SSES courseweb 2: Site architecture – node types and sections



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BLOGG: SSES COURSEWEB

This is a part of the experimental open techincal documentation for the SSES courseweb project. This part gives summarizes content types – how they are used and displayed.

RELATERAT
- Technical documentation for "SSES courseweb"
- SSES courseweb 5: Automatic e-mail notifications
- SSES courseweb 4: Profile management
- SSES courseweb 3: Course content and access

The courseweb addition to the SSES site brings a number of new content types:

COURSE RELATED NODES

- Course data (cw_course): Created by registrars, containing meta-data about a course – including teachers (which should be given access to the course). Not to be confused with the 'Course' (course) content type, used for public/brochure presentation of courses (and not a part of the courseweb functionality).
- Assignment (cw_assignment): Created by teachers, attached to a course. Assignments describe a task that students should do, before a given deadline.
- Assignment submission (cw_assignsub): Created by students, attached to an assignment. This content type is used to hand in completed submissions for assignments, and can be handed in for a group of students or just a single student. All included students get access to the submission.
- Blog posts (cw_blogpost): Created by teachers, attached to a course.
- FAQ (cw_faq): This node type is not used for now, but may in the future be used to create collections of frequently asked questions, to associate with courses.

PROFILE RELATED NODES

- Course web profile (cw_profile): Created by registrars manually or by import from CSV. Used to store student data, but also data about teachers, registrars, administrators, event speakers, etc. Course web profiles are Content Profiles, and used for automatically creating user accounts, when relevant – *user accounts are not created manually*. Not to be confused with the content type Profile, used for public/brochure presentation of SSES staff (and not a part of the courseweb functionality).
- Course web profile import (cw_profileimport): Created by registrars when importing profiles from CSV files. Also used to be able to find all profiles imported (or updated) by a selected import.
- Courseweb school (cw_school): Holds the five schools SSES cooperate with. Only used for node references from the profiles. Created only once, by administrators.
- Course status (cw_coursestatus): Used for assigning students to courses, giving them a "status" at the course (such as 'waiting list' or 'enrolled'). Not created manually. The course status is a factors in determining if user accounts should be created for profiles – students active on a course must have an account to log in with.

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STRUCTURE AND DISPLAY

Many (but not all) content types above are displayed using Page manager and Panels. When managing the display of these content types, make sure to check any Page manager settings.

Also, the content types related to courses are *not* displayed at their regular path 'node/NID', but at 'node/course-NID/NID' (or even node/course-NID/assignment-NID/NID for assignment submissions).

Why and how?

When viewing a course, there are extra menus visible in the sidebar – both links available to anyone subscribed to the course and links available to teachers and registrars only. These menus are actually Views blocks, fetching a number of links and other information from the displayed node.
These links should be available when viewing the course-related nodes as well, but the default argument handling in Views doesn't allow for fetching default arguments in the complexity required (unless you write one block display for each content type).

The path structure for the course-related content tricks Views into fetching the course nid, and using it for displaying the related links – no extra displays necessary. The redirection to the new paths is managed by page manager – the node templates for the relevant content types are set to a '301 redirect', with the new path as target.

(None of these tricks would have been necessary if the site used Panels all the way, but the existing site didn't.)

A FEW MORE NOTES ON THE COURSE BLOCKS

The course menu is actually divided into two Views blocks – one with student links and one with teacher/registrar links. These are grouped into one single block, using Mini panels, to give the visual impression of a single block. (The teacher/registrar links are actually the same block embedded twice, using Views Content Pane settings to exclude a link only registrars should see if the acting user is a teacher.)

At the course pages, there are also blocks displaying a summary of student statuses for the course. These summarize the number of students at each status (added/waiting list/pending/enrolled/active/graduated/cancelled) as well as a further division of each level, showing the number of students from each school SSES is cooperating with. These blocks are created by Views using the argument fallback option *summary sorted ascending* – combined with a custom template that removes the link normally displayed in the summaries.

The status summaries are using the same trick of using mini panels to make several blocks appear as a single one. To make the blocks appear in the proper contexts – and only those – we use the Context module. This requires enabling contexts of node types (such as course data and assignment submission) as well ass specific paths (such as node//*assignments and node*//faq).

Notes about the course jump menu

The jump menu displayed in the site header (for logged-in users only) is a view using the *jump menu* style. Views naturally restricts the listed courses to the ones you are allowed to view, making otherwise complex filtering unnecessary.

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