

Survey of cloud tools for use in the online classroom

Review completed by: \_\_\_\_\_ on (date) \_\_\_\_\_

For further information contact reviewer at: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of cloud tool		
URL <input type="checkbox"/> App		
Description/Uses		
Intended for use in grade(s):		
Type of tool – choose from:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Collaboration</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Presentation</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Instruction</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Engagement</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Organization</li> </ul>	
Account registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Teacher registration of accounts <b>or</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> student self-registration (personal email required)</li> </ul>	
Personally Identifiable Information held on servers located:		
User fees		
Minimum age requirement		
User accounts accessibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Password protected ‘fenced’ site <b>or</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> openly accessible to anyone on the internet</li> </ul>	
Advertising policy		
Teacher vetting of comments available		
Deactivation of user accounts possible at the end of term/year/project		
Tool can be used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Synchronously</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Asynchronously</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Online classroom</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Face to face classroom</li> </ul>
Pros		
Cons		

Why is this important?

In the world of online learning it is important to consider many aspects of the tools that you choose to use with your students. Their safety and the security of the information that they share needs to be protected. These are some areas to consider:

Account registration:

If students are required to register themselves using their own email addresses the teacher has less control as to what can be posted on their sites/accounts. If the teacher sets up accounts they have overreaching access to all student accounts and can do things such as vetting comments before they are posted, shutting down accounts, reviewing accounts for appropriate use and blocking user access to accounts.

Personally identifiable information held on servers located:

If servers are located within Canada, information stored on user accounts is protected under FOIPPA guidelines. If information is housed on servers in the United States or other countries, information can be searched (data mined) under that country's legislation (ie the US Patriot Act, 2001). This can expose student information to outside sources and pose a safety risk with the information shared.

User fees:

It is important to understand any costs associated to individual users or user groups to use the tool.

Minimum age requirement:

FOIPPA guidelines protect the information of users under the age of 12. Because of this guideline many tools (for instance Facebook) have a minimum age requirement to hold a user account. If you as their teacher assign underage users accounts you are going against licensed user agreements and privacy laws.

User accounts accessibility:

Some tools will allow user accounts to be viewed by anyone with a password (for instance so that classmates can comment on their friends blogs). This is known as a fenced site and adds a layer of security that only those with a password can view the users account. Other tools have open access to anyone using the internet and therefore user information can be searched.

Advertising policy:

You should understand what, if any, advertisements will appear on student sites or that students will be able to view. For instance, when using Youtube, there is a chance that students might view inappropriate advertisements and that must be taken into account when deciding whether or not to use the site.

Teacher vetting of comments available:

This allows the teacher to preview and approve any comments before they are posted to student sites. This adds a layer of safety because unwanted or inappropriate posts are not able to get through.

Deactivation of user accounts possible at the end of the term/year/project:

Once students no longer have a need for their account, they should be deactivated to avoid the possibility of them being hacked for information or used inappropriately when still tied to the school.

There are many considerations that a teacher should take into account before using an online tool with their students. This is only a partial list of considerations. Some considerations apply to all sites and some are specific to only a few types of sites.