. It was a large change and took a significant amount of testing, but we are confident you will see huge improvements in this area for that release. After the 9.1 WebDAV is stabilized we are
looking to "back port" the WebDAV changes into service packs for v8 and v9. This is not a small effort, so will take some time, but we should be able to greatly improve the stability in these release as well.

We also realize the change we made to the "Open Web Folder" button functionality in IE is not ideal for our clients. We are looking at bringing this functionality back once we stabilize the core WebDAV server.

Please let me know if there is any additional information that you need or if I can be of any further assistance.

Best of luck with the user group meeting.

Craig Chanoff