

Rubric for Digital Tool Evaluation

This rubric has been adapted for students as a formative tool to evaluate digital tools. The rubric supports a multi-dimensional evaluation of functional, technical, social, and cognitive aspects of digital tools.

Instructions

Not all rubric criteria are necessarily applicable to all digital tools and those using the rubric are encouraged to assess irrelevant criterion as “not applicable”. The rubric does not identify a discrete threshold that a digital tool needs to cross before a tool should be used; the rubric is a formative tool intended to offer insight into the relative strengths and weaknesses of a digital tool, as evaluated against a set of criteria.

Category	Criteria	Works Well	Minor Concerns	Serious Concerns	Not applicable
Functionality	Scale	The tool can be scaled to accommodate any size group with the flexibility to create smaller sub-groups	The tool can scaled to accommodate any size group but lacks flexibility to create smaller sub-groups	The tool is restrictive to a limited number of users and cannot be scaled	
	Ease of Use	The tool has a user-friendly interface and it is easy to become skillful with ii in a personalized and intuitive manner.	The tool has an interface that may be confusing; there is limited opportunity for personalization.	The interface is not user-friendly; it is cumbersome, unintuitive, rigid, and inflexible.	
	Tech Support / Help Availability	Campus-based technical support and /or help documentation is readily available and aids users in troubleshooting tasks or solving problems experienced; or, the tool provider offers a robust support platform	Technical support and help documentation is available but limited, incomplete, or not user-friendly	Technological support and help documentation is not available	

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	Hypermediality	The tool allows users to communicate through different channels (audio, visual, textual) and allows for non-sequential, flexible/adaptive engagement with material	The tool allows users to communicate through different channels (audio, visual, textual) but is limited in its ability to provide non-sequential, flexible/adaptive engagement with material	The tool is restrictive in terms of the communication channels employed (audio, visual, textual) and presents information sequentially in a rigid, inflexible format	
Accessibility	Accessibility standards	The tool meets accessibility guidelines (e.g. local accessibility legislation and/or W3C WCAG 2.0 standards)	The tool has some limited capacity to meet accessibility guidelines	The tool fails meet accessibility guidelines or no information of compliance has been made available for the tool	
	User-focused participation	The tool is designed to address the needs of diverse users, their various literacies, and capabilities, thereby widening opportunities for participation in learning	The tool has some limited capacity to address the needs of diverse users, their various literacies, and capabilities	The tool is restrictive in meeting the diversity of needs reflective in the student body. The tool likely restricts some learners from fully participating.	
	Required Equipment	Proper use of the tool does not require equipment beyond what is typically available to students (computer with built-in speakers and microphone, internet connection, etc.)	Proper use of the tool requires specialized equipment (e.g. unique device) that likely requires purchase at a low cost	Proper use of the tool requires specialized equipment requiring moderate to significant financial investment	

	Cost of Use	All aspects of the tool can be used free of charge.	Limited aspects of the tool can be used for free with other elements requiring payment of a fee, membership, or subscription.	Use of the tool requires a fee, membership, or subscription Use of the tool requires a purchase that is likely to pose a financial burden on students (exceeding \$50 for a single half term course)	
Technical	Integration/ Embedding within a Website Platform (e.g. Wordpress)	The tool can be embedded (as an object via HTML code) or fully integrated (e.g. LTI-compliant tools) into a website (e.g. WordPress) while maintaining full functionality of the tool.	The tool can be embedded within a website, perhaps with with limited functionality, but can not be fully integrated.	The tool can only be accessed in a website through a hyperlink or static representations of the tool (e.g file export), rather than a functional version of the tool itself	
	Desktop / Laptop Operating Systems	Users can effectively utilize the tool with any standard, up-to-date operating system.	Users may encounter limited or altered functionality depending on the up-to-date operating system being used	Users are limited to using the tool with one specific, up-to-date operating system.	
	Browser	Users can effectively utilize the tool with any standard, up-to-date browser	Users may encounter limited or altered functionality depending on the up-to-date browser being used	Users are limited to using the tool through one specific browser	

	Additional Downloads	Users do not need to download additional software or browser extensions.	The tool uses a browser extension or software that requires a download and / or user permission to run.	The tool requires a past or version of a browser extension or software.	
Mobile Design	Access	The tool can be accessed, either through the download of an app or via a mobile browser, regardless of the mobile operating system and device. Design of the mobile tool fully takes into consideration the constraints of a smaller-sized screen.	The tool offers an app, but only for a limited set of mobile operating systems. Tool is not accessible through a mobile browser. Design of the mobile tool constrained by the limitations of the mobile device.	Access to the tool is limited or absent on a mobile device.	
	Functionality	There is little to no functional difference between the mobile and the desktop version, regardless of the device used to access it. No difference in functionality between apps designed for different mobile operating systems.	Core features of the main tool are functional on the mobile app but advanced features are limited. Some difference in functionality between apps designed for different mobile operating systems, but has limited impact on learners' use of the tool.	The mobile app functions poorly such that core features are not reliable or non-existent. Significant difference in functionality depending on the mobile device's operating system used to access the tool.	
	Offline Access	Offers an offline mode: Core features of the tool can be accessed and utilized even when offline, maintaining functionality and content.	Offers a kind of offline mode, where the tool can be used offline but core functionality and content are affected.	The mobile platform cannot be used in any capacity offline.	

Privacy, Data Protection, and Rights	Sign Up/ Sign In	Use of the tool does not require the creation of an external account or additional login, such that no personal user information is collected and shared.	Either instructors are the only users required to provide personal information to set up an account; or the tool has been vetted through appropriate channels to ensure strict adherence to local, institutional, or personal policies/standards for protecting the collection and use of student personal data by a third party group.	All users (instructors and learners) must provide personal information to a third party in creating an account and there is some question or concern of the adherence to local, institutional, or personal policies/standards for protecting the collection and use of such data by the third party group.	
	Data Privacy and Ownership	Users maintain ownership and copyright of their intellectual property/data; the user can keep data private and decide if / how data is to be shared	Users maintain ownership and copyright of their intellectual property/data; data is shared publically and cannot be made private	Users forfeit ownership and copyright of data; data is shared publically and cannot be made private, or no details provided.	
	Archiving, Saving, and Exporting Data	Users can archive, save, or import and export content or activity data in a variety of formats	There are limitations to archiving, saving, or importing/exporting content or activity data	Content and activity data cannot be archived, saved, or imported exported	
Social Presence	Collaboration	The tool has the capacity to support a community of learning through both asynchronous and synchronous opportunities for communication, interactivity, and transfer of meaning between users	The tool has the capacity to support a community of learning through asynchronous but not synchronous opportunities for communication, interactivity, and transfer of meaning between users	Communication, interactivity, and transfer of meaning between users is not supported or significantly limited	

	User Accountability	Instructors can control learner anonymity; the tool provides technical solutions for holding learners accountable for their actions	Instructors cannot control learner anonymity but the tool provides some solution for holding learners accountable for their actions	Instructors cannot control learner anonymity and there is no technical solution for holding users accountable to their actions	
	Diffusion	The tool is widely known and popular, it's likely that most learners are familiar with the tool and have basic technical competence with it	Learners' familiarity with the tool is likely mixed, some will lack basic technical competence with its functions	The tool is not well known/foreign, it is likely that learners are not familiar with the tool and lack basic technical competence with its functions	
Cognitive Presence	Enhancement of Cognitive Task(s)	The tool enhances engagement in targeted cognitive task(s) that were once overly complex or inconceivable through other means	The tool enables functional improvement to engagement in the targeted cognitive task(s)	The tool acts as a direct tool substitute with no functional change to engagement in the targeted cognitive task(s)	
	Higher Order Thinking	Use of the tool easily facilitates learners to exercise higher order thinking skills (analyze, evaluate, create)	The tool may engage learners in higher order thinking skills (analyze, evaluate, create)	The tool likely does not engage learners in higher order thinking skills (analyze, evaluate, create)	
	Metacognitive Engagement	Through the tool, learners can regularly receive formative feedback on learning (i.e. they can track their performance, monitor their improvement, test their knowledge)	Opportunities for receiving formative feedback on learning are available, but infrequent or limited (i.e. poor opportunities for tracking performance, monitoring improvement, testing knowledge on a regular basis)	There are no opportunities for formative feedback on learning (i.e. lacking opportunities for tracking performance, monitoring improvement, testing knowledge on a regular basis)	

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