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## February 2007, Volume 1, Issue 6

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# What's New at e-ATS?

Volume 1, Issue 6  
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**Did You Know?** Did you know that you can open, edit, and save documents, workbooks, and presentations in the file formats new to Microsoft Office Word, Excel, and PowerPoint 2007 by installing the Office 2007 File Format Converter located on <http://sharepoint.rwu.edu>?

## Journal LX (Blog)

Dr. Michael Swanson began his career at Roger Williams University in 1972. He teaches American Studies, History, and CORE courses. His "favorite is whatever I'm in at the moment!"

During the course of last semester, Prof. Swanson added a new feature to his courses, a blog. A new tool was added to Blackboard which creates a journal feature (commonly referred to as a blog) allowing students to share comments on a common theme.

Prof. Swanson took on the incorporation of the journal tool as a "plaything". He admitted that he has remained teaching because of new approaches offered by technology. Traditionally, in the Urban Americas class, Prof. Swanson would divide the class into teams and the teams would represent a city. Each team would be required to present material in front of the class. A major drawback of this form was the lack of a durable product. Another troubling aspect of the traditional form was the PowerPoint presentations (discourages the development of writing skills).

Prof. Swanson discovered the journal feature offered he and his students many benefits. One advantage of the blog over the traditional team project form was the development of personal writing skills. The journal tool is easy to setup and monitor. It offers the professor the ability to view the project in its entirety. The contribution of individuals is easily tracked. The class as a whole is able to participate, if desired.

Prof. Swanson shared his view that the journal feature can be utilized for instruction as well as a resource (i.e., instructions for creating tasks). The students offered feedback in the form of "had fun". In addition, the students used the tool and learned the format easily.

Prof. Swanson is willing to discuss his success with Journal LX (blog) with anyone who might be interested. There are many benefits with few drawbacks. This feature of Blackboard offers one more method of reaching the students in a form they have become used to with little instruction.

### Who's Who at ATS

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### Blackboard Hot Topics:

- Assignment Mgr. / Gradebook / Word Reviewing Tools
  - Wed. 2/21 @ 12–1:45
- Discussion Boards
  - Wed. 2/28 @ 12–1:45
- Collaboration (Chat & Classrooms)
  - Wed. 3/7 @ 12–1:45
- Turnitin Assignments
  - Tues. 2/20 @ 2–3:45
- Blackboard Basic Instruction
  - Fri. 2/16 @ 1–3:45

All sessions will be held in SB 223 in Gabelli

### Important Web Links!

<http://rwu.e-academy.com>: Microsoft Products under RWU's "Work at Home" rights!  
<http://sharepoint.rwu.edu>: Publications, Support Materials, and Instructions



HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!