D2L: Intelligent Agents for Automated Emails

In your D2L Course, you can have automated emails sent to you, to students, or someone else based on certain conditions or triggering events. This is done through a process you can program, called an Intelligent Agent. When run, an Intelligent Agent asks whether a condition has been met, and if it has been met, sends an email in accordance with your programmed directions. The condition can include whether a student has done something or a student hasn’t done something after a period of time.

So, for example, you can set up an intelligent agent that determines if a student has not entered the space in the last seven days, and emails the students who have not. You can receive a CC of any of these emails as well.

Managing Intelligent Agents

Within a course, find Intelligent Agents on the Edit Course Screen

On the Agent List screen, see any agents created, and their status
1. Click the blue New button to create a new agent.

2. Name. In the dropdown to the right of the name, find various features, including Run Now, which lets you run an agent anytime, whether scheduled or not. Practice Run allows you to determine if it is properly identifying students that meet the criteria (by checking against other data in D2L, such as on the classlist) but does not send the emails programmed.

3. This icon appears when an agent is inactive. When inactive, it will not run under any circumstance.

4. Results of Last Run. Did D2L identify class members that met the agent's criteria? They are listed here.

5. When the agent is next scheduled to run. This is determined by a schedule you set up when you create/edit the agent. An agent must be active to have a Next Run Date.

Create an Intelligent Agent

that sends an email notification to any student who has not visited your course in the last seven days.

Click the blue New button to create a new agent.

Add a Name. Description is optional, and not visible to students.

Under Role in Classlist, it's best to choose "Users with specific roles" and then checkbox Student, if you have anyone else in the class who may not visit frequent (such as a colleague).

Check the box next to Course Activity. Then add a number in the blank for User has not accessed the course in the last ________ days.

Do not use Login Activity feature. This would not work if students logged into D2L, but did not visit your course.

1. Criteria

Role in Classlist

- All users visible in the Classlist
- Users with specific roles:
  - Instructor
  - Student
  - Staff

Login Activity

- Take action when the following login activity is satisfied:
  - User has not logged in during the last ________ day(s)
  - User has logged in during the last ________ day(s)

Course Activity

- Take action when the following course activity is satisfied:
  - User has not accessed the course in the last ________ day(s)
  - User has accessed the course during the last ________ day(s)
Under **Send an Email**, check the box to activate.

In the **To:** box, add the replacement string for students who might trigger the agent. You can find (and copy/paste) the code by clicking **What special email addresses can I use?**

If you’d like a copy of emails going to students from this agent, add your own email address in the **Cc:** box.

For the **Subject** and **Message**, you can use replacement strings to automate installation of things like the recipient student’s first name, and the course name. (This is similar to “mail-merging” in MS Word.)

You can find the appropriate replacement strings for use in the subject and message by clicking **What replace strings can I use in the subject and message?**

Scroll down and check **Use Schedule**. Then, click **Update Schedule**.

Here, you can indicate to D2L that you want this agent to run each day. Choose **Daily** under **Repeats** and add 1 under **Repeats Every**.

Then, in **Schedule Dates**, add the course start/end dates you have under **Course Offering Information** (also on the **Edit Course** screen.)

Click **Save and Close**, and your Agent is ready to use.

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**Customize Reply-To so Students Can Reply to Your Notification Emails**
By default Agent emails come from donotreply@canisius.edu. This is a pretty standard practice for automated web applications, and will not be stopped by our spam filters.

You can make it easier for students to reply to you directly. On the Agent List screen, click Settings in the upper right.

Click the radio button next to Set custom values for this course, and enter your name and email address in the appropriate boxes.

***Intelligent Agents Settings***

- Use the system defaults
  - Name that emails come from: donotreply@canisius.edu
  - Reply-To address for responses: donotreply@canisius.edu

- Set custom values for this course
  - Name that emails come from: Mark Gallimore
  - Reply-To address for responses: gallimom@canisius.edu

Then click the blue Save button.

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**Video Tutorial**

(Full Screen)

- **00:00 Introduction**
- **00:52 Managing Agents on the Agent List Screen**
- **02:59 Creating an Intelligent Agent**
- **03:32 Criteria - Specifying Initiating Users**
- **04:03 Criteria - Student Visits to the Class Space**
- **04:48 Actions - Create Notification Email Template**
- **08:31 Scheduling the Agent (Automatic)**
- **13:06 Change the Reply-To Option**

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