



香港城市大學
City University of Hong Kong
三十周年紀念 30th Anniversary

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OCIO Office of the
Chief Information Officer

Replacing Locally Hosted LMS with Cloud-based SaaS Solution: An Institutional Study

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Background

Supporting WebCT from 1998

Adoption of Blackboard in Faculty of Business in 2001

CIO decided to have a unified LMS

LMS evaluation in 2003 led to selection of Bb

Not satisfied with Bb managed hosting service at pilot

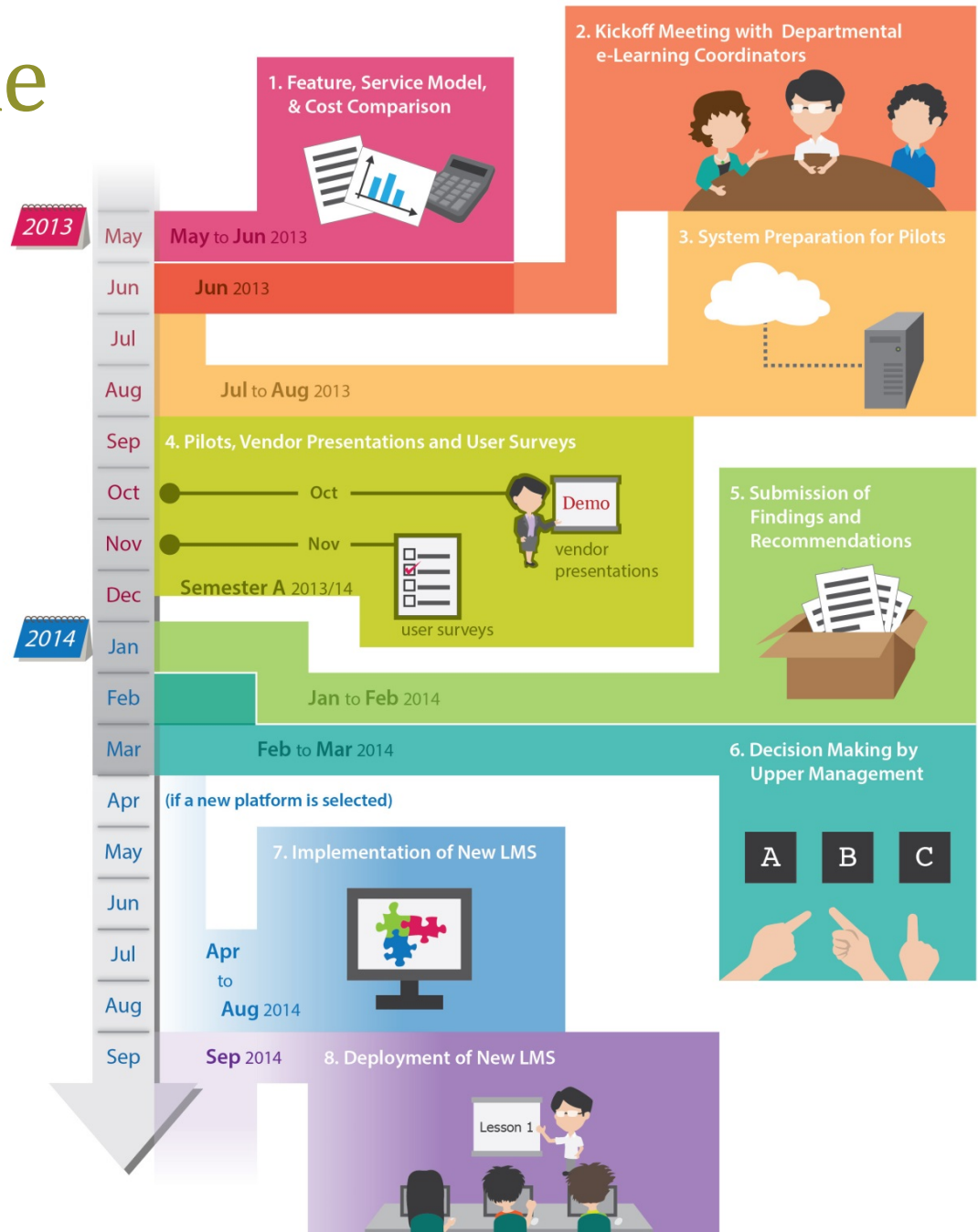
Hosting Bb on campus since 2005

Long term contract with Bb ending in 2014

2nd LMS evaluation in 2013

Project Timeline

1. Initiate study
2. Informing department representatives
3. Preparation for pilots
4. Pilots, promotional activities & feedback collection
5. Reporting to upper management
6. Decision making
7. Implementation
8. User adoption



Evaluation 2013: Result Summary



Blackboard

- Dated interface
- Hard to keep up with new versions
- Still acceptable as an LMS



- Unusual workflow
- https issue during pilot
- Not preferred by pilot users
- Not recommended



- Modern & intuitive UI
- Instant upgrade & bug fixes (SaaS)
- Preferred by pilot users
- Possible replacement to Bb



- Updated interface
- Lack of SaaS model
- Not piloted

Recommendations to Upper Management

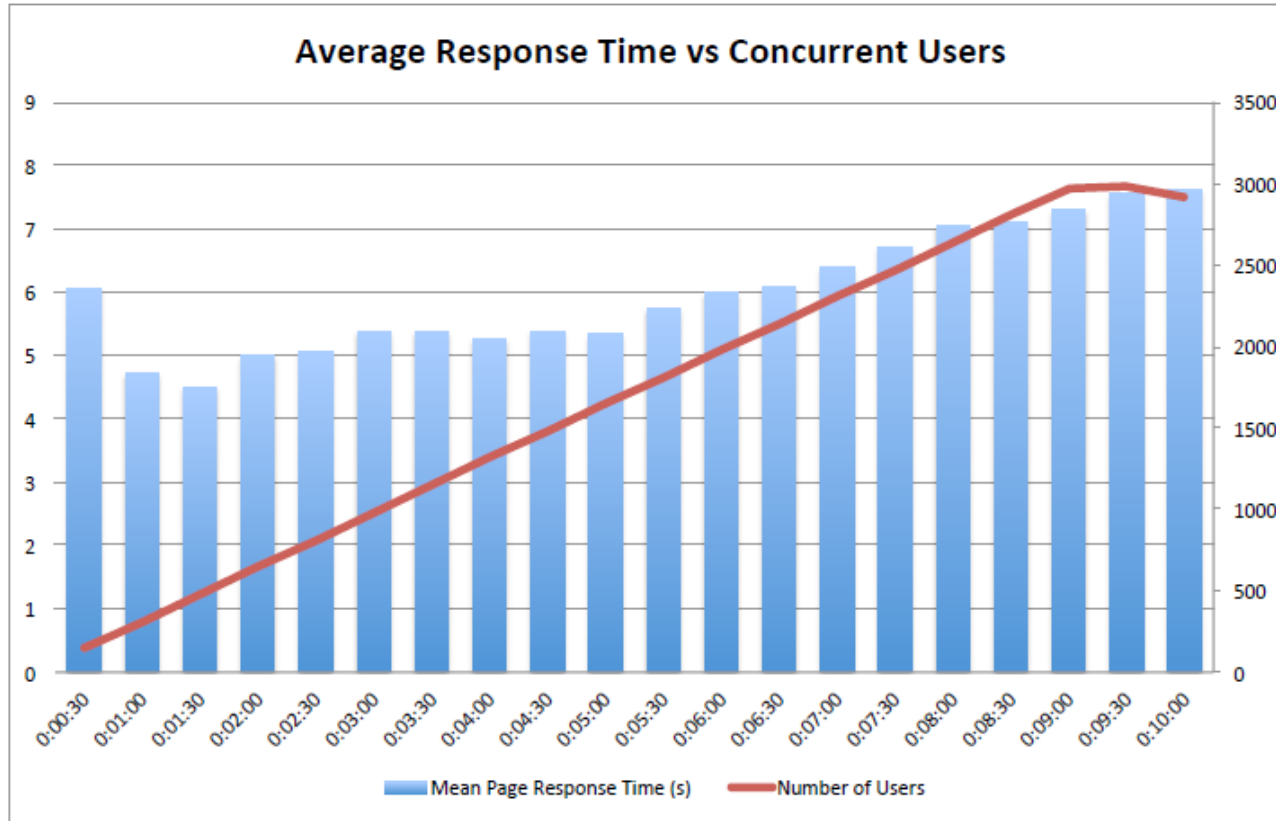
Progressive Option	Conservative Option
Adopt Canvas	Retain Blackboard
Soft launch in 2014/15	Renew contract for 5 yrs
Completely replace Bb in Summer 2015	Consider new hosting option

Responses from Upper Management

- No decision upfront
- Authorize further study of Canvas → Extended Pilot
- Demand proof of system capacity

Challenge #1: Verification of System Capacity

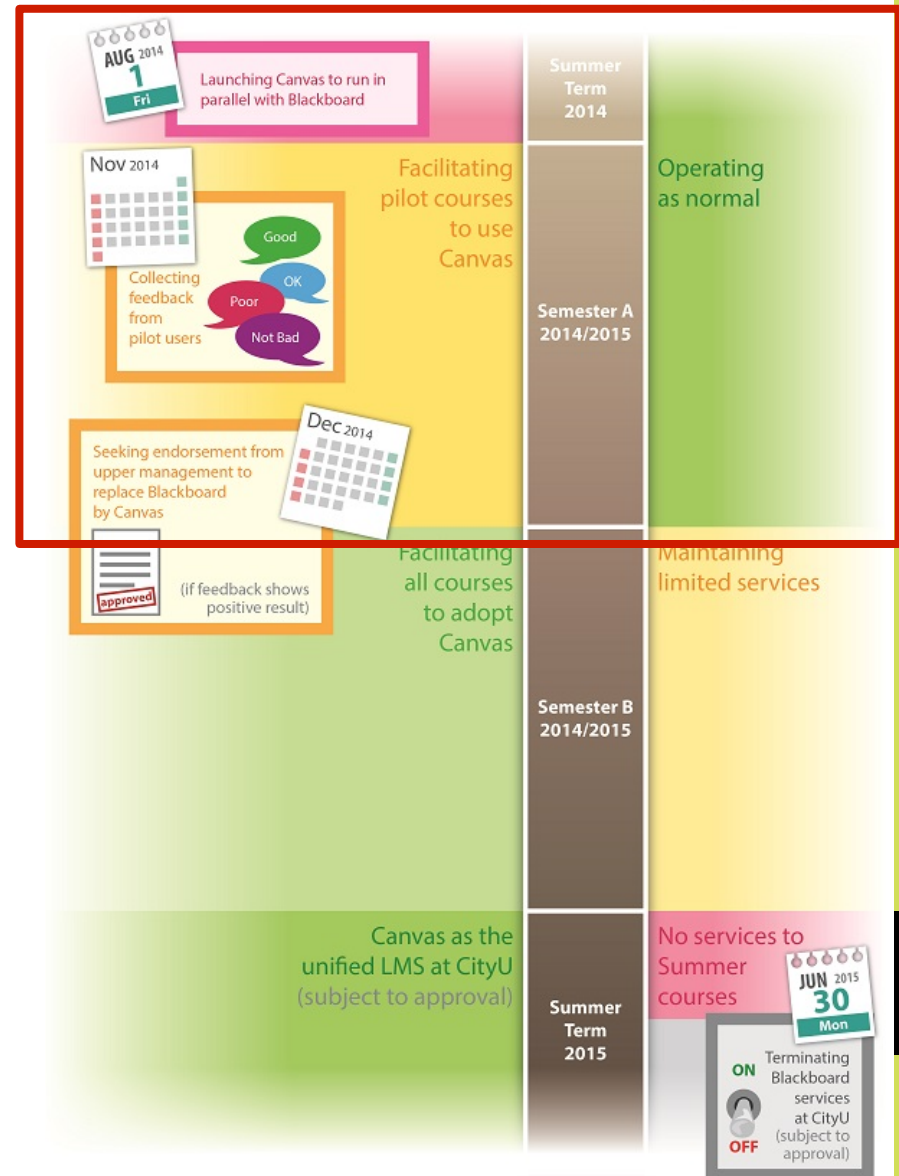
- Time test showed acceptable result for typical use
- Run Load test up to 3,000 concurrent users





Extended Canvas Pilot

- Canvas Implementation Group formed
- Extended pilot in Sem A (Fall Term) 2014/15
- Enlarge user population
- Generate authentic opinion
- Bb operating as usual



Challenge #2: Recruiting Users

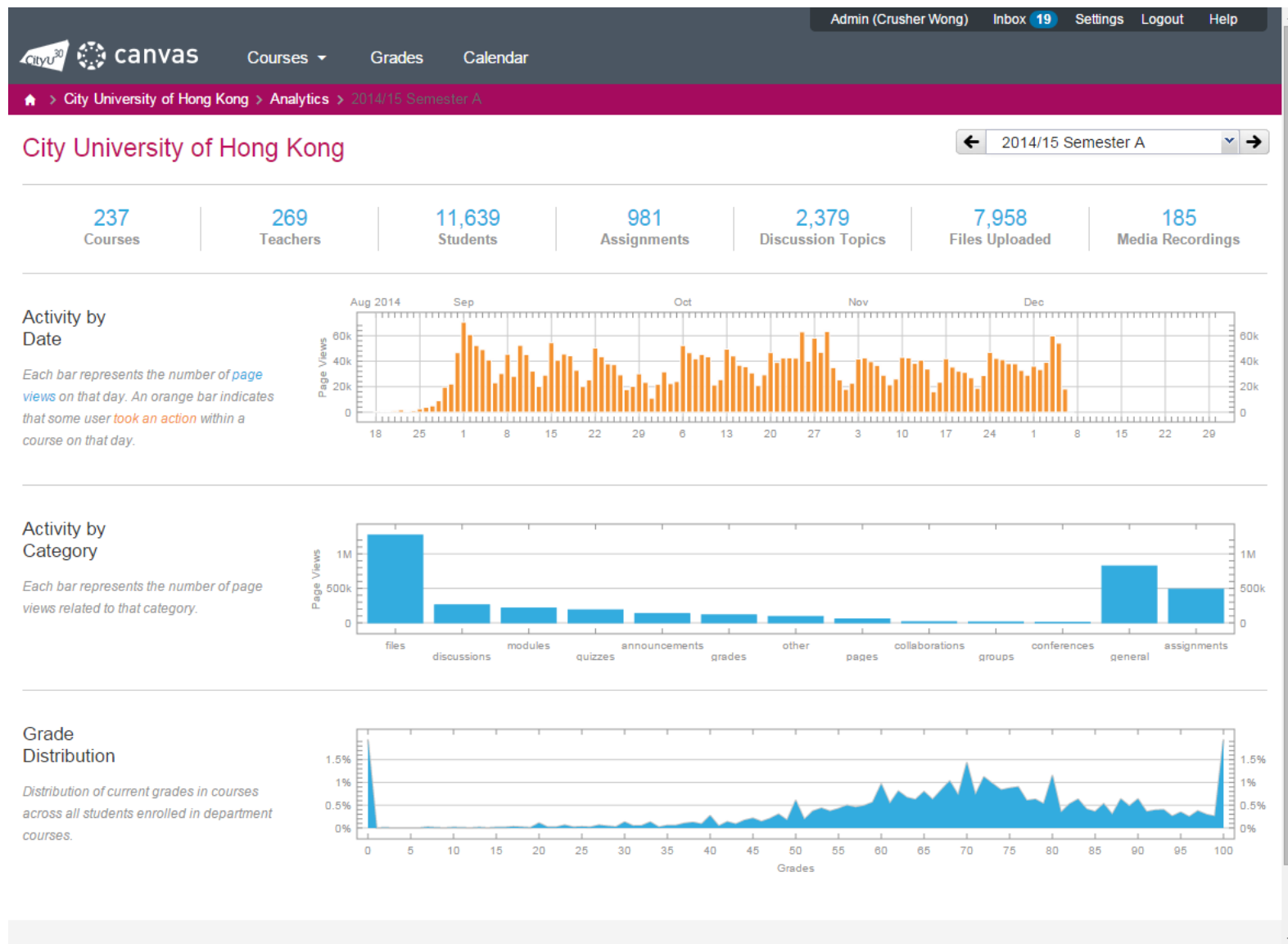
- Most faculty members preferred to wait and see
- Upper management wanted involvement from all academic units
- Soliciting individuals to join
- One academic unit elected to fully adopt Canvas in all courses
- Finally, 237 courses published for 11,629 students (within 24,000 students)
- Demanding to support 2 LMSs running in parallel with large numbers of users

Challenge #3:

Latency & Maintenance Time Frame

- Connecting to data centre in Virginia, USA
- Not ideal for large size file transfer
- Urgent maintenance took place during our training workshop
- Vendor had plan to open new data centre in Australia
- We suggested Singapore when Hong Kong had no AWS data centre

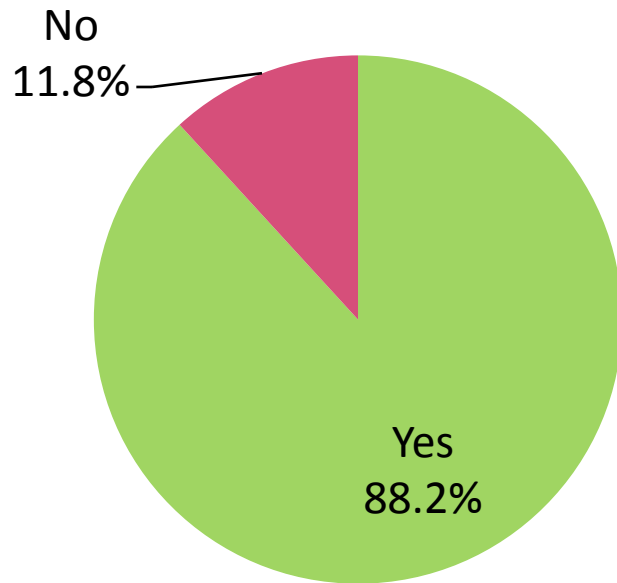
Canvas Analytics – Semester A 2014/15



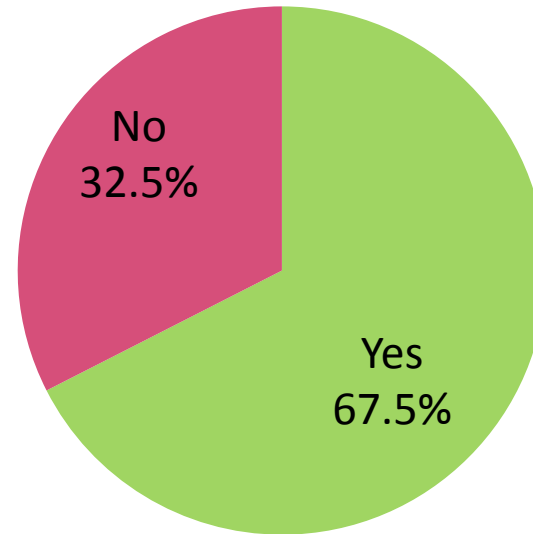
Feedback from Pilot Users

**Are you satisfied with Canvas as an e-learning system?
(regardless of e-portal features)**

Staff: 51 responses

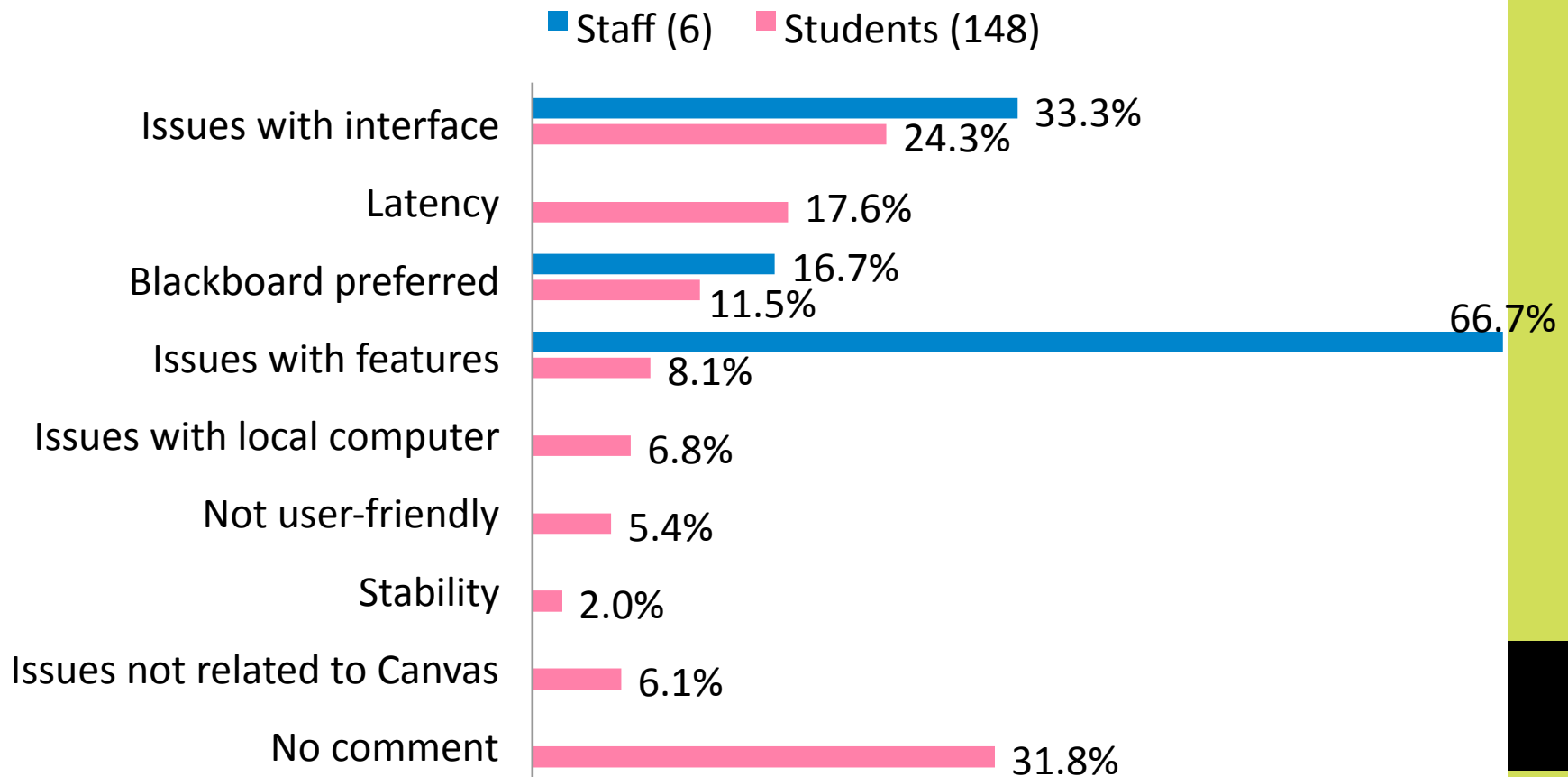


Students: 456 responses



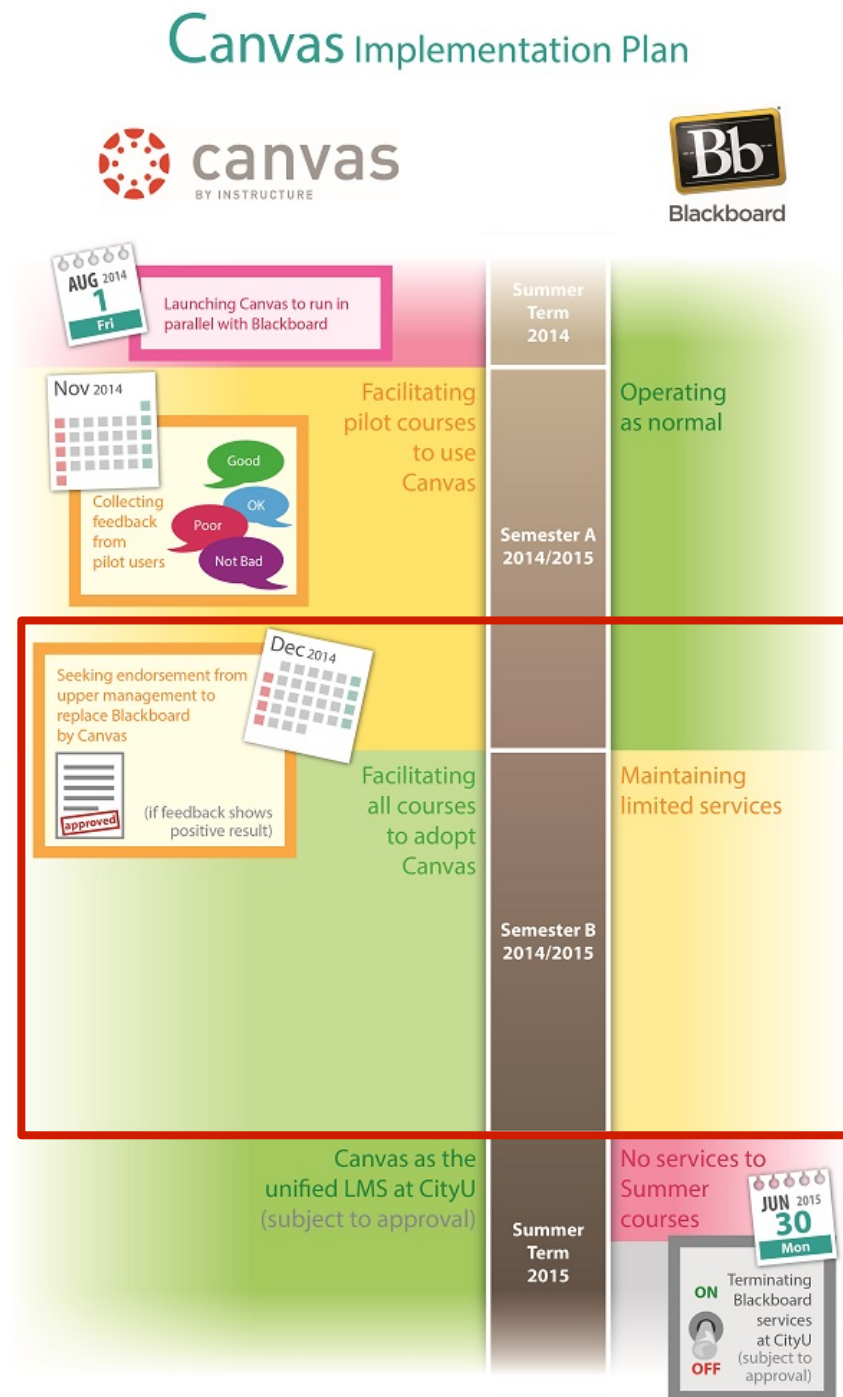
Canvas Extended Pilot Feedback

Why some users not satisfied with Canvas?



Full Adoption of Canvas

- Full launch in Sem B (Winter Term) 2014/15
- 19 workshops conducted
- 17 academic units visited
- Over 370 attended workshops
- Over 150 courses migrated
- Moved to Singapore AWS on 14th Jan 2015



Challenge #4: Course Migration

- Cannot migrate course contents from local server to cloud without faculty's consent
- Canvas provided migration service but the results were far from ideal
- Manual work to fine tune the courses after mechanical migration
- Allow colleagues to opt-in but advise to rebuild
- Only 10% of courses within this semester were migrated finally

Challenge #5: Limited Transition Period

- Blackboard will decommission on 30 Jun 2015 due to limited budget
- Unable to retrieve assessment records afterward
- No new course site on Bb since 1 Jan 2015
- Two LMSs only running parallel for Fall semester
- Some faculties were anxious about the change
- Final year students on new LMS for 1 semester only
- Users were cooperative in action according to analytics

Canvas Analytics – semester B 2014/15



Courses ▾

Grades

Calendar

Admin (Crusher Wong)

Inbox 20

Settings

Logout

Help

Home > City University of Hong Kong > Analytics > 2014/15 Semester B

City University of Hong Kong

← 2014/15 Semester B →

1,617

Courses

1,418

Teachers

23,914

Students

4,779

Assignments

13,479

Discussion Topics

55,372

Files Uploaded

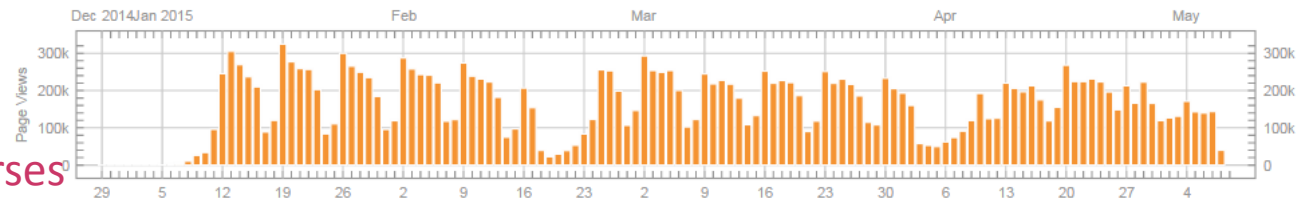
3,479

Media Recordings

Activity by Date

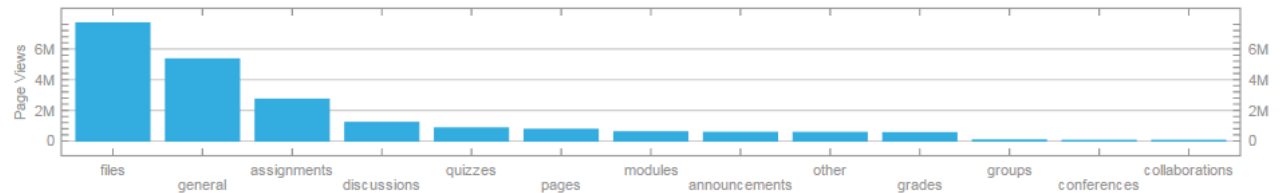
Each bar represents the number of **page views** on that day. An orange bar indicates that some user **took an action** within a course on that day.

80% of all courses



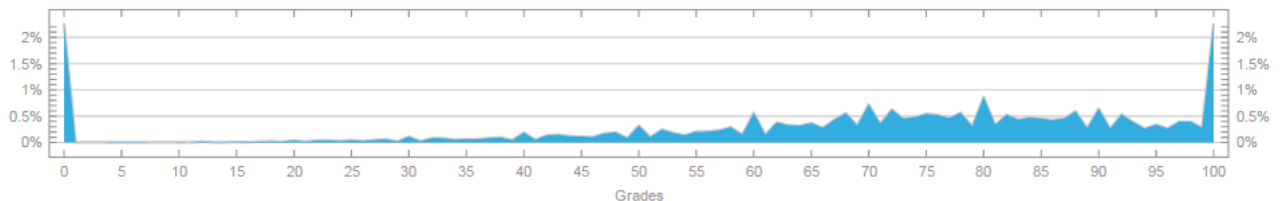
Activity by Category

Each bar represents the number of page views related to that category.



Grade Distribution

Distribution of current grades in courses across all students enrolled in department courses.



From Local Bb to Canvas on Cloud

Pros	Cons
Students access to all e-learning records before graduation	No tool to download some records (e.g. discussion)
Maintaining e-learning records for accreditation/audit purposes	Lack of control on sending notification to students
Easy to connect to other cloud services (i.e., Dropbox, O365, LinkedIn, etc.)	Hard to judge what to download as backup
Instant updates and quick bug fixes	More factors to investigate when problem occurs
Similar UI (operation) as social network platforms	Loss of certain features and control in course level & system level
Lower total cost of operation	Redeployment of human resources due to diminishing demand for servers on campus
No more server side management	Need more attention on legal issues
Rejuvenation of e-learning (from new pedagogy to MOOC)	Rising work load deal to new pedagogy development

Is it worth to make the switch?

- Initial success - adoption rate target met
- Some colleagues told me they loved Canvas
- Some said they could not reproduce certain learning activities
- Lower the barrier for application of technology for new pedagogy
- Increase workload to the support team

Check out the SaaS LMSs!

Questions?

CityU e-Learning Ecosystem

