

Update to the ANGEL Client Community

To: ANGEL Client Community

From: Ray Henderson

Date: Thursday, May 14

Subject: ANGEL User Conference Keynote Announcements

Greetings all from the ANGEL User's Conference (AUC) in Chicago where this morning we talked through some important announcements about the road ahead. Let me give you a rundown of the key points. Your colleagues are also actively Tweeting (hashtag #AUC09) and blogging from the conference so between us all we should be capturing a pretty current view of the conversation this week.

Here's the rundown:

Leadership – The big news of the day for me is that I'll be taking on a new leadership role with the combined organization. I'm going to be running Blackboard's eLearning division reporting directly to the CEO. My new job is President of Blackboard Learn, and I will have responsibility for Product Development, Support, Services and Hosting for all of our eLearning solutions, overseeing both ANGEL's and Blackboard's eLearning products. I'm excited about the challenge and opportunities I see in bringing together the best of ANGEL and Blackboard. I am also gratified that there's been a recognition that we've built something special here at ANGEL, something our eLearning colleagues at Blackboard want to extend to the whole Blackboard community.

Is it going to be hard? Yes. I've talked with many of you in the last week. I know there's plenty of concern and no shortage of skepticism about whether this is going to be good for clients. So what have I seen that made me think we can get past these understandable reactions? Two big things. A sincere appreciation for what ANGEL does really well that's already translating into objective decisions I'll talk about below. And a real humility for the mistakes made in the WebCT merger integration that's translating into a very pragmatic determination to do it better this time around.

Support and Services – The most important message we shared here is no change. The support and hosting organization will continue to operate the ANGEL support model and will remain based in Indianapolis. And we'll continue to provide Professional Services for ANGEL products. The person you called yesterday for support is the person you will call tomorrow for support.

Product Strategy – At a high level today's announcements were about reinforcing our commitment to the ANGEL product line and setting out a longer term goal of bringing the best of ANGEL and Blackboard together. Specifically:

- We will continue the 3 year support policy we announced earlier this year for both ANGEL LMS 7.3 and ANGEL LMS 7.4, which has already launched as planned. ANGEL LMS 7.4 is currently in a coordinated release period, which just means that we're taking extra care helping early adopting clients be as prepared as possible and have a successful back to school launch.

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- Planning will soon be under way for our next release – ANGEL LMS 8.0. It's too early to share details at this stage, other than to say that we'll do as we always do with a new release - get clients involved in defining it right from the beginning. The important takeaway is that development of the ANGEL platform will continue.
- Longer term, the plan is to bring the best of ANGEL and Blackboard (and WebCT) together as part of what we call Project NG (our Next Generation eLearning solution). Here again we'll follow our tradition of seeking feedback from all of you in the ANGEL community to help shape how the solutions come together over time.
- The LPS project will be combined with Blackboard Learn for Outcomes Assessment which is already live at 30+ institutions. So we thought the best knitting together of resources here was to infuse ongoing Outcomes development with the client input, analysis and design work from the LPS effort rather than separately deploy a new LPS offering.

Some of you have told us that you are interested in attending [BbWorld](#) (the Blackboard Users' Conference) this July in Washington, DC. This is a great opportunity to begin to get to know your eLearning colleagues in the broader community. Any ANGEL client that wants to attend BbWorld this year will receive free conference registration. We will provide more information on this opportunity in the coming weeks.

For those of you interested in hearing more about all of these announcements, I encourage you to join us for one of a series of webinars we've scheduled for the next couple weeks. To view the options and sign up go to: www.blackboard.com/angel/webinars. In the coming weeks, we'll also continue to share more information including written FAQs.

So plenty more details to come, but I think this captures the main points from today's discussion. As we move forward, and as I get transitioned into my new role, I'll count on your continued critical evaluation of what we put forward as our goals and plans. Hopefully you see the possibilities I have seen in this new combination - a steady way forward for the ANGEL product line and support experience, and an emergent long term vision of how we can all shape the future of eLearning together.

Best,

Ray Henderson
President of Bb Learn
Blackboard