

ODL Product Council

12/22/2015

PDFs in edX

Based on feedback from faculty, incorporating PDFs into edX is a major pain point, especially compared to the simplicity of alternate systems. It affects both residential and MOOC course authors. From the fall survey:

- *want to easily upload pdfs (1.061, 3.032, 6.0001/6.0002, 6.302, 7.06, 8.01/2)*
- *want pdf uploads as easy as Stellar (18.05 Orloff)*
- *students prefer reading pdfs to reading screen (16.90 Hoburg)*

We propose to streamline the workflow` for embedding PDFs into courses by enhancing the existing studio HTML editor and integrating it with Studio's "Files and Uploads" tool.

Currently, to update a PDF for use in a course, course authors must:

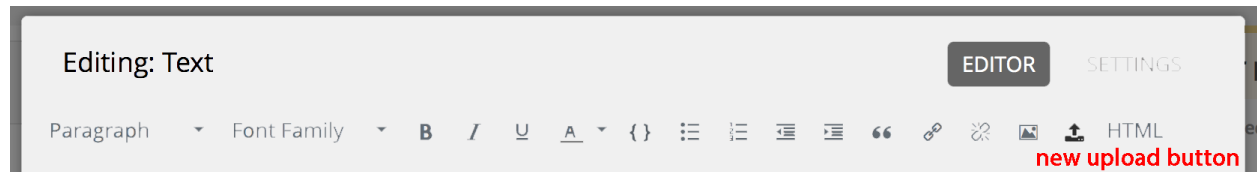
1. Navigate to the Files and Uploads section of Studio
2. Click on "Upload new File" and click on "Choose File"
3. Copy the URL
4. Close the Upload window and navigate back to the courseware
5. Open the Block and Click on Edit
6. Click on the link button and paste the URL
7. Write the title of the PDF

This is particularly painful if the author needs to link to multiple PDFs. There currently is no native support for embedded PDFs.

Typical HTML editors (like those used in Wordpress or Drupal) allow file upload directly from the editor, and automatic setting of the file location. We propose replicating this standard behavior in edX, for linked document and for embedded images. So instead of the 7 steps above, we have:

1. Navigate to the appropriate location in courseware and click the edit button
2. Click the (new) Upload icon
3. Choose the file(s) to upload / or choose from a drop-down list of already uploaded files
4. Edit the link text if necessary

Besides cutting down the number of steps, this workflow also allows the author to remain in the courseware section the whole time, focused on her content.



Insert/edit image ✕

General

Advanced

Source

+ Upload New File

Image description

Dimensions

x

☒ Constrain proportions

OK

Cancel

MVP for this enhancement will be to add a link to the uploaded PDF. If time allows, we will also investigate embedding the PDF so it can be viewed within courseware. We will also review two existing community XBlocks that offer this presentation functionality.