

**Volume**

**1**

WORCESTER COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

**MrCute for Moodle - Administrator's Manual**

WORCESTER COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

# MrCute for Moodle

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MrCute is an optional add-on to the Moodle Virtual Learning Environment and is available free of charge under an Open Source licence (see end of this document).

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## About MrCute

MrCute is an optional add-on to the Moodle Virtual Learning Environment. More specifically, it extends the functionality of the IMS Repository system originally developed by Alton College, UK.

MrCute is known to be compatible with Moodle 1.8.2 but not with earlier versions. At the time of release (March 2008), it has also been tested in 1.8.4, 1.9 and an early version of Moodle 2.0 with no apparent problems.

A repository is a storage area where materials – in this case e-learning materials – can be held and from where they can easily be accessed by teachers and learners. IMS (Instructional Management Standards) Global Learning Consortium is an international body which aims to set standards for interoperability between learning systems. The specific standards involved in this case are the IMS Content Packaging Standards.

## Before MrCute

The existing Moodle IMS repository system is as follows:

Moodle Administrator creates a folder (usually in the Moodle webroot and named “ims\_repository”). This folder is populated with (unzipped) IMS-compliant packages. In the UK, these are normally the interactive e-learning packages produced by the National Learning Network, but any IMS compliant package may be added, within a subdirectory structure which is aimed at browsing by category and title.

Moodle Administrator “switches on” the repository system by making minor changes to a single configuration file (details in Chapter 3).

Teacher selects “Add an IMS content package” from Add Resources option, then uses the Browse Repository option to search for relevant materials, which can then be previewed and add to a course.

## The problems

Although this functionality was a useful addition to Moodle, and has been widely adopted in the UK, especially in educational sectors where National Learning Materials are available, there are no easy ways of:

- Finding materials which are relevant to a number of disciplines but only filed under one (for example, material about accepting credit card payments may be applicable to a number of service and sales based vocations, but only filed under “beauty salons”).
- Adding more materials to the repository (for example, a teacher may feel that a particular handout, image or flash animation has relevance to other teachers; at present this would need to be passed to a technically competent person to create an IMS package, and that package then passed to an administrator to load into the ims\_repository folder)
- Extending keywording (tagging) or amending title and descriptions. This functionality is required where validation or reclassification of materials is acceptable.

## After MrCute

MrCute addresses these three issues. It adds:

- A search and embed option (and a hidden automatic indexing option to support the search)
- An upload (and automatic IMS package creation) option
- A new Moodle block to simplify previewing, and to allow editing by the uploader or by an administrator

## Why MrCute

Acronyms are fun so we wanted a fun acronym! Nevertheless, it has a meaning too: Moodle Repository Create Upload Tag Embed (admittedly the letters are in the wrong order, and the Validate function is missing – but who would ever remember MrEutcv?

## Credits

Funding for this project came from the United Kingdom's Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) Capital Programme and we acknowledge this, and the help given by the JISC in general.

The Project was led by Worcester College of Technology (WCT), a College of Further Education in the United Kingdom with the involvement of an independent consultant.

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We also acknowledge all the work done on Moodle by our colleagues all over the world, and particularly the initial inspiration of Martin Dougiamas in Australia and, in relation to our project, Helen Foster (formerly of Alton College UK and latterly Moodle Community Manager).

## Prepare, download, install

### Prepare

Before downloading and installing MrCute, it is essential that you ensure that the earlier Moodle IMS repository system is functioning. This will make the process of replacing it with MrCute very straightforward. The procedure for installing the original system as defined at Moodle.org is:

- Find `repository_config.php` in `Moodle/mod/resource/type/ims` and change `$CFG->repositoryactivate = false`; to `$CFG->repositoryactivate = true`
- Create a folder named `ims_repository` in the webroot
- Change `$CFG->repository = "C:/public/www/html/ims_repository"`; to point to the `ims_repository` folder you created on your file system
- Content packages should be then extracted (unzipped) to the folder `ims_repository` within whatever folder structure you prefer (we suggest retaining the NLN structure if you are using National Learning Network materials).

Although the repository directory may be named differently, we advise the use of the default suggested: `ims_repository`. This directory **MUST** be place in the Moodle root - for example: `c:/www/moodle/ims_repository`

Technically competent installers may find ways to locate the `ims_repository` folder elsewhere in order to associate it with more than one instance of Moodle – the developers have **NOT** tested this, so please let us know if you succeed!

## Download

MrCute comes in a single zipped download, which contains (in addition to the documentation and a readme):

- A replacement **folder** for moodle/mod/resource/type/ims
- A new **folder** (mrcute) for moodle/blocks
- a single replacement **file** for moodle/lib/form/choosecoursefileorimsrepo.php,
- a single replacement **file** for moodle/lang/en\_utf8/resource.php
- a new **file** (block\_mrcute.php) for moodle/lang/en\_utf8/resource.php

The zipped download file is available from <http://www.wortech.ac.uk/MrCute>. Simply right click and select your browser's save function (in Internet Explorer this is "Save target as..." and in Firefox "Save Link As...")

## Installation

The install procedure is simple but the steps given below should be followed in order to ensure a smooth changeover.

### *Prerequisites*

- Moodle 1.8.2 upwards
- PHP 5 (or greater) is required – tested only on PHP 5.2.5
- Current IMS Repository system should be enabled and working before installation (not essential but a wise precaution) - see "Prepare" above.
- Relevant repository folder (default name: ims\_repository, situated in the Moodle root) should be present and populated with at least half a dozen sample items - see "**Prepare**" above. This will enable you to test the install.

### *Language notes*

Due to Moodle's clever system for languages, you shouldn't lose any changes you've already made via the Site Admin block to the resources.php language file.

### ***Essential Precautions – DO NOT SKIP OR IGNORE!***

Please make sure you try the installation and do your initial testing on a TEST server, not on a LIVE or PRODUCTION system. Although we have installed on several systems, we make NO claims as to security, safety, suitability or integrity of the

supplied files or their effect on any system. You do all installation and testing entirely at your own risk and JISC, Worcester College of Technology, Learning Objectivity and the individuals in the development team cannot be held responsible for any result of the installation or testing.

Make sure you have backups of your entire test Moodle system before you start. Should you wish to reinstate previous versions without restoring an entire backup, you may also wish to backup the following (found in the Moodle root):

- lib/form/choosecoursefileorimsrepo.php (single file only)
- mod/resource/type/ims (entire folder)
- lang/en\_utf8/resource.php

Note: a single new table (mdl\_resource\_ims) is created when you run the database installer (see below), but the rest of the Moodle database is unchanged. However, the entire database should be backed up for safety.

Once again – do not test on a live server until you are satisfied, and then at your own risk and after backups.

Note: This version **OVERWRITES** the existing IMS repository system which is part of the Moodle core. It is not a “standard” Moodle install, so please follow these steps carefully.

### ***Preparation***

Preparation 1: Reminder: **BACKUP** your existing system!

Preparation 2: Reminder: Make sure the current IMS Repository system is working, and there are several IMS packages in the `ims_repository` folder preferably in two or more separate folders (sub-folders are ok, too).

Preparation 3: **Copy the file `mod/resource/type/ims/repository_config.php` (in YOUR Moodle) to a temporary location – you’ll need to open it to get the current ims repository location in the final step below.**

Preparation 4: Unzip the Zip file which accompanies these instructions to a temporary location.

### ***Installation***

Install step 1: Copy `lib/form/choosecoursefileorimsrepo.php` (**single file only**) over the existing file in your Moodle

Install step 2: Copy the `mod/resource/type/ims` **folder** over the existing folder in your Moodle

Install step 3: Copy the blocks/mrcute **folder** into the /blocks folder in your Moodle

Install step 4: Copy lang/en\_utf8/resource.php **file** over the existing file in lang/en\_utf8 in your Moodle

Install step 5: Copy lang/en\_utf8/block\_mrcute.php **folder** into the lang/en\_utf8 in your Moodle

Install step 6: Edit “repository\_config.php” (in the mod/resource/type/ims folder) to path to the correct folders for your Moodle – you’ll find these in the temporary file you saved at preparation step 3. (You can’t just copy the old file, as we’ve added a new parameter to it).

Install step 7: Run your Moodle

Install step 8: In Site Administration, click Notifications to automatically install the new block

Install step 9: In your browser, and while logged in as a Moodle administrator, go to the following URL (where <yourmoodle> is your Moodle site) to automatically update the database:

<http://<yourmoodle>/mod/resource/type/ims/dbinstall.php>

Install step 10: You’ll need to re-deploy all the resources in ims\_repository. This can be done in one simple step (but it may take a while if a lot of resources are filed). In your Moodle, add the Repository Block to any course, then select the “Browse” option and click the **Deploy All** link.

## Settings

After the install process is complete, the module and the block will be automatically made available to users without any further need for settings to be changed. However the following settings are available by editing the `repository_config.php` file in `<yourmoodle>/mod/resource/type/ims`.

IMS Repository name and path

Upload available: Defaults to **true**. If set to false, course teachers will not be given the option of uploading materials to the repository and will only see the browse and search functions.

## Repository Block

This block simply allows teachers to browse and search the repository without using the “Add Resource” option. It provides a useful way for teachers and others to check what is available and to view materials during course planning.

No block settings are required except “enable” (which is the default). Note that Administrators and the original uploader can use this block to edit submitted items. See also the next section on allowing other people to validate repository entries.

## Validation access to the repository

In addition to Administrators, who can always view and edit repository uploads, you may wish to create a new role which simply allows access to repository contents for the purpose of improving keywording and checking that materials are acceptable and do not break copyright etc. Here is the procedure for creating a role which we have called “Librarian” (but you may of course choose any role name you wish).

- In the Site Administration block, select Users:Permissions:Define Roles
- Select “Authenticated User”
- Duplicate the role (using the button provided)
- Rename the new role to “Librarian” (or as you wish)
- Change the single capability “Core System:Trust submitted content” to Allow
- At site Admin level using the “Assign global roles” function, give relevant staff “Librarian” (or as required) status
- Create a new course named “Edit Repository” (or as you wish)
- Add staff members who are allowed to validate/edit the repository to the course
- Add the Repository Block to the course.
- Test

## Deployment

If the word “Deploy” or the phrase “Deploy all” appears when browsing or searching the Repository, the materials displayed are available but have not yet been added to the MrCute indexing system. Clicking “Deploy” will correct this. The “Deploy All” function is intended to allow Administrators to add all materials uploaded to the `ims_repository` folder to be deployed. This process can take some time if a large number of packages require deployment.

*Technical note: The deploy function in MrCute carries out a different function (indexing) to the function in the earlier ims repository system (registration).*

## Support and Upgrades

### Support

We are not in a position, in financial terms or in the availability of time, to offer direct support to administrators or users of MrCute.

However, we will monitor the MrCute email address ([mrcute@wortechnology.ac.uk](mailto:mrcute@wortechnology.ac.uk)) and respond when possible to queries VIA THE RELEVANT MRCUTE DISCUSSION FORUMS, initially on the MrCute Moodle (where you can also try out MrCute) for yourself) at <http://www.learningobjectivity.com/moodle182> and (in due course we hope) on Moodle.org. We will not normally respond direct to individuals.

### Bugs

Please report bugs to [mrcute@wortechnology.ac.uk](mailto:mrcute@wortechnology.ac.uk) . We will again respond via the MrCute discussion forums.

### Upgrades

No guarantee is given or implied that later versions of Moodle will support, or be supported by, MrCute.

However, the team undertakes to keep a watch on future Moodle developments and where possible to make available amended code.

Our eventual aim is that MrCute be accepted into the Moodle core, as the earlier IMS repository system has been. At the time of initial release (March 2008) we expect MrCute to be placed in the Moodle.org CVS (Concurrent Versioning System) so that wide access to the code is possible.

## Licence

No guarantee is given or implied in any way that MrCute is suitable for any task.

The software is copyright Worcester College of Technology and the documentation is copyright Worcester College of Technology and Learning Objectivity UK. However the software is released under the terms of the full GNU General Public Licence which disallows inclusion of the code into any proprietary software and prevents anyone charging you for it. The licence wording may be viewed at the GNU website at <http://www.gnu.org/licenses/gpl-3.0.txt>.

The following is a selective quote from the GNU website:

*What is Free Software?*

*“Free software” is a matter of liberty, not price. To understand the concept, you should think of “free” as in “free speech”, not as in “free beer”.*

*Free software is a matter of the users' freedom to run, copy, distribute, study, change and improve the software. More precisely, it refers to four kinds of freedom, for the users of the software:*

- 1. The freedom to run the program, for any purpose (freedom 0).*
- 2. The freedom to study how the program works, and adapt it to your needs (freedom 1). Access to the source code is a precondition for this.*
- 3. The freedom to redistribute copies so you can help your neighbor (freedom 2).*
- 4. The freedom to improve the program, and release your improvements to the public, so that the whole community benefits (freedom 3). Access to the source code is a precondition for this.*

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