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A Self Help Troubleshooting Checklist:

If you are experiencing problems with WebCT follow these suggestions below to eliminate common sources of trouble.

Log In Address	Takes a long time to load
Username and Password	Disable pop-up blockers/ad blockers
Browser Version	Problems being re-directed
Browser Settings	Adware/spyware removal
Cache Issues	Still struggling?

Log In Address: Are you using correct URL for log on page?

Go to: <http://webct.montana.edu>

*Note: Open a fresh browser and type the above address in... sometimes using a hotlink out of a mail account will lead to unpredictable results.

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Username and Password: Are you using the correct username or password?

The banner number (MSU Student Number) is the preferred username but some extended studies courses issue a special username to their students. It is also possible to have a double account. A call to the helpdesk at MSU ITC (406-994-1777) can straighten this out.

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Browser Version: Is your browser compatible with the current version of WebCT being used on campus?

Montana State University is currently using WebCT Campus Edition 4.1

Go to: <http://www.webct.com/tuneup>

If your browser is not compatible-- take steps to get a browser that will work properly.

AOL Users: Sometimes AOL presents a problem.

Go to: <http://www.webct.com/tuneup>

Search until you find information on what to do if you are an AOL user.

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Browser Settings: Sometimes the browser has not been set-up properly.

Go to: <http://www.webct.com/tuneup>

Follow the steps to get your browser working optimally for WebCT.

Fresh Browser: Is WebCT being accessed through a newly opened browser? (as mentioned above)

It is always best to open a fresh browser and then go to the MSU WebCT Log In page either by a bookmark (favorite) you have set for the Log In page proper or by typing the address in.

(FYI: Never make a bookmark or favorite so it links inside the course itself-- this can lead to unpredictable results!)

Note: Sometimes problems can occur even when simply connecting to the MSU WebCT site out of an email message that has been sent to an AOL, hotmail, MSN (and other proprietary mail system) accounts.

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Cache Issues:

When logging on to WebCT, the browser keeps bringing the participant back to a certain point of time in the course (or to a certain page):

When working on a Windows Operating System: Sometimes it helps to clear the cache and/or temporary files associated with the browser. Keep in mind that Windows versions differ, computer systems differ and browsers are different but the participant needs to figure out how to "clear" out the pointers and cookies that keep sending the computer back to the same place in time. For instance, Internet Explorer 5.5 SP2 has a place that allows you to delete Temporary Files (Tools/Internet Options/On the "General" tab, under the "Temporary Internet

Files" area, select "Delete Files"). You can also delete the files that reside locally on your computer from this area.

Note: Different operating systems have different ways of addressing this issue but you can usually figure out the place (folder) that holds this type of stuff on your system. After finding it you can delete extraneous files. This process of clearing the cache has been known to help. Also, when logging on, it has been found to be best if you do not select the prompt for saving the password to the local machine, this has also proven to be problematic at times. Always best to go in fresh.

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Taking a long time. Stuck: Is the browser stuck? Just spinning?

Sometimes the browser needs to be refreshed or reloaded. Hit "Stop" and then refresh or reload. This will also sometimes help if you get an error trying to locate the site. Refresh or reload if you get an "...unable to locate..." error.

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Disable popup blockers/ ad blockers-- WebCT relies on popup windows to display messages and other tools. WebCT corp specifies that you disable popup blockers/ad blockers while using WebCT. Some of these products allow you to specify which sites to allow popups from - you will need to consult your documentation to see if this is an option. Otherwise you will have to disable the feature completely while using WebCT. **NOTE:** Some antivirus software (such as Norton/Symantec) includes popup killers, which may be activated upon installation or upgrade. You should check your documentation to see if this applies to your software.

Popup blocker in XP Service Pack 2 upgrade--

XP Service Pack 2 includes a popup blocker for Internet Explorer that will be enabled by default. While this is a very useful feature for general web surfing it will cause problems for MSU WebCT.

Working with the Popup Blocker:

If you wish to disable the Popup Blocker entirely you can do so directly from the Tools menu: Go to the Tools menu in Internet Explorer. In the "Popup Blocker" section choose "Disable Popup Blocker".

If you wish to keep it running but allow certain sites (like webct.montana.edu) you can do so directly from the Tools menu:

Go to the Tools menu in Internet Explorer. In the "Popup Blocker" section choose "Popup Blocker Settings". Follow the directions.

Quiz or Survey won't work:

If you are having trouble with quizzes and surveys there may be a problem generated by the

use of pop-up blocker software used to stop ad pop-up windows. If you are running one, turn it off before you attempt to take a quiz or survey.

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Why are students being sent to other sites or being told they are not authorized when they log in to MSU WebCT?

You are unable to login to WebCT and receive a message that reads something like this: *"You are not authorized to view this page. You might not have permission to view this directory or page using the credentials you supplied. Please try the following: sites organized by subject."*

Under the above message is a long list of search category links, you are being redirected to an external (SCCS) page by software installed on your computer. ***This is not a WebCT error.***

Causes:

This is a problem with the computer you are using to connect to WebCT. The computer may have some 'adware' software installed on it which intercepts URLs entered by you, and redirects them through an adserver proxy host, which in turn tries to send them to WebCT. This periodically creates problems for people who use Internet Explorer. Sometimes you may be able to connect without a problem, and other times you won't be able to connect at all. Such software is often bundled with 'free' versions of 'ad-supported' software available for download from the internet, usually as an alternative to paying for a full-featured version with no ads. Depending upon your security settings in IE, such software may also be installed automatically when visiting certain web sites.

There are many different types of adware, and some of them are necessary for the proper functionality of some software with which they may have been installed. For example, many 'free' software programs downloaded from the internet have managed to offer their software for free because they have signed distribution agreements with the adware companies to bundle the adware with their own product. In some cases, you are free not to install the accompanying software, but in others you are obligated to use it if you wish to use the 'free' software as well. Also, not all adware-related software programs are easy or visible to uninstall, nor have we been able to identify which programs come with such software.

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Known programs identified include:

Kazaa Media Desktop v2.6 - comes with something called PerfectNav (and maybe others);

MySearchBar (and other 'hotbars') - various programs like IEFeat!(?) and SubmitURL;

Other custom tool bars and launch bars may cause similar problems.

Internet Optimizer - not sure which software is installed but removing it apparently fixed the problem in at least one case.

This is not a static list...

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Things to do to fix these types of problems:

Make sure your Internet browsers have been configured correctly for use with WebCT. To do that, you should follow the instructions at this website: <http://www.webct.com/tuneup>

Make sure you do not have any parasite (adware/spyware) software on your computer. For more information about this, you should visit the following website: <http://www.doxdesk.com/parasite>

There is also some good info on these types of problems here: http://www.download.com/Spyware-Center/2001-2023_4-0.html

If you find adware/spyware and need to remove it:

If you want to try and remove these types of programs, the easiest way (for PC) is if they are listed in the Add/Remove Programs applet of your Control Panel (Start -> Settings -> Control Panel -> Add/Remove Programs). Look for programs which may be unfamiliar to you, or have something in their title about searching, internet, url, optimizer etc. If you are sure you wish to try and remove it, uninstall it and reboot the computer. Try to access WebCT and see if the problem has resolved itself, otherwise you can try to uninstall another one. Note that many of these shifty programs do not present an add/remove option. Then you may need to move to a special program. Read on....

If you detect adware/spyware and can't remove it by other means, or if you want to inoculate your system against adware/spyware, you should try downloading and running a program that detects and removes spyware/adware from your computer.

There are two well known free spyware remover programs:

- SpyBot S&D at www.safer-networking.net, and

- Adaware at <http://www.lavasoft.com>

Both of these programs will attempt to identify and offer to remove adware that is known to its database, which is regularly updated.

We do not directly support any of these software packages but they are highly rated by trade magazines as being effective in removing and preventing ad/spyware from computers. Note that they warn that some software you have installed may cease to function properly if you remove any adware upon which it may depend, so be sure to read the details.

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Still struggling?

If you are still struggling with getting connected, contact the instructor of your course; ITC Help desk at 1-406-994-1777 (M-F, 7AM-9PM, Mountain Time)- email: helpdesk@montana.edu; or call the Burns Telecom Center at 1-406-994-6550 (M-F, 9AM -5 PM, Mountain Time)- email: msuwebct@montana.edu.

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