3rd Party Tools - Useful or Not?

Robert Swift Jr.
What are 3rd party tools?

Third party tools are unassociated resources that are not part of the learning management system (i.e. D2L).
What does the research say about education technologies in general?

“The right tools make the job easier and the result is of higher quality than without the tools (J. Voogt, G. Knezek).”
Why use 3rd party tools?

“Many pedagogical approaches, especially those based on collaboration and practice requires more tools than the learning management system (LMS) provides (Gonzalez, Rodriguez & Nistal (2009)).”
Concerns about using 3rd party tools

1. Accessibility
2. Assessment of Student Learning
3. Availability/Sustainability of the Service
4. Confidential Data/Student Privacy/Record Retention
5. Copyright
6. Etiquette
7. Student Buy-In
8. Support
Accessibility

Things to consider….

• Have you selected a tool that is accessible to the hearing/vision impaired?

• Do you have a back-up plan for students who are unable to use the tool due to accessibility issues?
Assessment of Student Learning

Consider this….

• Can you measure the effectiveness of the tool or service in your course?
Availability/Sustainability of the Service

Things to consider….

• What assurance do you have that the tool will continue to provide an acceptable level of service?

• How will you get your information back and continue your class or research if the tool becomes obsolete.
Confidential Data/Student Privacy/Record Retention

Things to consider…..

• The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) prohibits disclosure of student education records without student consent.

• Is it necessary for students to see each other’s work? (for review and collaboration)

• What steps do you need to take to educate your students about the 3rd party tool you will be using?

• Do you have a way to retain the student work at the end of the class?
Copyright

Things to consider….

• Do you need permission from a copyright owner for materials that will be made available via the 3rd party tool?

• Who will own the copyright to the 3rd party content created by students?

• In what ways can the 3rd party tool use your content?
Etiquette

Consider this….

- How can you help ensure that your students engage in safe and respectful behavior while using the tool?
Student Buy-In

Things to consider….

• How can you help ensure that students will actually use the tool?

• Does this tool offer any metrics/reporting on student usage of materials provided?
Support

Consider this….

• Does this tool offer reference sources of help (such as documentation and training) and/or interactive assistance (such as phone, email and live chat support)?
References

