

Navigation improvements

The navigation in Moodle suffers from several problems:

- Very long navigation
- Content changes from page to page
 - Some nodes seem to be renamed
 - Some nodes switch from expanded/collapsed
- Very very low interest pages are accessible from any page

This confuses the user who would have troubles to figure out where he is, where he came from, how deep in the sitemap he is, etc... and if the user is confused, he will struggle remembering how to get somewhere.

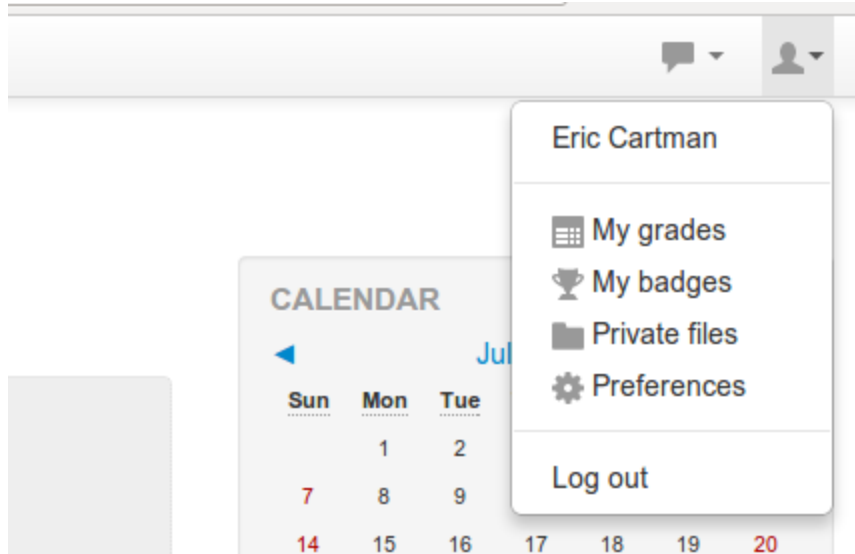
But, more importantly, this scares new users. One of my goal here was to present an understable product to a random person who would download Moodle and try it out.

The proposition here focuses on the 2 most important types of users:

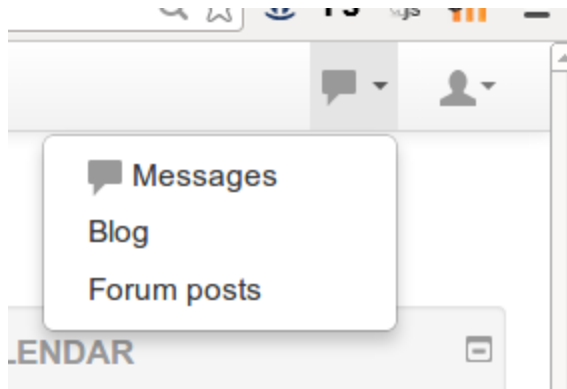
- Students
- Teachers

Direct access to user-related pages

The place where was displayed the information about the currently logged in user is now used to allow the user to quickly access **his own stuff**, like his profile, his grades, badges, and his preferences.



Another icon is used to access everything related to messaging. I am still unsure about that, ideally this would be changed into a notifications icon, which would eventually develop into messages, notifications, etc... This allows use to remove the need for My profile in the navigation block.

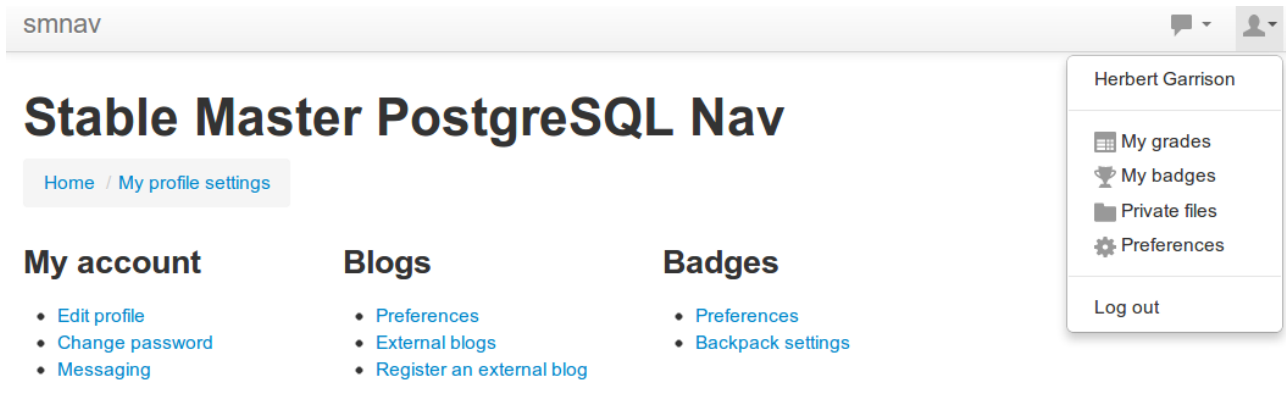


Key factors:

- Each dropdown menu has to be as minimal as possible, very few links.
- The dropdown items should not lead to something that you can be accessed via normal navigation. Example: My courses.
- Items that are subsidiary should be accessible from your own profile. Example: Notes. "Forum posts" could be a good candidate.

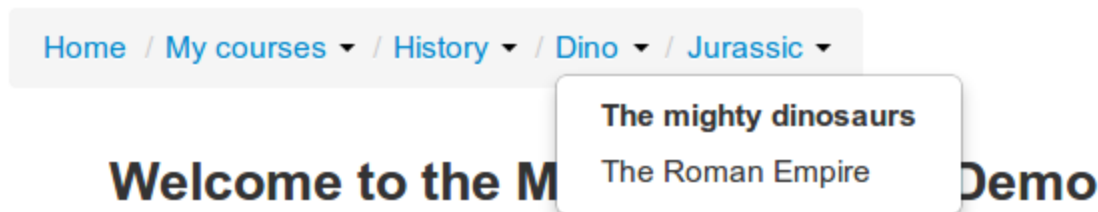
User preferences page

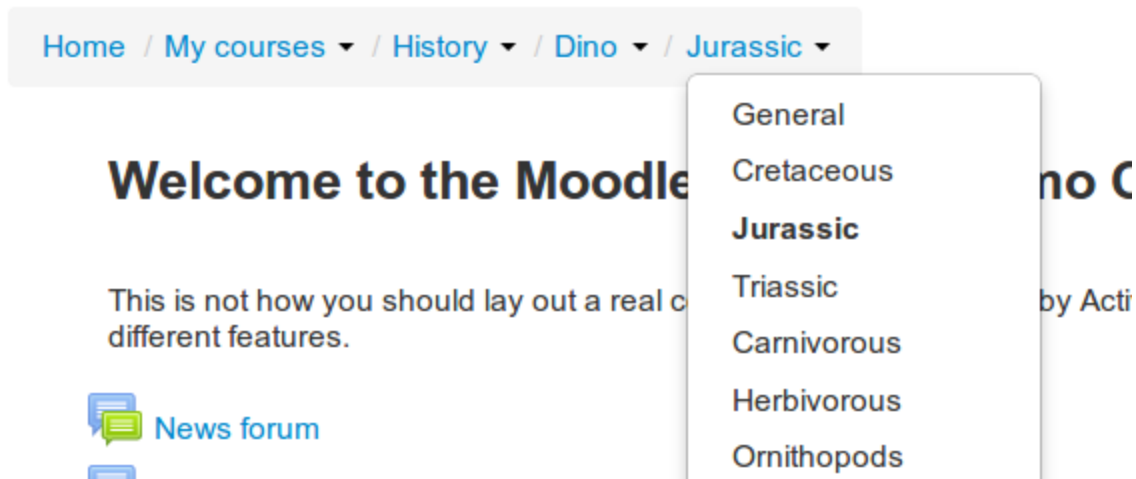
In order to get rid of the "My profile settings" in the settings block, I created a **"Preferences"** page which is accessible in the "Direct access dropdown" mentioned above. As most of the settings offered to the user in the Settings block are unlikely to be used often, they don't need to be accessible directly, on every page!



No more navigation block

All the navigation happens via the **breadcrumb**. Each node of the breadcrumb allows you to jump into neighbour nodes that you have access to. Like all the activities in the current section, or all the courses in the category that you are browsing.





Key factors:

- The modules should extend the navigation in the same pattern, ideally not more than one level
- The administration block should never be used for students to navigate in an activity. This is wrong! Students should never have to hear about "Administration".

Where am I?

The breadcrumb would certainly constitute a very good point of reference to figure out where you are. But on top of that I standardised the **headings** so that you always see the course name, and if you are in an activity, the activity name as well. This brings another level of consistency to help the user identifying where he is.

The mighty dinosaurs

Home / My courses ▾ / History ▾ / Dino ▾ / Triassic ▾ / A choice with anonymous results ▾

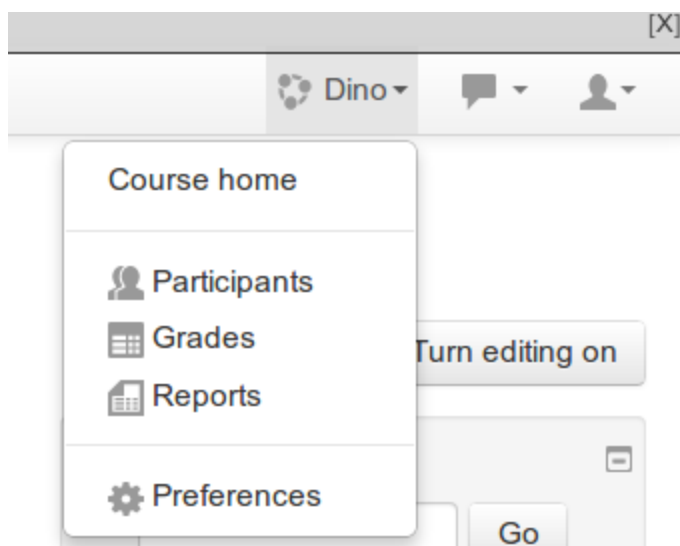
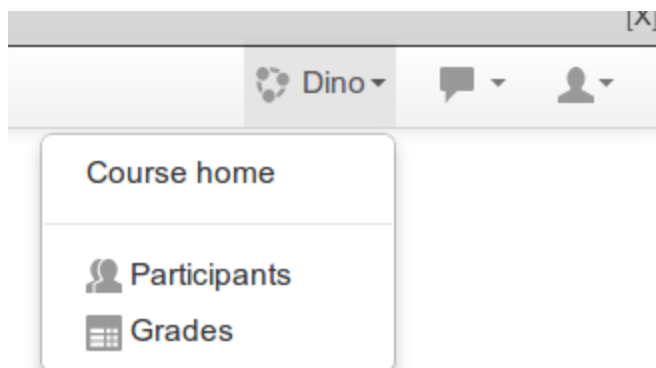
A choice with anonymous results

Course related pages

The content of the course can easily be accessed via the course page, and the breadcrumb, however some others pages also need to be accessible. Now, as soon as you are in a course, the top bar gets a new icon. I am not entirely sure about the position of this icon, but as a course is a massive set of content that you have access to, I thought that it wasn't that bad to put it there.

Next to the icon you have the course shortname, this helps the user identifying that this menu is likely to change from one course to another, and that they should keep on having a look at it.

Currently this would give access to the participants page, and your own grades. When you are a teacher, you would get access to the gradebook, and a preferences page which is like the user's preferences page.



Key factors

- The frontpage cannot use this system for its page. The frontpage is considered as the

Whole site, having a node in the top navigation is not necessary, and if ever we had one, it should not replace the course. Though, too many icons in the top bar defeat the purpose.

- Less is more

Activity settings

As the activity name is now forced, I have added a dropdown next to the activity name to get access to its settings. This dropdown should never be visible by students. I haven't had time to work more on that, but ideally the content should be relatively small, possibly linking to a Preferences page. Again, keeping in mind that only the most important stuff among the settings of the module should be visible by default. The rest should only be accessible in the "Preferences" page.

The mighty dinosaurs

[Home](#) / [My courses](#) ▾ / [History](#) ▾ / [Dino](#) ▾ / [General](#) ▾ / [News forum](#) ▾

 **News forum**

- Edit settings
- Locally assigned roles
- Permissions
- Check permissions
- Filters
- Logs
- Backup
- Restore

announcements.

and only teachers can start discussions or rep

2 columns design

As we now don't need to navigation block or the settings block any more, a 2 column design

seems more appropriate. It gives focus on the content.

Rules I applied (or to apply)

1. The top bar is a fixed navigation, its content should not change depending on where you are. I made an exception for the course dropdown, but I am not 100% convinced that this was the right thing to do.
2. The content of a dropdown should never change. Except it is made clear that the page has changed. Example:
 - a. The activity settings dropdown is allowed to change because it is visually tied to the activity itself.
 - b. The user dropdown never changes, as its content is totally independent of the page we are currently on.
 - c. The course dropdown content changes according to the course, but it never changes within the course. It remains the same.
3. Each dropdown should be concise.
4. To be part of a dropdown, a link should be really important. If it is not important enough, then it can be placed into another page.
5. No submenu in the dropdowns! Otherwise we fall back into a nested navigation.
6. It is better to have a link in the right place in context, rather than in a long navigation. Example: To subscribe to a forum, you should have a little link on the main page of the forum. This should never be part of the navigation.
7. The course dropdown is not placed next to the course title because it would distract a student. It breaks the flow of the page.
8. Modules should extend the navigation either using tabs, as some already do, or via in-context links.

Further improvements

1. Have a dropdown for quick access to different gradebook views for teachers
2. Same for reports.
3. Somehow get the Site administration content accessible for admins/managers
4. Solution for subsidiary content that is not more accessible
5. Solution to access site pages.
6. Solution to access category settings block content.

What is needed to get that into core

Most of the logic is based on the current navigation lib.

1. Extending the current navigation lib to support more "Node types"
2. Creating renderers for the dropdowns and the breadcrumb
3. Updating modules and pages to follow the new style