

3

Web 2.0

A World Wide Web of Options

Overview

We are living in a new, interactive, and collaborative Web 2.0 world with many mainstream Internet technologies and applications available for use in the virtual classroom. If your online teaching career necessitates a journey beyond the Learning Management System (LMS), you may find yourself venturing into the ever-growing and ever-changing market of open-source learning. User-generated applications and social networking sites such as Facebook, Google Docs and Blogger, YouTube, Skype, and Ustream provide an innovative foundation for online curricula.

With education budgets on the decline, there is a general tightening of expenditures; subsequently, sources such as Google Educator have risen in popularity, especially in the venue of public education. Given today's economics, you may have to rely on the cost-free Web 2.0 applications currently available on the Internet. Even if you have an LMS at your disposal, you may find yourself feeling adventurous at some point and wish to explore these popular alternatives.

As you implement mainstream applications, keep at the forefront both privacy and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility concerns. Some tools and applications may have more lenient privacy standards than an LMS, so take extra precautions in maintaining the integrity of written work. As the popularity of mainstream education sites increases, software developers are striving to provide content that is universally accessible. State

Screen Capture 3.1 Google Educator main page.

The screenshot shows a Windows Internet Explorer browser window displaying the Google For Educators website. The browser's address bar shows the URL <http://www.google.com/educators/index.html>. The page features the Google logo at the top left, followed by navigation links for Education Home, Tools for your classroom, Classroom activities, Classroom posters, Google Teacher Academy, and Teacher Community. A main heading reads "Welcome to Google for Educators" with a subtext: "At Google, we support teachers in their efforts to empower students and expand the frontiers of human knowledge. That's why we've assembled the information and tools you'll find on this site. Learn more about [Google for Educators](#)." Below this is a "Recent Projects and News" section with a sub-heading "Google Teacher Academy Seattle" and a paragraph: "We'll be holding the next Google Teacher Academy in Seattle, Washington on July 28th (with an optional unconference on July 29th) at the Google office in Seattle. We are accepting applications from all over the world, so polish up your writing and video skills and apply by 11:59 PM PDT on June 16, 2011. For more information, please visit our site." To the right of the text is a "Go glc CERTIFIED TEACHER" badge and a YouTube logo. At the bottom right, there is a "Google Teacher newsletter" sign-up form with a "Subscribe" button and a note: "The Google Educator mailing list is powered by [Google Groups](#)". Below the form is a circular graphic of various educational icons and a text box: "Your school can go Google with Google Apps Education Edition".

Google For Educators

Welcome to Google for Educators


At Google, we support teachers in their efforts to empower students and expand the frontiers of human knowledge. That's why we've assembled the information and tools you'll find on this site. Learn more about [Google for Educators](#).

Recent Projects and News

Google Teacher Academy Seattle

We'll be holding the next Google Teacher Academy in Seattle, Washington on July 28th (with an optional unconference on July 29th) at the Google office in Seattle. We are accepting applications from all over the world, so polish up your writing and video skills and apply by 11:59 PM PDT on June 16, 2011. For more information, please visit our site.

Go glc
CERTIFIED
TEACHER



5/3/2011 Teaching Channel and YouTube celebrate National Teacher Day

Candice Teaching Channel Head of Product Development, guest blogged on the YouTube blog to commemorate National Teacher Day and celebrate the contribution of teachers worldwide. Teaching Channel is the first teachers-focused YouTube Edu partner, seeking to capture compelling teaching lessons on video and surface them to a wider audience so that others can find inspiration. highlighted two examples of innovative teaching lessons available on the Teaching Channels YouTube channel, showing how Alex uses rap to explain integers and how music teacher Genain trumpets Duke Ellington to explain similes. "Inspired teaching, like any great art, should be seen, so we're pleased to share these great lessons with the world," said in her post. If you're interested in seeing more examples of this content, subscribe to the Teaching Channel on YouTube today!


Google Teacher newsletter

Sign up to receive updates on new features, tips and other information relevant to teachers.

Enter your email address

Subscribe

The Google Educator mailing list is powered by [Google Groups](#)



Your school can go Google with Google Apps Education Edition

and government compliancy law is often more stringent for academics, so contact your IT department to determine if your choice of mainstream applications meets the minimum compliancy standards of the ADA.

Web 2.0: Mainstream Applications

If you find using an LMS's discussion and teaching modules too inflexible for your needs, or if you simply want or need to expand beyond your educational institution's licensed programs, you may consider supplementing your online course with the following web-based applications currently available on the Internet. Internet giant Google has developed Google Educator, which incorporates Google Docs, Blogger, and a variety of other applications designed for classroom use. Facebook, the leader in social networking, features tools for blogging, messaging, real-time chat, and media sharing. YouTube and Ustream can provide for your streaming audio, video, and lecture needs, and Skype is effective for live conferencing and virtual office hours. Table 3.1 illustrates the educational features available on these popular mainstream sources.

Although primary sources of the new Web 2.0 can supplant more traditional LMS features, none of the aforementioned educational tools support anti-plagiarism detection software. While there are mainstream options for checking originality, most require a paid subscription. Google Alert offers a free, albeit limited, detection service by way of the Google search engine. If your institution has a license with an anti-plagiarism program such as Turnitin, consider using mainstream Web 2.0 learning and teaching tools in tandem with the resources provided by your institution's LMS.

Social Networking: Facebook

Facebook provides the most popular avenue to connect with students on their level of communication, and this free mainstream application offers a variety of innovative applications appropriate to the virtual classroom. Most notably, Facebook serves as a web host for discussion blogs, streaming audio and video, live chat, and instant messaging. Within Facebook, you can create groups; disseminate information; share pertinent quotes, links, photos, and multimedia; and relate to your students on a more personal level.

Most commercial websites offer options to share articles and videos on Facebook, affording educators a valuable tool in incorporating current events and media into the online platform; you can also add links to an

Table 3.1 Educational Features Checklist.

<i>Application</i>	<i>Educational Features</i>								
	<i>Messaging/ Notification or Email</i>	<i>Word Processing</i>	<i>Peer Editing</i>	<i>Whole- Class Live Chat</i>	<i>Discussion Blog</i>	<i>Small Group/ Individual Conferencing</i>	<i>Virtual Office Hours</i>	<i>Media Sharing</i>	<i>Streaming Audio/ Video for Lectures</i>
Facebook	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Google Docs	✓	✓	✓		✓				
Google Blogger	✓				✓			✓	
YouTube								✓	✓
Ustream								✓	✓
Skype						✓	✓		

unlimited amount of video hosted from sites such as YouTube. Having used Facebook in our online courses, we have a few suggestions for implementing it into your online curriculum.

Although Facebook functions primarily as a social networking site, it also offers academic-enhancing possibilities, the most valuable aspect for educators being the newly designed group page. Facebook recently added new beneficial rules for setting up group pages: Members now have the option of setting up a group page that is closed (open only to invitees) or open to any account holder (anyone can join). If you choose to have a group page for each of your courses, then select the closed-group option and invite participants accordingly. You may also consider creating one group page for all of your students; should you select this option, you will need to widen your topics to include a more general educational or social tone.

As group administrator, you select how much freedom you want to offer your members. You can restrict posts to the group wall, you can be the sole provider of information and then permit your students to respond to the topics or media you share, or you can choose an open submission policy and allow students to post their own opinions and material. An advantage of using Facebook over the tools offered by the university is that Facebook makes it easier for the students to add content.

You will have numerous ways to display course information as each group page provides the following categories for sharing on the wall: Post, Link, Photo, Video, Event, Doc, and Poll Question. Facebook formats each type of post, so once a category is selected, a dialogue box pops up to assist you in posting. It's remarkably intuitive, fun, and easy! An instructor can disseminate information or engage students in discussion by posting quotes, questions, timely news videos, images (personal or from around the Internet), music videos, and links to external webpages.

Facebook can serve as a mainstream learning tool for forum discussion (blogging), live group chat, and email LISTSERV. The group wall is quite similar to a forum discussion; the main difference is seen in the format and storage of posts. A typical LMS forum offers a more organized and accessible way to view all threads in a discussion; a blog or a Facebook discussion may get buried in a long list of discussion threads. While still accessible, a participant may have to scroll quite a way down the page to access an older discussion. To counter this, you could use the Facebook Docs feature as a way to conduct a discussion. Docs can be uploaded and edited by all members, and they will display on a separate Docs page separate from the main group wall. Your Doc could pose a discussion question, and group members would select *edit* to add to the bottom of the document.

In tandem with wall discussion features, Facebook also supports live chat with an unlimited number of participants. On the bottom of the group

Facebook page, students may click the chat box icon, which will substantially enlarge the chat screen. Students may need to be instructed to enable the live group chat function in Facebook.

In addition to chat, Facebook offers a private messaging feature that can substitute for a class email LISTSERV. Each group administrator has the option to message individuals or the entire group; students will receive messages in their personal Facebook in-boxes, and as long as the email notification feature for messaging is selected, they will be notified via email whenever a message is sent out.

If you elect to incorporate Facebook into your online classroom, we offer the following suggestions to protect your and your students' privacy:

- Create a new email account for Facebook. Since you will receive notifications and possibly email messages from members, we advise you to keep this separate from your personal or campus email. It's very easy to create a Yahoo, Hotmail, Google, or AOL email account—and you will be grateful that you did.
- Instruct your students not to add anyone to the group. There is a feature/link to invite new members. Either disable it or dissuade your students from adding people who are not on your roster.
- To ensure your own personal privacy, we suggest that you refrain from adding your students as your “friends.” If you do decide to add students as friends, they will be able to access your personal Facebook page and see all of your posts, pictures, and information, and they will also be able to post on your wall. There are numerous privacy settings available, but once you befriend someone, you will need to block undesirable “friends” on an individual basis. It's simpler to keep students on the group page and avoid inviting them to be your friends. Our advice? Do not open this Pandora's box!

As administrator, you are at the controls. Please remember to check with your IT department for your institution's rules on ADA accessibility. Please note that Facebook makes frequent changes to its interface.

Google Docs

Google offers a free web-based word processing application known as Google Docs. Once you sign up for a free Google email account, you can access this real-time collaboration tool and begin to edit your documents online from any computer. Users can create new text documents, spreadsheets, presentations, drawings, and forms, and most file formats (including Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and PDF) can be uploaded directly into the program.

There are several options for visibility and ownership, and Google Docs has a pull-down menu feature to select what works best for each of your documents.

The owner of the document can assign permissions to share and edit to an unlimited number of participants. Depending on your choice of assignment, you can share a document with an entire class or limit accessibility to small groups or individual students. You can allow all students to edit or select just a few. For individual paper assignments, students can upload their documents onto your Google Docs course page; you can then choose who views and edits each document. For group workshops or presentations, students can upload to your page, or you can require them to create their own pages and then subsequently give you viewing and editing privileges for their course documents.

Because Google Docs lends itself naturally to collaboration, you may wish to choose this mainstream platform to conduct writing workshops that require peer review. Documents can be edited in real time, so if your course meets live, your students can simultaneously comment on student papers or projects. The program also offers a notification option; if selected, then participants with editing privileges will receive email notification when there are changes to a document. Please be advised that, at this time, Google Docs has not integrated a tool for anti-plagiarism. If you are concerned about originality, you can copy and paste in a few key phrases from your student papers into Google Alerts (<http://www.google.com/alerts>).

Additional Mainstream Options

Blogs

Conduct an Internet search for blog-creation sites, and you will come up with a variety of options for creating your own blog. On the very top of your search results, you might find Blogger, a free blog hosted by Google. Many free and commercial blogs provide design templates and video tutorials, most offer to host your blog on their website, some allow you to upload photos and video, and most should provide similar privacy options for sharing and posting. If you choose to use a mainstream blog in lieu of an LMS discussion forum, you will need to designate a significant amount of time to set up your page and permissions. If time management is an issue (especially for those new to online teaching), consider relying on the ready-made LMS forums for your blogging needs. Once you have reached a comfort level in teaching a variety of online applications, you may find freedom in a mainstream blog.

YouTube

If you are interested in incorporating mainstream media, YouTube is a popular and very reliable hosting source. Like Facebook and Google, there

is no charge for an account or access. You can sign up for an account and upload video onto the YouTube website then simply ask your students to visit your YouTube page, or you can embed the YouTube video player (simply via the embed link YouTube provides) into your LMS, Facebook, or Google page. Our university has its own YouTube page; we are free to sign up for an account in order to store our videos all in one place. Although the Fair Use Act should enable you to upload a portion of commercial video for educational purposes, always check for copyright permissions.

Streaming Audio and Video

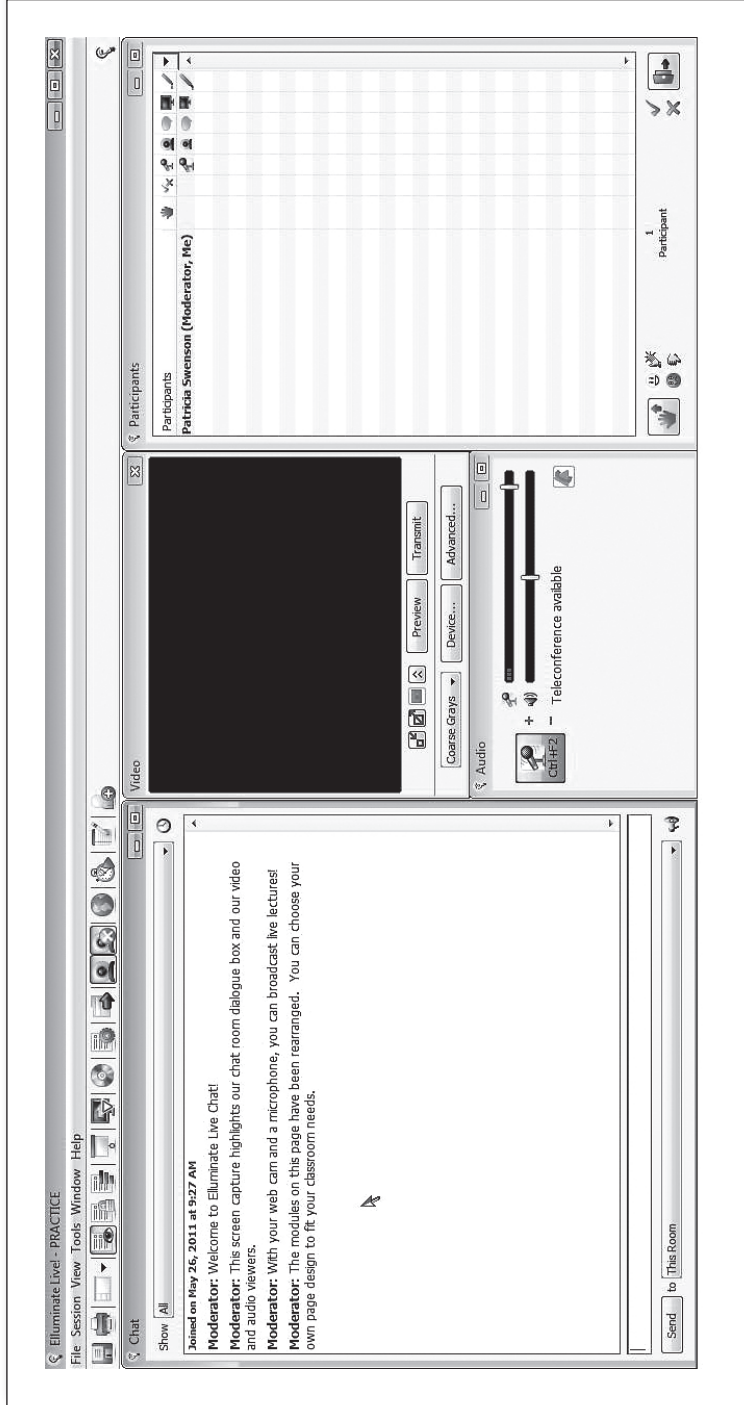
If you are interested in producing and broadcasting your own lectures, you can purchase your own software and hardware and create streaming audio and video lecture presentations. Inexpensive computer software is available for you to record your own voice at home using a microphone. This software enables you to save your audio in a variety of formats that are compatible to your LMS or Web 2.0 application. Your computer's webcam can be used to broadcast a live lecture and discussion. You can also audiotape or videotape a traditional classroom lecture you've given to use in a subsequent online class. These audios and videos can then be saved and uploaded for future viewing.

A few popular mainstream webcasting sites exist for streaming audio and video. At our university, we are fortunate to have Elluminate, a web-conferencing application, embedded into our LMS. Many mainstream applications, such as Facebook, Google Docs, and Blogger, have media-sharing capabilities; once you save your own lectures as media files, you can upload them onto the aforementioned websites. Our university has also established a video production service that provides educators with a recording studio and necessary software to format streaming video to the QuickTime format. We highly recommend that you contact your IT department for available in-person or online options for recording and streaming live and recorded audio or video.

Ustream

For those without an LMS or an on-campus video recording option, you may wish to create an account with Ustream, a website that offers a platform for live broadcasts and streaming video. With your computer webcam or a video camera, you can broadcast live or stream your recorded lectures to a wide audience. You can upload your videos onto Ustream's website, or you can download a video player and broadcast live from your own channel. If

Screen Capture 3.2 Elluminate's web conferencing feature.



you choose the video player option for your live lectures, your students will also need to download the player onto their own computers and then link to your account. The basic streaming video feature is free, but cost will vary if you desire a professional-quality broadcast and storage system for your taped lectures. For lectures on the go, you can even record yourself on an iPhone and upload it to Ustream!

Skype

The group video and conference software Skype provides a more limited mainstream option for live streaming video. If you choose to Skype, then all participants must subscribe (it's free) and upload the software and player onto their personal computers. A broadband connection and webcam are required. Prior to conferencing, all contacts (participants) must join and link to your account. To participate with a group of 10 (the maximum number of participants per session), you will need to sign up for the premium service or request a video subscription from the Skype Manager. There is a minimal monthly fee or pay-as-you-go option for these premium services.

Perhaps the best and most efficient use of Skype would be for a virtual office hour or one-on-one discussion. Because the maximum number of participants cannot exceed 10, live whole-class discussion is highly improbable. For students who may be overseas, or if you are traveling during the semester, Skype provides a free means for private communication.

Please remember, as with all mainstream applications, you will need to check with your institution regarding accessibility of blogs, chat, and video. The ADA, as applied in your area, may have more stringent rules regarding education, so if you intend to use mainstream commercial applications in your classroom, be sure to check with your IT department for state and federal accessibility requirements.

Summary

For more experienced online educators, those feeling particularly adventurous, or those teaching virtual classes on a tight budget, Web 2.0 offers enticing, fun, and free options such as Facebook, Google Docs and Blogger, YouTube, and Ustream. These commercial sites offer components comparable to what is found on the LMS platform, and most provide an array of tutorials and group help forums to assist you in your initial setup. From blogs to chat to streaming multimedia, the mainstream Internet contains a variety of options for disseminating your course information. As

an added benefit, you'll find that students gravitate toward these popular interactive technologies.

As you set up your course, you'll find a range of diverse options for many of your technological and educational needs. Whether you choose a mainstream or academic platform for your courses or a combination, inquire as to your institution's requirements for accessibility and ADA compliancy. As mainstream websites advance in popularity as free alternative options for educators, most are making strides in privacy and accessibility for all learners. We hope you enjoy the vast array of Web 2.0 tools available to you.

Links to Mainstream Websites

Many commercial sites offer free resources, tutorials, and discussion blogs for educators who wish to incorporate a portion of their curricula online. The links below provide you with a wealth of information:

Illuminate: <http://www.illuminate.com/>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/>

Google Educator: <http://www.google.com/educators/index.html>

Google Blogger: http://www.google.com/educators/p_blogger.html

Google Docs: http://www.google.com/educators/p_docs.html

Google Alerts: <http://www.google.com/alerts>

QuickTime: <http://www.apple.com/quicktime/>

Skype: <http://www.skype.com/intl/en-us/home>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/>

Ustream: <http://www.ustream.tv/>

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/>

