

#### Introduction

Contribute is a web-based application developed by Freed-Hardeman University that is designed to facilitate online, real-time conversation between participates. Although its primary purpose is to support backchannel conversations, its rich feature set offers a variety of pedagogical opportunities for application in the teaching and learning environment. This includes study sessions for exams, group collaboration on projects, and many other collaborative uses. This guide is designed to "jump-start" your use of Contribute.

## How do I access the Contribute?

To access Contribute, open the following address in your Internet browser: <a href="http://apps.fhu.edu">http://apps.fhu.edu</a>. Click the Contribute icon to open the app. You may also enter <a href="http://contribute.fhu.edu">http://contribute.fhu.edu</a> to open the app directly. Click the Login link, and sign in using your FHU username and password. Individuals outside the university may login using their Google or Facebook account credentials.

# How do I join or create a Contribute session?

Users may create new Contribute sessions and invite others to attend, or they may join sessions that have already been created. You may perform one of the following after you log into Contribute:

- Select a session from your list of active sessions.
- Join a session by entering a Session ID.
- Search for Session or Course ID.
- Create a new session.

You will enter a session title, description and email address list of people to invite when you create a session. You can associate the session with a Course ID if you are an instructor. This action will automatically include students as session participants.

# How do I post to the Contribute conversation?

The Contribute conversation is displayed on the left-hand side of the Contribute screen. Above the conversation window where posts are listed, is a textbox where participants may enter their posts. You may enter text, hyperlinks or change to *File* mode and upload files into the conversation from your local computer. You may also interact with an individual post by marking it as a *Favorite*, *Reply* to the post and/or *Ditto* a post if you agree with the statement or question posed by its author. These actions will allow you (and others) to summarize information contained in the conversation through the Contribute toolset. Posts are displayed as threaded conversations with replies indented under original posts.

## What tools are available in Contribute?

Contribute contains a robust set of tools that will enable you to manage the Contribute session and summarize information in a way that is meaningful. The toolset is accessed in the Tools window located on the right-hand side of the Contribute screen. The following is a summary of each tool.

- Who's Online Displays a list of participants in the session.
- Favorites Displays a list of posts that you marked as favorites.
- Twitter Allows you to create a hash tag for the session and include Twitter posts in the conversation.
- Dittos Displays a list of posts that were dittoed by participants in descending order of their popularity.
- **Word Cloud** Will generate a word cloud from the conversation or will allow a moderator to declare a topic and generate a word cloud from participant responses.
- **Polls** Will allow the moderator to administer a poll to participants.
- **Links** Displays a list of hyperlinks included in the conversation.
- **Replies** Displays all replies made to your posts.
- **Settings** Will allow each participant to manage their individual session. Moderators may manage users, invite more participants and archive sessions.

#### How might I use Contribute in my classes?

Contribute may be used in any number of ways to enhance the teaching and learning experience. The following is a list of activities that you may wish to consider:

- Contribute can be used to facilitate backchannel conversations among students during lectures, presentations made by guest speakers or when videos are presented to the class.
- Contribute may be used to facilitate online study sessions for exams. The conversation acts as a narrative of the content included in the session and may be referenced by students at any time in the future.
- Students may use Contribute for communication and collaboration on class projects.