

Creating an Online Community, Class or Conference - Quick Tech Guide

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Are you creating an online course, event or conference? If you're not a programmer, and if you don't have a lot of money to spend, this guide will get you started. Read it from top to bottom to get a step-by-step guide to what you can do to set up your course or event. Then check the links to find free or cheap and easy tools that will get the job done for you.

- **To suggest changes, please add a comment**

To add a comment, highlight some text, then right-click and select 'Add a comment' (or type Ctl-Alt-M) and type your comment in the box that appears to the right.

This guide lists:

- **Cloud only** - if you have to set up a web server, it doesn't belong on the list. If you are required to download an application, it doesn't belong.
- **No apps** (no Play Store, Apple Store, etc.,)
- **Free** (or Nearly Free) - ideally, the tool has a free tier that lets you try it out. Your *total* costs to do *everything* should be less than \$100/month
- **No credit cards** - doesn't ask you for a credit card unless you're actually paying them money
- **No adjectives**; just say what it does, and keep everything brief

- *Short URL for sharing: <http://bit.ly/quicktechguide>*
- *Events calendar: [click here](#)*
- *Ask an Expert: [click here](#)*



Contact: [Stephen Downes](#)

Live Events Calendar

To view the events calendar, click on the link below:

[View the events calendar](#)

View calendar directly:

https://calendar.google.com/calendar/embed?src=downes.ca_s97jkc1f3ogocrqhcvsqf2jnqs%40group.calendar.google.com&ctz=America%2FToronto

Submit an Event

If you are hosting a live webcast or online event intended to help people create an online community, class or conference, and if this event is FREE, then please be sure to submit your event listing here:

<http://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeQJiDNdVOFkkY1JC2WvbCiDTN083CNhJ-FfoBDESK1hZeU2w/viewform>

Create Your Own Public Events Calendar

I did this with a Google Forms plug-in called [Form Director](#) - it took me a bit to figure it out, but there are easy-to-follow [video instructions](#) here.

Basic Options

The guide that follows lists a range of different types of technology you can use to create an online community, class or conference. The easiest way to do it is to simply use available online applications such as those offered by Google or other providers. But if you have a modest budget, you have some additional options. Here are your basic options:

- **Cloud applications** - offered by service providers such as Google or Zoho and perform a specific function or service. Think of Blogger for publishing blogs, or GMail for reading email. Advantage - you can do a lot without spending any money at all, disadvantage - is that there are often limits to what you can do with free online applications.
- **Web Hosting** - you create an account with a web hosting service ((for example) [Reclaim Hosting](#)) and use their internal applications panel (usually cPanel) to install and run your

own cloud applications. The advantage is that you do not have limits on your applications, but the disadvantage is that you have to pay money, and it's a bit more complex to set up. These are indicated below with (*). More on [web hosting options](#).

- **Cloud Hosting** - you create an account with a cloud service (for example [Digital Ocean](#)) and then create and run a web-accessible container for your application. The advantage is that you can run larger and more complex applications, but the disadvantage is that it can cost more and be more complex to set up. These aren't (yet?) listed below.

Email

Begin with email. It's useful for mailing lists and also to register for a number of the services listed below. Even if your students or participants prefer communicating with some other messaging system (covered below) it will help a *lot* to have a way to reach them all by email.

- [Zoho Email](#) - Free personal mail, \$1 per user per month business email at the lowest tier
- [GMail](#) - Google mail service, and you can use it to 'login with Google' on many services
 - Video Instructions - [Part One](#) - [Part Two](#)
 - How to create Contact Groups in Gmail - [video](#)
- [Mail.com](#) - choose between different domains, free entry-level tier
- [Outlook](#) - Microsoft's rebranded Hotmail service
- [Eyejot](#)
- [Protonmail](#) (Swiss)
- [Mailbox](#) (German)
- [Startmail](#) (Dutch)
- [Countermail](#) (Swedish)
- Resources
 - [Comparison of email providers](#) - Wikipedia
 - [Online Teaching with the most basic of tools – email](#)

Blogging

A blog is online content that is sorted by date. It is most useful for regular columns or postings, like a journal, newsletter, or record. Any online course or event should have an official blog (sometimes called a 'mother blog') for instructor or convenor announcements and comments. Blogging is also an excellent activity for course participants.

- [EduBlogs](#) - WordPress based, free for education [Instructions: [video](#)]
- [MyClass](#) from EduBlogs, tool for managing class of student blogs [Instructions: [video](#)]
- [Blogger](#) - still free, still easy [instructions: [video](#)]
- [Medium](#) - a lot of tech blogs use this
- [Tumblr](#) - a lot of art blogs use this

- [WordPress](#) - this link is to wordpress.com but there are [other WordPress hosting](#) sites
- (*) WordPress - User groups enables up to 10 levels of users
- [Telegra.ph](#) - get content quickly and easily online (and then share via social networks)
- [Write.as](#) - decentralized blogging platform
- [micro.blog](#) - Short microblog posts or full-length posts. Supports open IndieWeb standards so you can use many third-party apps.

Guides: Summer [2020 Blog Fest](#)

Websites

Use the website as the home for your online course or conference. Provide essential information and a way for people to contact you. From the website, link to other services (such as registration, email lists, blogs, etc.). Don't expect people to visit your website regularly; you will have to reach out to them.

- [Wix](#) - free websites - [Instructions - [video](#)]
- [Google Sites](#) -- Like the name says
- [Weebly](#) - mostly for e-commerce, but other types of sites also work
- [Zoho Sites](#) - starts at \$4 per month
- [Squarespace](#) -
- [Wordpress.com](#) - used for blogging, can also be used to create pages and static sites.
- (*) [Known](#) - platform for writing a blog, hosting a podcast, or sharing your favorite photos. Can be used for an individual site or publish collaboratively
- [GitHub.com](#) - GitHub is better known for code hosting, but also hosts websites for many projects, events, courses.
- [GitLab Pages](#) - GitLab is better known for code hosting, but also hosts websites for many projects, events, courses
- [Glitch](#) - The Glitch site is self-hosting allowing users to view or remix the site's source code. Glitch focuses on being a friendly, accessible community, and other registered users frequently help writing or reviewing code.
- [Netlify](#) - Create/maintain websites through github, gitlab or gitbucket (caution: not easy)

Lists

Create lists to keep track of email addresses, twitter handles, whatever. There are many complicated ways to do this, including a zillion apps that make to-do lists, customer lists, mailing lists, etc., etc. but this section is reserved for really simple tools.

- [ListMoz](#) - basic untitled lists each with their own URL

Collaborative Writing

One document, many writers. This document here in Google Docs is an example of collaborative writing. You need to set the permissions to make it work - in Google Docs click the 'Share' button (at the upper right) then the tiny 'Advanced' link.

- [Google Docs](#) -- click the 'Share' button to share Video Instructions - [Click Here](#)
- [Riseup Pad](#) -- an EtherPad service
- (*) [MediaWiki](#) - just like Wikipedia, create web pages collaboratively
- [Nextcloud](#) -- has built-in collaborative document editor
- [CryptPad](#) -- a privacy-by-design collaborative document
- [CoCalc](#) -- collaborative calculations and writing in LaTeX, Jupyter; freemium model
- [Overleaf](#) -- collaborative LaTeX editor
- [MeetingWords](#) -- collaborative editor: texts must be edited in 7 days or are deleted
- [Wiki.js](#) -- a Javascript-based wiki you can run on your computer or (better) in the cloud. Free and open source, modules for extensibility.
- [StackEdit](#), markdown editor - add-on or app you can install on your browser or computer. "What's really neat is that it's easy to sync your files to Google Drive, Dropbox, GitHub account."

Online Bookmarking

Online bookmark collection creators to share favorite websites, webpages, docs, images, videos, etc.

- [Wakelet](#) - free, no need to be registered to view someone else's collection, collaborative curation
- [Diigo](#) - bookmarking too - [[hints](#)]
- [Pinboard](#) - social bookmarking for introverts - \$22/year
- [Zotero](#) web and desktop bibliography tool with shared groups and discussions

Resource: [Intro to Collaborative Bookmarking](#) – video

Photo and Image Sharing

Photos and images can serve as a resource in their own right, but more commonly are used to illustrate articles, blog posts, slide shows, and other sharable resources. Openly license photos may be freely used, but otherwise copyright applies, and use is limited to fair use or fair dealing.

- [Flickr](#) - upload and share photos, create albums and collections, search by tag or license
- [Imgur](#) - upload photos, community votes up or down
- [Deviant Art](#) - Focuses on original art
- [Google Photos](#) - share photos and folders, create link to share

(Note: Instagram is an additional option, but not appropriate for online courses and events).

Resource: Wikipedia list of [photo sharing websites](#)

Notes and Documents

- [Evernote](#) - a single place for your notes, ideas, lists and reminders
- [Nimbus Notes](#) - create and edit notes, save web pages, etc
- [Google Keep](#) - keep text, lists, images and audio, access through Google account
- [Microsoft Word Online](#) - cloud version of MS Word, save documents to OneDrive
- [Microsoft OneNote](#) - Microsoft's note taking app, aimed at students
- [Google Docs](#) - Google's version of MS Word
- [Zoho Docs](#) - Alternative to Google Docs
- [CryptPad](#) - encrypted before being sent, which means nobody can access your data unless you give them the keys (not even us).

Mailing Lists

Mailing lists can be used to reach out to people and send regular updates using email. For online events this is often a key point of contact. Regular emails should announce new content, upcoming events, services and deadlines. Note that some people may not be using email, so you should also use microcontent for additional notifications. Tips for using mailing lists: [LearnDash](#).

- [MailChimp](#) - has a free tier, larger lists are more expensive [Instructions: [video](#), [video](#)]
- [SendInBlue](#) - free tier up to 300 emails a day [Instructions: [video](#)]
- [MailerLite](#) - 12K emails per month on free tier [Instructions: [video](#)]
- [phpList](#) - send up to 300 emails for free with cloud service
 - (*) can be installed using cPanel on your hosted website
- [Google Groups](#). Can be used as a mailing list (see Group Discussion, below).
- (*) [MailPoet](#) - plugin - WordPress-powered sites with email designer (free up to 1,000 subscribers)
- [LetsNews](#) - one-click creation of a newsletter sending service in the cloud

Microcontent

Social network sites generally specialize in short content messages, also known as microcontent. Messages can be addressed directly to individuals (using @names) or to groups of people (using a topic or #hashtag). Note that these services are *not* private.

- [Twitter](#) - remember to create and use a #hashtag for your course or conference
 - Try [Tweetdeck](#) to more easily follow topics and trends
- [Mastodon](#) - decentralized microcontent - takes a bit of getting used to, but without Twitter's chaos and issues (use [masto.host](#) to set up your own) -- [Instructions: [video](#)]

- [MoodleNet](#) - distributed social networking platform for educators (currently in testing)
- (*) [Pixelfed](#) - like Instagram, decentralized (there may be cloud hosting at [fediverse.net](#))
- [Plurk](#) - share short messages, links, videos and everything else with your friends
- [Chatzy](#) - create a chat room immediately – only for you and people you invite
- [Backchannel Chat](#) - class discussion tool; teacher can control all aspects of the discussion
- *(Note: Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn, and Reddit are additional options, but they're really not appropriate for online courses and events).*

Private Messaging

From <https://dataethics.eu/digital-selfdefense/> Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp and many other similar services are not private. Messenger is said to listen to your IRL conversations, if you've given it access to your microphone, and WhatsApp keeps metadata and sends your phone number to its owner, Facebook. You can find really good alternatives, when it comes to chat- and communications apps. The best are:

- [Wire](#) (Swiss/US) financed partly by Janus Friis, who co-founded Skype. Works out of Berlin - complying with the strictest privacy laws in the world.
- [Signal](#) (US) is also good - though not as great on usability.
- [Telegram](#) (Originally from Russia but now located in Dubai)
- [Threema](#) (German)
- [Riot](#) (UK and open source)

Calendar and Scheduling

Calendars are useful for setting up a course or conference schedule. Your calendar can be imported by people into their own personal calendar (but they will need instructions on how to do this (for [example](#))).

- [Google Calendar](#) - subscribe to different calendars; make your own -- [Instructions: [video](#)]
- [Outlook](#) - Microsoft's service also provides calendar functionality
- [Nextcloud](#) - productivity suite featuring built-in calendar
- [Any.do](#) - It's the easiest way to stay organized and get more done
- [Doodle](#) - use a poll to set a meeting time

Events / Conferences

Some applications manage entire events for you, taking care of details like scheduling speakers and registering attendees. If you are hosting a larger paid conference it may be worth your while to investigate a paid option for this; otherwise, stick with the free versions.

- [EventZilla](#) - free tier for free events, % of registration for paid events [Instructions: [video](#)]
- (*) [Open Conference Systems](#) - available on some hosting services, but not Reclaim

- [Mobilizon](#) - decentralized events platform (currently in testing)

Feed Readers

If you have many people writing blogs, then the easier way to read them all in one place is to use a feed reader. Highly recommended. These usually have a free tier.

- [Feedly](#) -- click on the + at the left to add new feeds
- [The Old Reader](#) - free tier, 150 subscriptions
- [InoReader](#) - free tier - [[hints](#)]
- [NewsBlur](#) - free tier allows 64 subscriptions
- [Nextcloud](#) - has a 'News' feed reader
- [Feed Informer](#) - free, simple

E-Reading

There are tools that can help you collect all your course readings into a single place for reading online. This might be easier than blogging them or collecting links some other way.

- <https://www.zotero.org/> - free, can use OERs, also integrates assigned (\$\$\$) eBooks
- [Kindle](#) - free reader, login with your Amazon account, there are [free books](#)
- [Zotero](#) - open source research assistant that allows for online sharing of reading resources (free up to 2 GB of cloud data)

E-Book Publishing

You can create your e-books that can be read on e-book readers. The question you need to ask, though, is whether this *needs* to be a book, or whether it could be some web pages or a blog.

- [PressBooks](#) - the personal plans start at free, generally inexpensive for more services
- [LibreTexts](#) - allows ongoing and collaborative editing of content, interactive elements (like H5P) built into the platform, also houses a lot of pre-existing OER
- [Rebus Community](#) - working together to create and share OER. People, processes, and tools to support your publishing efforts.
- [LeanPub](#) - create a book or course for free, options to sell
- (*) [Scalar](#) - for media-rich long-form content.

Slides and Presentations

Most online conferencing systems have a mechanism to share slide presentations (or desktops, if you're using a cloud-based slide tool, which is what we list here). Slides can be used to add a graphical element to an online presentation, so you can be more than just a talking head. They

make a good medium for students to use to present to the class as a whole, online or off. Or, they can be used as a means of presenting visual content for people to read at their leisure.

- [Google Slides](#) - part of Google Docs; cloud-based slide hosting
- [Slides.com](#) - cloud editor plus slides hosting
- [Zoho Show](#) - online slide editor, allows collaborative editing
- [Emaze](#) - automated generation, visual effects
- [Prezi](#) - dynamic/non-linear presentations, could customize templates (free or premium)
- [Genial.ly](#) -- interactive content platform - presentations, infographics, dossiers, video presentations, eposters, quizzes [[About](#)]
- [Paste](#) - collaborative slides, auto-formatting
- [CryptPad](#) - very basic slides, encrypted
- [SlideShare.net](#) – large body of shared slide presentations

Group Discussion

Groups are discussion areas where a number of people can contribute individual messages to a common space (sometimes called a 'group' or a 'thread') dedicated to a specific topic. Group discussions are an excellent activity for course participants. Note that discussions should be facilitated (that is, give them something to talk about) and moderated (to prevent inappropriate comments).

- [Google Groups](#) --
- [Groups.io](#) -- platform for online communities. Management tools. Mobile ready. Free and paid plans. No ads, no tracking.
- Facebook with [social learning groups](#)
- [Rocketchat](#) -
- [Proboards](#) - host of free forums on the Internet
- [Discord](#) -- mobile & desktop app (requires download) - voice and text chat. [Instructions](#).
- [GroupMe](#) - Group text messaging - free
- [Slack](#) - Group chat - free with paid features

Annotation

Annotation tools support discussions that are anchored to specific pieces of content. For example, in a text document, an annotation tool might allow a group to discuss a specific paragraph. Annotation tools support reflective reading or viewing and enable people to dig further into the content with the aid of other learners or instructors.

- [Hypothes.is](#) - collaborative web annotation tool (OER) to discuss openly accessible resources (websites, articles, etc.). Discussion can be open to anyone with an account or happen within closed groups

- [VoiceThread](#) - add audio annotations to multimedia content - has [free](#) options -
- [Hubub](#) - enables threaded discussions that are anchored to points in video. Discussions can be open (broadcast to twitter) or closed. Free and paid plans, GDPR compliant.

eBoards

A digital whiteboard is a free-form drawing tool, just like a whiteboard. They can be used with screen recorders (see below) to make lesson videos, or used as a group activity for brainstorming or just drawing things.

- [Limnu](#) - sketch, share and collaborate with others
- [InVision](#) - free-form design tools, free tier, a few extra steps to get started
- [StormBoard](#) - sticky note tool; each stick note can become a whiteboard. Free for educators until June, 2020
- [Awwapp.com](#) - Free, synchronous multi-user whiteboard in HTML.
- [Jamboard](#) - from Google
- [Whiteboard.fi](#) - collaborative whiteboard, no login
- <https://www.notebookcast.com/es/> (Pizarra online compartida multi usuario en tiempo real)
- [Wordwall.net](#)
- [CryptPad](#) - whiteboard

Teams

Team environments support messaging, calendars, task lists, collaborative editing, and more. They need a bit more time to learn, but once everyone using the environment is comfortable they can be effective for classes or communities of practice.

- [Riot](#) (web or desktop client for [Matrix](#))(This is the closest thing yet I've seen to a PLE)
- (Commercial solutions include [Slack](#) and [Mattermost](#), free for users, servers cost money)
- [Hypothes.is](#) web based annotation with community discussions.
- [Trello](#) - boards and lists - click 'Butler' (upper right) for more features
- [Kanbanery](#) - collaborative project and task management based on <http://personalkanban.com>.
- [BaseCamp](#) - limited free version, project management and teams
- (*) [Mattermost](#) - open source, self-hosted Slack-alternative
- [Catalytic Essentials](#) - scientific workflow platform for academic researchers. Use CDSWAH20 code for free access.
- [Nextcloud](#) - allows for files, messaging, and calendars. Open source with many add-ons
- [Fleep](#) - combines messaging with file sharing and tasks
- [Notion](#) - write, plan, collaborate, and get organized — all in one tool
- [Confluence](#) - Confluence is your remote-friendly team workspace where knowledge and collaboration meet - free tier
- [CryptPad](#) - Kanban board

- [Asana](#) - tasks, to-dos, reminders, and ideas, updates from coworkers, organize tasks and projects for work, or manage your to-do list

[Advice: [Liberating Structures](#),]

Engagement

Most online conferencing systems offer the platform for people to join, meet, and discuss, for further engagement, you would have to combine with an audience engagement platform to make it interactive.

- [Toasty](#) - an engagement platform with video conferencing that focuses on facilitated engagement and audience-audience engagement, driving meaningful conversations physically and virtually.
- [Mentimeter](#) - ask poll questions to an audience, limited trial. You can make your presentation in Powerpoint interactive with the add-mentimeter directly.

Forms and Surveys

Collect feedback from the class or audience with forms and surveys. Some, like Survey Monkey, are an all-in-one service, while Google Docs requires that you create a spreadsheet to hold the responses, then a form to present the questions.

- [Google Forms](#) (connect each form to a [Google Sheet](#), a spreadsheet that contains the responses)
- <https://www.wufoo.com/>
- [Survey Monkey](#) - makes sure to get the [free plan](#) (they hide it pretty well)
- [Zoho Survey](#) - free tier limited to 100 responses
- [CrowdSignal](#) - limited free tier
- (*) [LimeSurvey](#) - popular online survey application
- [1KA](#) - an open source application for web surveys. *1KA service* used free of charge.
- [Zeetings](#) (hosted in Australia: free for educators + 500 students/ session) - users can share slides (on- and offline) while also communicating through chat annotations
- [ArsNova](#) (hosted in Germany) (open source on- and offline polling tool - check for the manual = menu to switch language to English)
- [Socrative](#) (U.S corporate tech tool - company announced to support educators by offering free pro version - use for self-evaluation/ quizzing)
- [Pear Deck](#) - Google Slides add-on
- [Smart Surveys](#) - UK-based
- [Qualtrics](#) - free tier limited to 100 responses
- [Kahoot!](#)
- [Quizizz.com](#)
- [educaplay](#)

- [Hot Potatoes](#) - crear ejercicios interactivos de opción múltiple, respuesta corta, oraciones mezcladas, crucigramas, emparejar/ordenar y llenar espacios.
- [Polly](#) - live poll, plug-ins for [Slack](#) and Microsoft [Teams](#)

Scheduling Meetings

These tools can provide a quick way to find the best time slot for groups to meet online, without the need for back and forth emails or messages.

- Doodle -- https://doodle.com/en_GB/
- Calendly -- <https://calendly.com/>
- Google calendar -- <https://calendar.google.com/calendar/r>

Tables

This is a list of generic list-creation, table, and simple database tools. These are useful any time you want to collect and share, well, lists. They typically import from and export to Excel format. Use lists to collect email addresses, Twitter handles, website addresses, and more.

- [JotForm Tables](#) - cloud based, many templates, public sharing is read-only
- [AirTable](#) - complex, powerful, allows full public editing
- [Google Tables](#) - In beta, U.S. only
- [Microsoft Lists](#) - Designed specifically for MS Teams, I think you need to pay for this, need Office 360, hard to find in documentation
- [Asana](#) - intended mostly for project teams

Resource: [7 powerful alternatives to Microsoft Lists](#)

Content Management Systems

Use a content management system (CMS) to make larger resources (like documents, photos, videos, etc) available to participants. Different CMSs may specialize in different types of content.

- [Wordpress](#) - The most popular CMS in the internet
- [SlideShare](#) - upload and share slide shows, PDFs
- (*) [Omeka](#) - accepts and stores all types of files, including images, video, audio, multi-page documents and PDFs, Power Point presentations
- (*) [TruCollector](#) - WordPress plug-in, visitors can upload media and tag it
- Google Drive
- [Internet Archive](#) - allows upload of content you create (and openly license) or content already openly-licensed

- [Hubub](#) - upload videos and host threaded discussions around them. Discussions can be open (broadcast to twitter) or closed and are always anchored to times in the video. Free and paid plans, GDPR compliant.

Learning Management Systems

LMS is an application that will help you build a complete course online. Included is course content and usually educational extras like quizzes and surveys. In some places you can create a course for little or no cost. The main question to ask is: do I want to dedicate all my time and effort to a single system, or would it be better to use other services as I need them?

- Primary
 - [ClassDojo](#) - designed for primary schools - free for teachers, even if not in a school - [Instructions - readers, add a resource here!]
 - [SeeSaw](#) - for primary schools - [Instructions: [web page](#)]
 - [Edmodo](#) - communication, collaboration, and coaching platform to K-12 schools and teachers.
- Higher Ed
 - [Canvas](#) - course creation and importing, quizzing platform, gradebook
 - [MoodleCloud](#) - free hosting for Moodle - [Instructions - [web](#)]
 - [Lumen Learning](#) announced free access to higher ed professionals during Covid-19 crisis
- MOOC
 - [Udemy](#) - helps you create and sell courses, though you can set them as 'free' - process steps you through course design, courses are reviewed
 - [Open edX](#) - open source MOOC platform used for [edX](#) and many other organizations (see [Sites powered by Open edX](#))
 -
- Commercial
 - [Thinkific](#) - has a core feature set for free
- Suites of Tools
 - [Google Classroom](#) - part of G Suite for Education, which includes other Google tools listed in this guide
 - [Microsoft Teams](#) - free version - [preview](#) - [Instructions: [video](#)] and OneNote Class Notebook

Audio Recording

- [Vocaroo](#) - no-login audio recording
- [Online-Voice-Recorder](#) - no-login recording, some editing capabilities
- [Twisted Wave](#) - browser based audio editor
- [Audacity](#) - downloadable audio recording and editing application, all platforms, widely used

More advice: [\[here\]](#)

Podcasting

Send a voice message or audio recording to an audience. These services allow you to record the audio from your own computer (or create it using other tools and then upload it). They will also distribute your audio to podcasting networks (like iTunes) so people can listen to the audio.

- [Anchor](#) -- free service for recording, hosting, and distributing podcasts
 - Guides: [Edublogger](#),
- [Soundcloud](#) -- record from your desktop or mobile phone
- [Podomatic](#) --
- [Blubrry](#) -- lowest tier is \$12/month, but includes a WordPress site
- [Internet Archive](#) -- upload audio and make it available to everyone for free
- [Zencastr](#) - podcast recording and post-production - free tier plus pro

Resource: Educationalist, [Hear Me Out](#)

Video Conferencing

For person-to-person or small group conversations, video conferencing offers a rich experience. Some plans allow you to record and save the meeting. For larger groups, you will need videocasting.

Video-conferencing options for teachers and schools include:

- [Zoom](#) — software designed exclusively for video conferencing, with breakout rooms
- [Google Hangouts Meet](#) — the evolved version of classic Hangouts that's part of G Suite - [Instructions: [video](#)] [TurboMeet](#) - Chrome extension adds captions, etc)
- [Microsoft Teams](#) — communication and collaboration platform that's part of Office 365
- [Big Blue Button](#) -- open source conferencing tool, integrates with Moodle - dozens of free implementations, example, <https://ensemble-bbb.scaleway.com> or <https://bbb.wsweet.cloud> (this one allows to record the videoconference) [\[instructions\]](#)
- [Jitsi](#) — free and open source video conferencing with built-in etherpad for collaboration
- [Whereby](#) — WebRTC-based in-browser video conferencing for small groups
- [Skype](#) - one-to-one and group video conferencing

- Cisco [Webex Personal Account](#) (Unlimited Usage, 100 Participants, limited countries, Covid outbreak special only)
- [Discord](#) - free VoIP, text, and video chat, can be used in a browser, but also has a downloadable app; features for gamers like Twitch integration, requires a server; you either host your own (*) or use someone's hosted server [[Description](#), [Instructions](#), [tips](#), [Server List](#)]

[Advice: [basics of online meetings](#), [virtual peer assists](#)]

Video Conferencing for Schools						
	Price	Length	Meeting	Live stream	Record	Join without login
zoom	Free basic plan	40 minutes	100 participants	 Pro plan only	To computer	
Teams	Free basic plan	No limit	250 participants	 Paid only	10k viewers	
Meet	Free until July 1	No limit	250 participants	100k viewers	To Google Drive	

edublog

(Via [The Edublogger](#))

Video Conferencing Plus

These are applications that combine the basic functionality of videoconferencing within a wider environment. They are used when you want to combine videoconferencing with some other activity, for example, teaching a class, or collaborating on a document.

- [Class for Zoom](#), class video streams, easy one-to-one sessions, built-in tests, quizzes and assignments, examinations, attendance and performance monitoring and so on.
- [QigoChat](#), which combines Zoom with Google Drive and other tools for working groups that collaborate on reports, documents and proposals;
- [InSpace](#), which offers a simpler and more intuitive interface.

VideoCasting

If you want to send videocasting to a large number of people at once, then use the following:

- A digital signal processor, [Open Broadcast Studio](#) (I've also used [Xsplit](#)), that you run on your computer
 - [OBS: Open Broadcaster Software](#)

- A distribution platform, like [YouTube Live](#) (can also use Twitch or Facebook, but I wouldn't)
 - [[Guide](#) from Google]

Screen and Video Recording

If you want to show your audience how to do something, then screen recording is an effective tool. It records everything that happens on your computer screen, and often has a box showing the speaker (this is known as 'Picture in Picture', or PiP). They can be used to record lessons or conference sessions that the viewer can watch at their convenience.

- [OBS: Open Broadcaster Software](#)
- A distribution platform, like [YouTube Live](#)
- [Loom](#) -- Guides: [Kathleen Morris](#),
- [Screencastify](#)
- [Screencast-o-matic](#) - Google extension
- [Zoom](#) - record video conferences
- [Twitch](#) - most often used to record games, but is a general purpose tool
- [TechSmith Snagit](#) - Image capture and screen recording application for Windows or Mac. Free to use through the end of June.
- [ShowMe](#) - record whiteboard (on tablet) and large repository
- [Flipgrid](#): Flipgrid is 100% free for all educators, learners, and families. Recording and sharing short videos together.
- [Edpuzzle.com](#): Good for preparing assessment with videos.

Screencasting For Teachers (Free Plans)				
	loom	Screencastify	SCREENCAST O MATIC	zoom
Video length	Unlimited	5 minutes	15 minutes	Unlimited
Record screen and/or webcam	✓	✓	✓	✓
Zoom or draw	✗	Mouse spotlight and draw	Zoom only	Mouse spotlight and draw
Save and share	Download, embed, or share link	Download, Google Drive, or YouTube	Download, link, embed, social media, Google Classroom	Download to computer (not on iOS)
Edit recording	Trim	Trim	Trim and captions	✗
No watermark	✓	✓	✗	✓
Access	Chrome Extension or download desktop app	Chrome extension (Mac, Chromebook, Windows)	Web app or desktop software (Windows, Mac, Chrome); iOS app	Desktop software (Windows, Mac, Chrome); iOS app; web (limited)

[edublogs](#)

(Via [The Edublogger](#))

Video Hosting

It's usually most convenient to store videos on a dedicated video hosting platform. Videos can then be linked to from other web pages, or embedded right in the page. You can also use video hosting platforms (and especially YouTube) to find materials other people have created.

- [YouTube](#) - upload and share videos
 - [Make the most](#) of YouTube
- [Vimeo](#) - free tier called 'Vimeo Basic'
- [Twitch](#) - save, store and share videos
- [PeerTube](#) - decentralized video sharing site
- [Video Review](#) - Video hosting, feedback, and collaboration site. Free to use through June 2020.

Cloud Storage

Cloud storage is useful if you have files you want to access from multiple computers, or if you have files you want to share with other people. Many of the services already listed above provide cloud storage (including all the Google tools).

- [Google Drive](#) -
- [DropBox](#) -
- [Box.com](#) -
- [OneDrive](#) - Microsoft's cloud storage tool - article: [The importance of starting with OneDrive](#)
- (*) [NextCloud](#) - file sync and share application

Drawing and Design Tools

These are tools for making things like flyers, posters or infographics. Usually they provide a template and options for making predefined types of content, adding images, and adding text. The product can then be printed, saved as a PDF, or saved as an image.

- [Canva](#) -- makes flyers, posters, etc
 - Guides: [Edublogger](#),
- [Padlet](#) -- makes boards, documents, and webpages
- [Piktochart](#) -- presentations, posters, interactions (makes you do a survey when you start, just say "no thanks" to it)
- [Mindmeister](#) -- concept mapping tool with group editing and conversations.
- [Miro](#) -- for collaborative idea generation and visual feedback (formerly RealTimeBoard)
- [Google Slides](#) -- useful for simple diagrams (export to various formats)
- [Visme](#) - create presentations, infographics, documents, videos, graphics
- [LucidChart](#) -- collaborative whiteboard charts - free tier three charts only - [[Guides](#)]
- Google Drawing -- useful for simple diagrams

- [Mural](#) -- digital workspace for visual collaboration (like Miro)
- [Genial.ly](#) -- Create presentations, infographics
- [app.diagrams.net](#) - formerly draw.io

Free Photos and Stock Video

- [Unsplash](#) - free high definition photography, accreditation appreciated
- [Videezy](#) - free HD stock footage and high definition videos
- [Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog](#)
- [Creative Commons](#) -- image search
- [Wikimedia Commons](#) - licensed for free reuse
- [Smithsonian Open Access](#) -- 3 million 2D and 3D digital items
- [Europeana](#) is an online repository with over 58 million cultural heritage items from around 4,000 institutions across Europe.
- [British Museum](#) collection of 1.9 million images
- [Pics4Learning](#) - curated image library that is safe and free for education
- [Burst](#) - from Shopify, free stock photos for websites and commercial use
- [Pexels](#) - free stock photos & videos shared by talented creators
- [Pixabay](#) - 1.7 million free images & royalty free stock
- [Openclipart](#) - 160K free clipart images

Social Media Publishing

This is a tool that allows you to set up your social media accounts and publish your content from one place. You can also schedule your publishing ahead of time. They can also help you track reviews, keywords, or mentions on social networks.

- [Zoho Social](#) - lowest tier starts at \$10/month
- [Buffer](#) - fewer features, starts at \$15/month
- [Hootsuite](#) - There's a limited free plan but most will use the \$29/month plan
- [TweetDeck](#) - free, from Twitter

Badges

Use badges to recognize accomplishments, completion of tasks, or special standing in the course or community. Encourage participants to display their badges on their home page to motivate other participants to accomplish the same.

- [Badgr](#) - Create badges, award badges, provide participants with a place to store badges
- [Open Badge Factory](#) - award 5000 badges at the free tier
- [CanCred Factory](#) - issue two badges up to 5000 time for free
- [Credly](#) - want you to contact them before you can issue badges, probably not an option
- [ForAllSystems](#) -

- [Bestr](#) -
- [Openbadges.me](#) -
- [Badge List](#) -
- [Badgewell](#) -
- Moodle - allows for the creation of badges which can then be displayed on profiles and elsewhere

Labs and Sims

Although you can't do hands-on laboratory activities online, there are many online activities and simulations that offer an online replacement. Treat these just as you would an in-person lab, paying attention to proper procedure and documentation. (Note that many online lab websites were built in Flash, which is no longer supported on most browsers - these links have been checked to make sure they actually work).

- [oPhysics](#) - collection of interactive physics simulations
- [GeoGebra](#) - math and math apps
- [PHet](#) - HTML5 math and physics lab and simulation
- [Chemistry Simulations](#) - from the American Association of Chemistry Teachers
- [ChemCollective](#) - from Carnegie Mellon University
- [PraxiLabs](#) - immersive and interactive 3D simulation of a realistic lab
- [Bioman](#) - physiology video games, virtual labs & activities - eg. [Endocrine Ed](#) - [more](#)
- [Teaching Genetics with Dragons](#) - interactive genetics game/sim
- [LabExchange](#) - biotechnology/molecular biology simulators
- [Sky Server](#) - learn science by studying the stars and galaxies of the Sloan Digital Sky Survey (SDSS) - the same objects that professional astronomers study
- [Toy Theatre](#) - virtual manipulatives in a range of school subjects: math, reading, science
- [Physical Geology 101](#) - lab study material, identify rock types

Virtual Reality

Virtuality offers many opportunities for real time engagement and learning activities. It is particularly good for simulating real world events like disaster response, medical interventions, nursing etc. OISE provides good discussion of applications of VR in the classroom - [here](#).

- [AltSpace](#) Social VR Host your own event. Easily start your own meetup, show or class.
- [Active Worlds](#)
- [Second Life](#)
- (*) [OpenSimulator](#) - an open source multi-platform, multi-user 3D application server.

Reporting and Analytics

- [IntelliBoard](#) offers reporting and analytics for BbLearn, Canvas, D2L, and Moodle. No charge until May 31st.

E-Learning Online Communities

This guide is only the beginning. One of the great benefits of online learning is that you can join online communities of online educators, some small and local, others very large and global. Pick the community that suits you best and continue to learn from their experiences and discussions.

- [Europeana Education community](#) - brings together all those who believe that Europe's digital cultural heritage has an important role to play in education
- [Global Educator Collective](#) - international group of teachers who wanted to support others on transitioning to online learning - 127,000 members

Curriculum Resources

Various governments and agencies have released lists of resources sorted according to grade and subject, ranging from primary school through to university. We haven't attempted to list them here because even one such list would dwarf this entire guide. Teachers and students are advised to select from the provider of their choice, then find the appropriate subject and age range. Most of these resources are free.

- List of [online education resources](#) for home education released by the British government
- [Open Academic Continuity Resources](#) - eCampusOntario Tools
- Government of Ontario - Learn at Home - [High School Courses](#)
- [LibreText](#) - 398 Textbooks, Textmaps, and LibreTexts

Browsers

- Firefox
- Chrome
- Edge
- Opera
- Safari
- Brave
- Vivaldi
- Maxthon
-

Ad Blockers

From here: <https://dataethics.eu/digital-selfdefense/>

- [Ublock Origin](#) is a good cookie- and adblocker for Chrome, Safari and Firefox.
- [Ghostery](#) can be used both for the computer and a browser for your mobile. It has been bought by the really cool German browser [Cliqz](#), which can also be recommended as it protects your data by default.
- The app [AdblockPlus](#) is one of the best for your mobile gadgets and also for your computer. It blocks both for ads and marketing-cookies. Can be turned on and off with a single touch on the screen.

VPN

With a VPN you get security as the most important feature. It encrypts the traffic between your gadget and the free Wi-Fi at hotels and cafes, so nobody can hack your gadget with ease. At the same time, you can use a VPN to control your location. *Note:* not all VPNs are secure; and they are generally not available for free.

- [Mozilla VPN](#) - US\$4.99/month, device-level encryption, no bandwidth restrictions, no logging of your network activity, connect up to 5 devices
- [F-Secure](#) (Finland)
- [ipredator](#) (Sweden)
- [ibvpn](#) (Romania) lots of servers
- [Cyberghost](#) (Romania) lots of servers

Search

Search is the online educator's (and online student's) best friend. Any type of learning and instruction will need content, and the internet contains quality content on every subject imaginable. Experienced students know to search for error messages, uncommon terms, background information, images and multimedia, and everything else they may need.

- [Google](#) - [Hints]
 - [Google Image](#) search
 - [Google Video](#) search
 - [Google Scholar](#) - academic publications
- [DuckDuckGo](#) - search that doesn't track you
- [Bing](#) - Microsoft's search engine
- [Amazon](#) - search for books and products

- [Ecosia](#) - search engine that donates 80% or more of its profits to nonprofit organizations that focus on reforestation.
- [Startpage](#) (Dutch/US)
- [Qwant](#) (French/German)
- [Mojeek](#) (British)
- [Hulbee](#) (Swiss)
- [Searx.me](#) (meta search engine for the nerds)

Self-Tracking

From <https://dataethics.eu/digital-selfdefense/> with additions. Most fitness trackers don't have a great privacy policy and are not secure, but these two can be trusted:

- [Garmin](#) (US)
- [Samsung](#) (South Korean)
- [Apple Smartwatch](#) (Yes Apple is criticized for not paying taxes and being transparent, but they are good on privacy)
- [ActivityWatch](#) - ActivityWatch is an app that automatically tracks how you spend time on your devices. It is open source, privacy-first, cross-platform, and an alternative to services like RescueTime, ManicTime, and WakaTime.

Other Guides

This page is focused on technology and tools. But that's just the beginning. If you want advice on best practices and how to manage your work online, you may be interested in some of these other current guides:

- [Teaching in a Digital Age - Second Edition, Tony Bates](#)
- [Resources For Teaching Online Due To School Closures](#), Kathleen Morris, Edublogs
- [UPCEA Curated List of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Resources](#)
- [Going Online in a Hurry: What to Do and Where to Start](#), Michelle D. Miller, Chronicle
- [A Brief Guide to Synchronous Remote Course Tools](#). Michael Ball, UC Berkeley EECS; March 2020
- [Teaching Effectively During Times of Disruption](#), for SIS and PWR, Jenae Cohn and Beth Seltzer, Stanford
- [Resources for Just-in-Time Online Teaching](#), Derek Bruff, Vanderbilt
- [Teaching in the Context of COVID19](#) HASTAC
- [UCF Keep Teaching Teaching in the context of COVID-19](#)- resources, training and information

- [How To Run A Free Online Academic Conference: A Workbook](#) - F. Sayre, et.al.
- [How I Work Remotely](#) - Ben Werdmuller
- [16 Free Resources for Schools Who are Closing Due to Coronavirus](#) - V. Davis
- [Tricks and tools for better working from home](#), Jessica Bown, BBC
- [Advice to those about to teach online because of the corona-virus](#), Tony Bates
- [Best Resources For Creating Live Virtual Training Right Now](#), Connie Malamed
- [Tips for Hosting a Successful Online Conference](#), Sakai
- [Remote Learning - It's Happening](#) - Langwitches
- [Remote Work Survival Guide](#) - Remotive
- [Open source, experimental, and tiny tools roundup](#) - huge list of tools, enough for months of projects
- [40+ Tools for Distance Learning \(A response to COVID-19\)](#) - Nicole's Notes
- [7 Big Ideas as You Shift Toward Online Teaching](#) - John Spencer
- [Remote Leadership Toolkit](#) - Dan Pontefract
- [Online Pivot – some Open University resources](#) - Martin Weller
- [Remote Teaching Resources for Business Continuity](#) - spreadsheet of US institutional resources
- The iDEA Book: Educational Research and Practical Examples for Distinctive Course Design is available [here](#).
- Creating an Online Community, Class or Conference - Quick Tech Guide: Short URL for sharing: <http://bit.ly/quicktechguide>
- [Connected Courses](#) Connected Courses is a collaborative network of faculty in higher education developing online, open courses that embody the principles of [connected learning](#) and the values of the [open web](#). [This course ran in 2014 but there's a wealth of useful stuff in there still]
- [Directory of Learning & Performance Tools](#) - and [Top Tools for Learning](#) - Jane Hart, [Centre for Learning & Performance Technologies](#), UK
- [Handbook on Facilitating Flexible Learning During Educational Disruption: The Chinese Experience in Maintaining Undisrupted Learning in COVID-19 Outbreak](#) - guide with international contributions - UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (March 16, 2020)
- Huge list of online resources - <http://www.amazingeducationalresources.com/> - unsorted; most are free but require a sign-up or registration
- USFCA resources: [Faculty resources](#), [Student Resources](#), [Teaching with Zoom](#)
- Learning Policy Institute - [Resources](#)
- The Online Learning Collective - [discussion and resources](#)
- [Working From Home? Here's How AWS Can Help](#) - none of these services is free, but some of them are reasonable, and reading this may give you some ideas
- [Four Weeks In](#): 10 Lessons from Teaching Online at Duke Kunshan University
- Coronavirus Handbook - [Education Section](#)
- [Online learning in a hurry](#) - series of videos by Dave Cormier
- [Free Tech For Learning](#) -- ISTE & EdSurge

- [Teaching online: Challenges, Tactics, and New Possibilities](#), Marie Claire LeBlanc Flanagan
- Teaching online: A Practical Guide" Susan Ko and Steve Rossen
- [Video Tools: A review of tools for meeting online](#), Marie Claire LeBlanc Flanagan
- [Virtual Events for Associations: Your Guide to Going Digital](#) - WebCourseworks
- [How to Use Zoom Videoconferencing to Teach Online Effectively](#) - Contact North
- Very large [unsorted list](#) of resources in a Google spreadsheet
- Resources from [European SchoolNet](#)
- Esther Olatunde - [Remote Work Playbook](#)
- Virna Rossi - [Fast switch to e-learning](#) 5' CPD videos
- Overview of emerging country-level response to providing educational continuity under COVID-19: [Best practice in pedagogy for remote teaching](#)
- UCT [Low Tech Remote Teaching Guidelines](#)
- [SUNY's Exploring Emerging Technologies for Lifelong Learning and Success](#)
#EmTechMOOC is a Coursera-based MOOC targeted to lifelong learning needs to keep pace with technology change, which works together with EmtechWIKI - a socially curated collection of emerging technology tools, tutorials, and resources
- [Remote education practice](#) for schools during coronavirus (COVID-19) - Gov.UK
- International Islamic University - [Policy for Online Teaching](#)
- ISTE and EdSurge - [Learning Keeps Going](#)
- Torrey Trust and Fred Zinn - [Preparing for Remote/Online Teaching in the Fall](#) and [Building a PLN](#) Class Activity
- Educause - [Typology of Free Web-based Learning Technologies](#)
- Stanford - [Teach Your Class Online - The Essentials](#)
- [Remote Teaching Resources](#) for Business Continuity - 400+ links to university continuity web sites
- Google - [Distance Learning specific resource and course for Educators](#).
- Times of India - [10 online learning platforms by HRD-UGC](#)
- NYU Shanghai - [Digital Teaching Toolkit](#)
- Teaching from Home: [Some Technical Advice](#)
- Jane Hart - [Top Tools for Learning 2020](#)
- P2PU - [Learning Circle](#) Course Creation Guide
- P2PU - [Course in a Box](#)
- RTI - Content Delivery [decision making tool](#)
- Transport Canada - [Virtual Training Guidance](#)
- University of Michigan - [Changing study habits for online learning](#)
- Oregon State University - [Remote & Online Learning](#)
- University of California-Santa Cruz - [Remote Learning Resources for Students](#)

Lessons Learned

- OECD [Policy Responses to Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) Early lessons from the COVID-19 crisis
- Tony Bates - [10 Lessons](#) for a Post-Pandemic World from Covid-19 for Canadian universities and colleges
- Learning Policy Institute - [Restarting and Reinventing School](#)
- UNESCO - [What have we learnt?](#) Overview of findings from a survey of ministries of education on national responses to COVID-19
- World Bank - [How countries are using edtech](#) (including online learning, radio, television, texting) to support access to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Brookings: [Taking distance learning 'offline'](#): Lessons learned from navigating the digital divide during COVID-19
- Royal Society - [Lessons learnt](#) during COVID-19 lockdown
- [Lessons learned](#) while creating an effective emergency remote learning environment for students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Peter J. Vollbrecht, Kirsten A. Porter-Stransky, and Wendy L. Lackey-Cornelison.
- Stephen Downes - [Lessons from the Pandemic](#)
- Damian Radcliffe. [Lessons learned](#): 9 takeaways from teaching online during COVID-19: Tips for remote instruction developed in the past 10 weeks
- McKinsey, [What Now?](#) Decisive actions to emerge stronger in the next normal.
- Todd Stanley - Students Struggling in Virtual Classrooms Show a [Glaring Problem](#) in Our Schools
- Anya Kamanetz, KQED - [5 Things We've Learned](#) About Virtual School During the Pandemic
- EdTech Hub - [Education for the Most Marginalized](#) Post Covid-19
- Jason Oreno - [Education's Response](#) to the COVID-19 Pandemic Reveals Online Education's Three Enduring Challenges
- Jisc - Learning and teaching [reimagined](#)
- *Online Learning*, Special Issue: [COVID-19 and the Transition to Emergency Remote Instruction](#)
- Office for Students, [Gravity assist](#): propelling higher education towards a brighter future
- Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic: [How to Improve](#) How We Teach and Learn Online
- [QuickPoll Results: Assessment and Learning Design](#), EDUCAUSE
- [The state of school education one year into the COVID pandemic](#), OECD,