



Thommen's Timely Technology Tips "Make Life Easier, A Proactive Approach" Creating Effective Titles & Icons

ANGEL allows faculty to customize the look and feel of courses and learning objects. Below, are some suggestions regarding titles and icons that can make classes easier to manage and navigate, for both the student and the instructor.

Object and Folder Titles

1. Don't use HTML code in object or folder titles. (If you don't know what this means you probably aren't doing it.)
While it is possible to color, bold, italicize, etc., titles, ANGEL programmers did not intend this flexibility. The HTML code causes strange things to happen in the Gradebook and/or management tools. Finally, objects containing HTML code in the title may cause malfunctions in future versions of ANGEL. To focus attention on a particular object, consider using this modification on the subtitle field instead.
2. Keep object and folder titles as short as possible and use the subtitle field to expand or explain the title.
Long titles that are used in the Gradebook will be truncated, and expanding the column width to see the whole title is extra work. Also, keeping titles shorter than 10 -15 characters avoids the problem outlined in item four (4) below.
3. Make all titles in a course site unique.
If a course has two identically named objects in separate folders, many ANGEL tools or reports only display the title of the object, and don't include the name of the folder containing the object. Trying to figure out which two or more identically named objects to act upon, from a display list of identical titles, is very difficult.
*Identically named objects will also cause confusion for students trying to find specific materials (e.g. "Was the information I need in the **Chapter_1** document in the week 1 folder, or the **Chapter_1** document in the week 2 folder?").*
4. Differentiate or individualize all titles within the first 10 to 15 characters.
Many ANGEL tools use drop-down menus to manage or report on a learning object. These menus, to facilitate selection, only display the first 10 to 15 characters from an object's title. If a class has a number of objects that share the first 10 or 15 characters, selecting the correct object from the menu list is time consuming and difficult.

Changing Icons

1. Don't use moving graphics (animated .GIF's) to replace normal icons. They are distracting.
2. If you replace an object's icon, it should provide the student some information as to what the underlying object represents.
Using a unicorn to replace a folder icon doesn't tell the student what to expect if they click on the folder's associated link. Instead, try this: If a folder contains information about unicorns, use a normal folder icon as the background and superimpose the unicorn's image to make a new icon. To the right, is an example of how I wanted to emphasize the fact that the folder in question should be associated with me.



This timely tip can also be found at:

ANGEL: Faculty Community Group > Content > Thommen's Timely Technology Tips
http://www.lcc.edu/cte/resources/thommen_tips/

