



Introduction to CROPS

Compiled by Mike Truong (mtruong@ucmerced.edu)

Updated: 1/2012

What is UCMCROPS?

UCMCROPS (or CROPS for short) stands for UC Merced Courses, Research, Organizations, and Projects System. CROPS enables members faculty, staff, and students to communicate, collaborate, and work together within a structured environment. Projects enjoy a central repository for messages, documents, and collaborative tools that encourage interaction and sharing.

There are three types of sites and their associated tools within CROPS:

- ***course sites:*** for course management
- ***project sites:*** for online collaboration, and
- ***portfolio sites:*** for creating, viewing, and evaluating electronic portfolios

How do I access CROPS?

While you can access CROPS through the official UCM portal (<http://my.ucmerced.edu>), the most direct way is the CROPS gateway (<http://ucmcrops.ucmerced.edu>). Doing so will allow you to have the maximum real estate to work with.

What is My Workspace?

My Workspace is your homepage where all announcements and events from all the sites you belong to are aggregated. The Resources tool in *My Workspace* provides you a private space in which you can store and manage files. You can set global preferences for email notifications, display of your personal information, edit site membership, create new sites, and more.

Where do I go to get help on CROPS?

There are a couple of places to get help with CROPS. First, you can refer to the comprehensive online Help Guide to using CROPS, which can be found at <https://ucmcrops.ucmerced.edu/xsl-portal/help/main>. Second, you can ask someone, a fellow peer or a colleague, as CROPS is widely used throughout the campus. Third, you can get support by contacting Help Desk (helpdesk@ucmerced.edu) or CROPS Support (ucmcrops@ucmerced.edu). Finally, if you're a faculty or TA, you can get support by contacting CRTE (crte@ucmerced.edu).

What tools are available on a typical Course Site?

The table below summarizes the main tools available on a typical *Course Site*. Tools can be organized into four main categories: 1) ***Communications*** tools facilitate interactions among site members; 2) ***Course*** tools are used for course delivery; 3) ***Assessment*** tools provide instructors tools to conduct formative and sumative evaluations; and 4) ***Site Management*** tools are used for administrative management of the site. Tools that are most popular or most useful are identified by asterick (*).

COMMUNICATION TOOLS	USAGE
Home	For viewing recent announcements, discussion, and chat items.
Announcements*	Use Announcements to distribute information and send out notification about activities or events relevant to your site.
Blogger	Use Blogger to keep a chronological web log of news, commentary or events on your site.
Calendar	Use calendar to post information about activities and events of interest to your site participants.
Chat Room	Use Chat to engage in real-time, unstructured conversations with your site members.
Discussion Forums	Use Discussion Forums to create, moderate, participate and manage discussion groups and topics within your site.

Email Archive*	Use Email Archive to see a list of messages that have been sent to your site.
Forums	Use Forums to post discussion topics or respond to discussion threads.
Mailtool	Use Mailtool to send email messages to site participants, groups, individuals and external users.
Messages	Use Messages to post private messages to site participants.

COURSE TOOLS	USAGE
Assignments*	Use to create and submit text-based assignments.
Discussion Forums	Use Discussion Forums to create, moderate, participate and manage discussion groups and topics within your site.
Drop Box	Use Drop Box to exchange documents with an instructor in a personal, individualized folder.
Forums*	Use Forums to post discussion topics or respond to discussion threads.
Lessons	Use Lessons to create, publish, and manage online instructional sequences for your site.
Podcasts	Use Podcasts to share rss feeds with your site participants.
Resources*	Use Resources to post, store and organize material of use to site participants.
Sections	Use Sections to create and manage sections in your course.
Syllabus*	Use Syllabus to create a unit-based outline of your course.
Web Content*	Use Web Content to display a web site outside the system to your site participants.
Wiki	Use Wiki to create a website that allows site participants to add and edit content collaboratively.

ASSESSMENT TOOLS	USAGE
Evaluation System	For running evaluations/feedback and surveys.
Feedback	Use Feedback to provide targeted feedback on assignments to site participants.
Gradebook*	Use Gradebook to calculate, store and distribute grade information to students.
Polls	Use Polls to take a quick poll of users on your site.
Tests & Surveys*	Use Tests & Surveys to create, edit, and manage online assessments and to set up automatic feedback and grading options.
TurningTechnologies	Integration with the TurningTechnologies suite of student response systems

SITE MANAGEMENT TOOLS	USAGE
Roster*	Use Site Roster to view a list of participants in your site.
Search	Use Search to look for content within or across sites in which you're a member.
Sections	Use Sections to create and manage sections in your course.
Site Editor*	Use Site Editor to edit and manage your site.
Site Statistics	Use Site Statistics to view statistics on your site by user, event or resource.