

OpenGrade

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1 Introduction

- purpose** OpenGrade is software for teachers to keep track of grades. It can put the students' grade reports on a web server, and allow the students password-protected access to them.
- legalities** OpenGrade is free software, and it comes with source code. It is copyright 2002 by Benjamin Crowell, and to have permission to copy it, you must agree to the terms of the licensing agreement on page 14. This documentation is copyright 2002 by Benjamin Crowell, and is available under the GFDL 1.1 license on page 19.

2 Installing

- Linux** You will need a Perl interpreter, which is available as free software. I've tested OpenGrade using Perl 5.6 and 5.8. You will also need the free gcc compiler installed.

First, download the `opengrade-...tar.gz` file from lightandmatter.com. If your browser doesn't automatically unpack the file, you can unpack it by using the Unix command `tar -zxvf opengrade...tar.gz`.

Get in a terminal window, and move into the directory you just created. Next, while logged in as root, use the command `make` depend to run a script that will download some open-source software from cpan.org that is required in order for OpenGrade to work. (The modules it uses are `Term::ReadKey`, `Date::Calc`, `Digest::SHA1`, and `Tk`.) The installer script will check whether each of these is already installed, and if it's not, it will download and install them. You need to have an active internet connection for this to work.

Next, do the command `make install` to install the program. This will install the software in a subdirectory of `/usr/local/lib`, and will make a symbolic link to the software in `/usr/local/bin`.

After all this, you can run OpenGrade by invoking the program from the command line:

```
% opengrade &
```

or

```
% opengrade my.gb &
```

The `.gb` extension stands for gradebook. (That was a description of how to run the graphical user interface. There is also a text-based user interface, which you can run by giving the `-t` option, and omitting the final `&`.)

MacOS X The text-based user interface runs fine on MacOS X — that's the system I developed it on. The GUI requires Perl/Tk, which is currently (as of April 2003) not easy to install in MacOS X — see the OpenGrade web page for more information. You need to install the Developer Tools in order to get the C compiler installed. They come either on a CD or in a `.dmg` file cleverly hidden somewhere on your hard disk. Since MacOS X is Unix, the installation procedure is similar to the Linux procedure.

FreeBSD First, make sure you have a recent version of Perl installed, like 5.6 or 5.8, not the 5.0 that currently comes with FreeBSD. If you install a newer version of Perl, follow up with the command

```
use.perl port
```

so that the system will actually use the new version by default.

OpenGrade isn't available through the FreeBSD ports system, so you'll have to install the dependencies by hand:

```
cd /usr/ports/devel/p5-Date-Calc ; make install
cd /usr/ports/devel/p5-Term-ReadKey ; make install
cd /usr/ports/security/p5-Digest-SHA1 ; make install
cd /usr/ports/x11-toolkits/p5-Tk ; make install
```

(Don't install `p5-Tk` using the package. Use the port. The package won't work, because it installs into the Perl 5.0 directory.)

Finally, go back to the directory that has OpenGrade's stuff in it and do

```
make install.
```

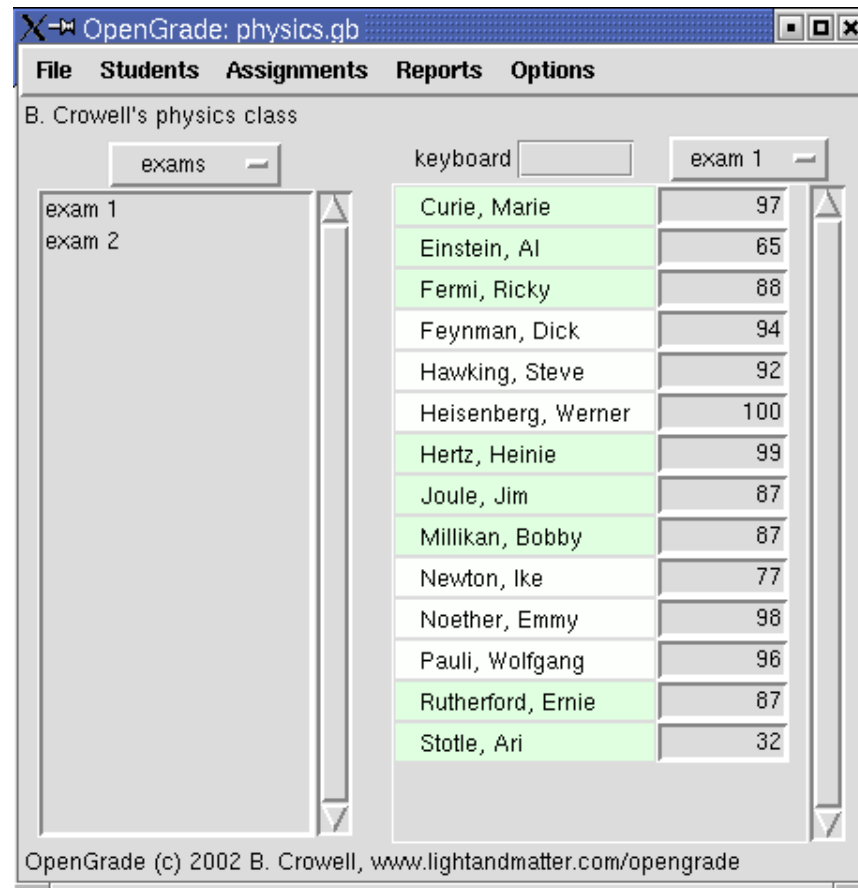
Windows First you need to download Perl from <http://www.activestate.com/>. Starting from their homepage, follow the link for downloading ActivePerl. The first place this takes you is a page that helps you download any special software you need for your particular version of Windows. (If you aren't sure what version of Windows you're running, you can find out by right-clicking on My Computer, and then selecting Properties.) Next they ask you for some registration information, and then you download ActivePerl.

Once you have ActivePerl installed, download OpenGrade, and unpack the archive using WinZip or similar software. Reboot, make sure you have an active internet connection, and then double-click on the file `install_win.pl`. Wait until it's done, and reboot again.

To run OpenGrade, double-click on the file `ogr`.

3 Using the Graphical User Interface

entering grades To see how OpenGrade works in everyday use, run the program as described above, and open the file `sample.gb` that was included among the files you downloaded. Enter `secret` for the password. (OpenGrade uses passwords for authentication, but there is no encryption. See page 6 for more information on how this works.) Click on exam 1 in the list on the left, and you should see something like the window shown below.



On the right, you have a list of the students enrolled in the class. Their scores on exam 1 have already been entered, but you can change them now if you like. If you click on exam 2 from the list, you'll see their results from that exam.

Note the popup menu at the top of the column of scores. With this menu, you can choose to see each student's average test grade, or each student's overall grade in the course. The two tests are the only assignments in the file right now, so the exam averages are the same as the overall grades.

If you explore the other popup menu, above the list of assignments, you'll see that there is another category, homework, with no assignments in it. Let's add a new homework assignment. Select the homework category from the popup menu, and then select New Homework from the Assignments menu. Type 1 in the first space: this assignment will be known as Homework 1. Type a number in the second space for the maximum number of points possible on this assignment. Click on OK. A blank column of scores pops up in the main window, and you can enter the students' grades.

When entering grades, make sure you have your Num Lock turned on, or else OpenGrade won't respond to numbers from the keypad. When you hit the Return key (on either the keypad or the main keyboard), the grade will be entered, and the next student will automatically be selected. (You can also use the down-arrow key as a synonym for Return, and the up-arrow to select the preceding student.) This allows you to enter a list of grades quickly if you already have them in alphabetical order.

If you have a stack of papers that is not in alphabetical order, and you're entering all the grades, the quickest way to do it is to use the keyboard to select each student. Here's how it works. Normally when you're entering grades, the keyboard focus is in one of the little grade boxes on the right-hand column of the spreadsheet. If you hit the space bar, however, you'll see that now the student's name is highlighted rather than the student's grade. Once the focus is in the left-hand (names) column of the spreadsheet, you can use the keyboard to select a different student by typing the first letter (or first few letters) of her last name. The characters you've typed will appear above the top of the list. Now hit the tab key, and you can enter the grade. Note that if you keep on typing, the software assumes you're trying to be more specific about what student you have in mind rather than selecting a different student. For instance, if you have students named Jarret, Johnson, and Olson, then typing j○ means that you're selecting Johnson; it doesn't mean you hit j, then changed your mind and wanted to select Olson instead. If you hit j and then change your mind and want to select Olson instead, then you need to hit the backspace key to erase the j. (The software will also forget about the letters you've typed when you hit tab and take the keyboard focus away from the list of students.)

When entering grades, the + key is a shortcut for .5. For instance, a score of 3.5 points can be entered as 3+.

creating a new file

To create a new gradebook file, choose New from the File menu and fill in the form. You've created a new gradebook file, which is empty. Now you need to get it set up correctly.

If you use a fixed set of grading standards, you can now enter them by choosing Grading Standards from the Options menu.

Next you'll probably want to set up all your categories of assignments, such as exams, homework, and quizzes. To do this, choose New Category from the Assignments menu. The first thing you're asked for is a short name for the category. It doesn't matter too much what you pick; in the graphical user interface, you'll never even see it again. However, you will see this short name if you ever use the text-based user interface, or if you examine the gradebook file directly in an editor. Just pick something short, like e for exams, or q for quizzes. Make sure you don't use the same short name for two different categories. Most of the rest of the inputs are fairly self-explanatory, except for the space at the bottom for the weight of the category. This is optional. If your student's grades are simply going to be based on the sum of their points in the various categories, then you should always leave this space blank. On the other hand, if you want each category to have a certain weight, then you should enter a weight for every category you create. See page 8 for more information on weighted grading.

Once you've created your categories, you can enter your students' names using Add from the Students menu. If you already have your roster in a text file, you may find it more convenient simply to open your gradebook file in a text editor, paste in your roster, and then put it in the form OpenGrade requires, as documented in section 10.

reports A variety of reports is available from the Reports menu. The reports offered in this menu will depend on what student, category, and assignment you've selected. When you choose a report from the menu, it's displayed on the screen. You can then hit OK if all you wanted to do was look at it, or Save to save it to disk as a plain text file, e.g. for printing.

4 Goodies

This section documents various features of OpenGrade that you may or may not need. Almost everything in this section applies equally to the GUI and the text-based interface.

extra credit If an assignment is going to be for extra credit, you can simply set it up with a maximum point value of zero, but enter scores that are greater than zero. Normally, the software beeps at you and asks for confirmation when you try to enter a grade that is higher than the nominal maximum for the assignment. But when the maximum is zero, it will accept nonzero values without complaining.

Sometimes you have an assignment that is not completely extra credit, but it may be possible for students to do something extra that gives them more than the nominal maximum number of points. When you enter a score that's above the maximum, the software will pop up a dialog box asking you if that's what you really want. To avoid this dialog box, you can just type in the score with a trailing letter x, e.g. 101x on an assignment with a nominal maximum score of 100.

dropping a student When you drop a student, the student's grades will still be in the gradebook file, so that if you need to, you can add her back in later. In the GUI, you drop a student by clicking on her name in the main window, and then selecting Drop from the Students menu; to reinstate her, select Reinstate from the same menu.

scores that don't count You may wish to record scores that don't count at all in a student's grade. (For instance, you might give a diagnostic test, or record whether the student has completed some safety training.) There is an option for this when you set up the category.

dropping some scores When you're setting up categories, the software will ask you how many scores to drop in this category. For instance, you could choose not to count each student's two lowest homework scores.

5 Using the Text-Based User Interface

The user interface is menu-driven, and is fairly self-explanatory.

Often you'll need to select a particular student. Typically you'll just enter the first few characters of the student's last name, and hit return. As you go along, the software will display a list of all students whose names match the characters you've typed so far. When you see that there's only one student on the list, then you know you're ready to hit return to select that student. Capitalization is ignored here.

There is a time-saving trick that you can use when you have more than one student with the same last name. For instance, my school has a large Vietnamese population, and my classes usually have several students named Nguyen. Suppose my class includes both Phong Nguyen and Thu Nguyen. To select Phong Nguyen, I can type ng, which narrows it down to these two students, then hit the

tab key, and then type p.

6 Safety Features

Grades are valuable information, and OpenGrade has a whole repertoire of methods to help you make sure you never lose any of them.

- auto-save Let's say you're editing a gradebook file called `foo.gb`. Periodically, OpenGrade will save a copy of your work under the filename `#foo.gb#` (the same naming convention as the one used by the Emacs editor). If your computer crashes in the middle of an intense grade-recording session, you should be able to recover most of your work from this file. OpenGrade will also attempt to auto-save your file when you terminate the program abnormally, e.g. by typing control-C. The auto-save file is deleted when you eventually save your file in the normal way, so your directory should not get cluttered up with auto-save files.
- auto-backup When you save the file `foo.gb`, OpenGrade will preserve the old version of the file under the name `foo.gb~` (again, the name is based on the Emacs convention). This takes care of the situation where you save your file, and then realize you've messed something up.

7 Passwords and Authentication

Every OpenGrade file has a digital watermark that is based on the password you choose for the file. Suppose one of your students somehow gets access to your gradebook files. Of course, this shouldn't happen, because you should store your gradebook files on a computer account that nobody has access to without logging in, but let's assume that you got up from your desk without logging out, and a student has walked up and is trying to tamper with your files. If she tries to open one of your gradebook files using OpenGrade, it will demand the password, and will refuse to open it without it. (But don't leave your desk while you have a file open!) If she opens the file using a text editor, she could start messing around with its contents. However, when you get back to your computer and open the file in OpenGrade, it will detect the fact that the digital watermark is no longer valid. OpenGrade does not store your password anywhere, so it assumes that the problem with the watermark is because *you* are an unauthorized person trying to tamper with the file! It will refuse to open the file for you. This is your warning that the file has been tampered with. OpenGrade will also let you view a report that shows more information about the tampering, e.g., which lines were tampered with, deleted, or added.

In everyday use, you should go by the following rules to protect your files. Make frequent backups and printouts. Don't store your gradebook files on a computer that people can get access to without logging in. Never leave a file open in OpenGrade if you're getting up from your desk. Use a good password: one that is at least eight characters long, isn't a dictionary word, and contains both letters and digits. Don't write your password down, and don't use passwords people can guess, such as your license plate number, your kid's birthday, or your pet's name. Don't type your password if someone can look at your hands and see your keystrokes. Don't give anyone access to copies of your gradebook file, because a determined hacker might be able to determine your password by writing a program to guess millions of possibilities.

Here are some real-life situations that can arise, and methods for dealing with them:

You try to open the file, and OpenGrade doesn't accept your password. Don't panic! The most likely cause of this is that you've made a mistake typing in your password. Just try again.

You've forgotten your password, and you need to edit the file. OpenGrade does not store your password anywhere, so there is no way to get it back. Use Change Password under the File menu to change the file's password.

You need to look at an old OpenGrade file from years ago, and can't remember the password The easiest solution is to examine the file in a text editor. Otherwise, change the password as described above.

A student tampers with your file using a text editor. Once you've convinced yourself that you didn't just make a mistake typing in your password, here's what you should do. Click on the button to view the report on the tampering, and save the report to a file. Next, make a copy of the file. You'll probably also want to print out both of these files. Next, restore your gradebook file from your latest backup. (If you've been uploading your grade reports to a server, then you should have a recent backup copy there.) By examining the report on the tampering, you should be able to repair some or all of the damage, and you may be able to figure out who the tamperer might be, e.g., if all the changes were increases in a particular student's scores.

A student changes the password of your file. This could happen if the student has read this documentation! You'll find out that the file has been tampered with, because OpenGrade will refuse to open it with your password. The procedures for handling this are similar to the ones described in the preceding paragraph. However, you won't be able to get a line-by-line report on the tampering.

This is too much security for you. You don't want to be bothered with passwords. Just use a password with no characters in it. All you have to do is click on the OK button whenever OpenGrade asks for a password.

This isn't enough security for you. Download Gnu Privacy Guard (also known as GPG or GnuPG), and use it to encrypt your gradebook files.

8 Posting Grades on the Web

This section describes OpenGrade's machinery for posting grades on the web.

To post grades on the web, you'll need access to a server where you can install files and CGI software yourself. Install the `ServerOG.cgi` script distributed with OpenGrade. To view their grades, students will interact with a second CGI script, `Spotter.cgi`, which is distributed with the Spotter software, also on the `lightandmatter.com` site. You will need to set up a directory tree on your server as described in the Spotter documentation, in the section titled "Interfacing."

Once this is all set up, you can upload grades by selecting Post Grades from the Server menu.

9 How Grades Are Calculated

There may be situations where it's not obvious to you how the software is calculating students' grades. This may happen when you have categories in which you drop some low scores, or when you have assignments that aren't due yet, but which some students have already turned in. OpenGrade has definite mathematical rules, documented in this section, for handling such situations. Although the rules are a little complex, there is one general principle that will usually keep things clear in your head: the number of possible points is always the same for every student. This principle has two advantages: (1) If we want to know who is doing better in the course, student A or student B, we don't have to specify whether we mean better in the sense of total points or better in percentage terms. (2) It makes sense to compute statistics like averages and standard deviations for the class as a whole, and these statistics can be computed in terms of points, not just in terms of percentages.

dropping low scores When dropping low scores, we choose them so as to maximize the student's total points, not the student's percentage. The maximum number of possible points in the category is calculated by leaving out the assignments that have the lowest number of points possible. Thus, the numbers deleted from the list of scores do not necessarily correspond to the numbers deleted from the list of possible points. If there is extra credit on some assignments (i.e. the student has scores higher than the maximum), then these extra credit points are skimmed off the top before any of the calculations are carried out, and then added back on at the end.

due dates When you create a new assignment, the default is to leave the due date blank; the software then assumes that the assignment has already fallen due.

The only time you really need to enter a due date for an assignment is when it's something that some students will turn in early. You only need to enter the month and day, not the year; the year is figured out based on the date you gave for the beginning of the term when you set up the file. If an assignment isn't due yet, then it doesn't count in students' grades at all. This is in keeping with the general principle that the number of points possible is the same for all students. Thus, a student may turn in an important assignment early, know she had a certain grade on it, and know that her grade in the course is going to change a lot on the assignment's due date; but the effect will not show up in the software until the due date.

An assignment is considered to have fallen due at the beginning of the day it was due. For instance, if June 3 is the day you'll be turning in final grades for your course, then you can set the due date on a term paper to June 3, and it will be included in the grades you calculate on June 3.

weighted grading You can set up a gradebook file for either weighted or point-total grading; this is determined when you make your first category.

With weighted grading, if the total number of points possible in a particular category is zero, then that category is treated as if it doesn't exist, and the other categories then become more important. Because of this, there can be no such thing as an extra credit category when you use weighted grading.

10 Format of Gradebook Files

OpenGrade's files are in a plain text format that you can edit in a text editor. The following is a small example.

```
1  class
2    .title "B. Crowell's Physics 205/210, spring 2002"
3    .staff "bcrowell"
4    .days "MW"
5    .term "2002-1"
6    .dir    "bcrowell/s2002/205"
7    .standards "A:90","B:80","C:70","D:60","F:0"
8
9  preferences
10   .file "/home/bcrowell/.OpenGrade_prefs"
11
12  categories
13   .e "catname:exam,exams","max:120"
14   .hw "catname:homework,homework","drop:1"
15   .q "catname:quiz,quizzes","ignore:true"
16
17  roster
18   .newton_ike "id:1234"
19   .einstein_al "id:5678","dropped:true"
20   .oflaherty_karen "id:3333","last:O'Flaherty"
21
22  assignments
23   .e.1
24   .e.2 "max:135","name:midterm"
25
26  grades
27   .newton_ike.e "1:119","2:135"
28   .einstein_al.e "1:120"
29   .oflaherty_karen.e "1:120","2:135"
```

Lines 2-5 give general information about the class. The title is placed at the top of web reports. The staff list gives usernames of the instructors and TA's who may make changes to the gradebook. The list of days the class meets is used to make it easier to enter certain dates, and likewise for the line specifying the date on which the current term began.

Line 6 gives a subdirectory of the directory `cgi-bin/spotter` in which this class's grades will be stored; this is only needed if you're posting grades on the web and letting students view them with Spotter. Line 7 sets your grading standards for this class. On reports, these symbols will be displayed along with the numerical scores. If you don't want any grade symbols displayed, you can just leave the rest of the line blank after `.preferences`. The symbols are entirely arbitrary.

Lines 9-10 tell where your preferences file is located. OpenGrade tries to put this in the customary location for your operating system.

Lines 12-15 specify that there are three categories of graded work in this class: exams, homework, and quizzes. The short tags `e`, `hw`, and `q` are used internally, and are also as headings in some tables. The `catname` parameter gives two

forms of the name, which are usually singular and plural. The first one is used in constructing strings like `exam 1` for use in reports, and the second one is for headings in reports. In line 13, we specify that exams are worth a maximum of 120 points by default; this is optional. In line 14, the parameter `drop:1` says that we drop the lowest homework score. In line 15, `ignore:true` says that quizzes don't count toward the students' grades at all. The category parameters `ignore` and `max` are just defaults that are applied when new assignments are created, and these defaults can be overridden for individual assignments.

Lines 17-20 give the roster. Normally the names are given simply as database keys, in the format `lastname_firstname`. When the name is displayed, the first character of each name is capitalized. When this is not the correct capitalization, or when the name contains punctuation, the correct form can be indicated separately, as in line 20. Line 19 indicates that Al Einstein has been dropped from the course, so he will not show up on reports. However, his data are still in the file, and he can be added back in at any time.

Lines 22-24 list the assignments that have been scored so far: two exams. The first exam is worth 120 points, the default for the exam category. The second exam is worth a little more, and instead of being called "exam 2," it will be labeled on reports as "midterm."

Lines 26-29 list the students' grades.

This listing is different from the OpenGrade files you'd typically see, because it lacks authentication codes. Authentication adds some data to the file which is preceded by a `#` sign wherever it occurs. Every line has some authentication information at the end, and there are some separate authentication lines at the beginning and end of the file. The format of the authentication codes is described in the source code of the `LineByLine` module. If you cut and paste this example into a file, and then try to open it with OpenGrade, it will refuse because it doesn't have valid authentication codes. You would have to do Change Password from the File menu to add authentication codes.

I haven't written a formal grammar for the file format, but here's some practical information about some of the possible ambiguities.

Sections are typically separated by a single blank line, but the number of blank lines between sections is not significant, and will not be preserved when OpenGrade reads a file and then writes it back out. The order of the sections is arbitrary, but to help make the files more readable to humans, it's recommended to start with the following sections in this order: class, preferences, categories, roster, assignments, grades. Other sections will be added in the future, and an application that reads and writes the format is responsible for preserving any sections that it doesn't understand.

Although the authentication code at the end of each line is marked with a pound sign, it's not treated the same as comments are typically treated in Unix configuration files: it's required, not optional; it's not preserved verbatim when a file is read and rewritten; and it's not free-form. The remainder of the discussion applies to what's left of the line after the authentication code has been checked and stripped off. No significance is attached to leading or trailing whitespace, but for human readability, each section should be indented. Programs that read and write the format can and should indent their output consistently, disregarding the indentation of the original input. A line that ends with a comma continues onto the next line as if there was no newline after the comma.

11 Future Improvements

general All client-server transactions should be wrapped in a subroutine. The subroutine should check whether the password works, and if not, prompt for the right one. If not connected, should give an error message. It should then reconcile the server and client: server's e-mail overrides client's, and all other data from client overrides server's: disabled accounts,...? Should also handle errors. Need to deal with cases where the keys for the same student on the server and client become inconsistent.

It would be nice to be able to export to a spreadsheet in tab-delimited or comma-delimited format, which could then be imported into Excel, OpenOffice, etc. I would also be cool to be able to make custom-formatted report cards; I think the right way to do this is probably to use the facilities built into a word-processor (OpenOffice?) for merging data into a form.

It should be possible to get stats like what percentage of the class has A's, etc. This could be done by adding more outputs to the `Crunch::stats` subroutine.

Downloading grades: Needs more flexibility for scoring.

`MyWords.pm` has a mechanism for defaulting to English if the translation in the preferred language isn't available. This should be generalized so that the fallback isn't always English, and it should be in `Words`, not `MyWords`.

Some server operations should be made more efficient. When uploading grades, compression could be used. When listing work from the server, the algorithm that runs on the server shouldn't read each file more than once.

When downloading work, due date should be easier to edit, and it should be harder to forget to set it correctly; should round off the time to the nearest hour or half-hour, and should set the date to the most recent class meeting by default. Could also have the meeting time of the class stored in the gradebook file. The algorithm is a kludge: AND together the "find" parts.

GUI There should be an easier way to look at your grading standards. You currently can't look at them without going through a couple of steps as if you were going to modify them.

A bunch of the menu items should have "..."

The routine `ExtraGUI::save_plain_text_to_file` should offer a better dialog box for choosing where to put your file.

A bunch of the dialog boxes that you pop up from the server and reports menu have blank or bogus titles.

When you select a student using the keyboard, the roster should scroll if necessary.

The `Browser.pm` module is in severe need of refactoring. It was only supposed to contain GUI-related stuff, but it's become a messy mixture of lots of different stuff.

In the dialog box for adding a new category, there's some extra help that the `TermUI` gives when weights are enabled, and the GUI should give that help, too.

When creating a new file, there needs to be a way to set whether weighted grading will be used. (`TermUI` does this when you add the first category, but don't do it that way in the GUI, too awkward. The decision really needs to be made when they open the file.) There is no warning when you create a new file on top of an

old one.

In `FileDialog`: (1) Inputs should look sunken, not raised. (2) When creating a new file, the focus should be in the right place to start with. (3) There's no easy way to set `activeBackground`; in KDE, the default is lame, and this causes buttons to become totally black when the cursor is over them.

Missing functionality: change order of assignments or categories, delete a category (after deleting all assignments).

The assignments listbox should start out positioned at the end, not the beginning, when you select a new category. This seems to be pretty difficult to do, however! Selecting and then unselecting the last item doesn't work, and it doesn't have `set()` and `get()` methods like a `Scrollbar` widget.

The dialog box for creating a new file doesn't give all the help that the text-based version does. It doesn't check whether the days of the week are legal. Actually, I think I can do this by building new types and options in to the `Input` class.

Should allow the user to view dropped students. Have a note in `add_or_drop()` about this.

`Input` class needs 'date' type.

Resizing needs to be handled better. Some widgets have hardcoded sizes, which I'd like to avoid.

text interface There should be a way to run the text interface on a system where Perl/Tk isn't even installed.

The terminal-based interface should figure out the width of your terminal window, rather than defaulting to 80 columns.

Emacs-style tab completion is goofy in a case where one student's name is the same as the beginning of another's (Ng and Nguyen) — you need to type the underbar!

In the statistics report, there is no user interface to say if you want stats within a category, and the report routine doesn't support that, either. The formatting of the report could be improved a lot.

When selecting a student, should be able to type in first name. The display is also kind of messed up during the process of selecting a student. And the underbar should be hidden.

Give some message when they make a choice that's not on the menu, or not allowed because there is no open file, etc. In main loop, can make hashes to control the behavior of the commands.

Menus should allow you to type multiple characters in a row and then hit return so you go into a sub-menu. (Don't just take keystrokes without hitting return, because some commands like "revert" are more than one character.) Beep when they do an illegal command, and flush the rest of the string out.

12 Bugs

general Some errors should be checked for when reading in the gradebook file: two students with the same key; mangled syntax in parameter lists; grades for a student who isn't on the roster; more than one assignment in a single-assignment category.

When you create a new category, it should require you to give a weight if you're already using weights, or prohibit you from doing so if you aren't already. This should really be selected when you create the file.

With some files, I couldn't do any client-server stuff until I touched the client-server settings. It didn't matter that I wasn't even changing the settings.

The time zone correction in `ServerOG.cgi` when downloading grades may be incorrect if the client and server are in different countries that have different definitions of daylight savings time. It will also not work correctly if either time zone is a non-integer. It might make more sense to have the time zone as part of the Spotter file tree, so Spotter can do the time zone correction when recording the grades.

On Windows, the preferences file is always saved in My Documents. Since the My Documents folder could be on the C drive or the D drive, we search those drives for the directory. This should work for most users, but if it doesn't find My Documents on C or D, it just silently fails to create the preferences file, which is a bug. I don't know much about Windows, but I think preferences should probably go in Documents and Settings.

GUI There is some GUI stuff relating to passwords in `BrowserData::new()`.

Sometimes when you're creating a new assignment, it complains that a blank value isn't allowed for the name of the assignment, even though you have entered a non-blank value. This is a hard bug to reproduce. It may have to do with keys on the keyboard that generate escape sequences or control characters.

There are some bugs in the GUI that are not really bugs in OpenGrade but bugs in particular implementations of Perl/Tk. I've run into two problems that occur only on a particular system running FreeBSD 4.8 and KDE 3.1. One bug is that the application crashes with a core dump when you exit; however, your data are not lost, because this happens after the file is saved. The other bug is that right-justified grade entries are displayed incorrectly – they're positioned too far off to the right, so you can't see them; this is the reason I changed the default to left-justification, and added an item to the preferences menu.

The dialog box for setting standards is too tall when you use ABCDF+- grading.

I wrote stuff into the `Browser.pm` package at the outside level, assuming there would only ever be one window open. This needs to go into `BrowserWindow`. Likewise, what happens with stuff like `grades_queue()`, which is inside a `BEGIN{ }` block? Will its variable get properly initialized when I make a new `BrowserWindow` object? Will each `BrowserWindow` object really have its own `%queue`?

When opening files, the buttons aren't properly internationalized. This can be done using some of the options to `Tk::FileDialog`, but I just haven't done it yet. Actually I need to find a better file dialog package.

13 Programming Stuff

- version history See freshmeat.net for a history of what changes have been made to the code over time.
- internals You can use `make internals` to make the file `internals.html` from the POD documentation.

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