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Ways to Collaborate: Google and Beyond

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Collaboration & Annotation

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Debbie Ginsberg, Educational Technology Librarian

Document Collaboration

Use these tools to collaborate on individual documents both in the classroom and outside of class. These can be especially useful when students are working on revising a few paragraphs in class.

Etherpad

<http://etherpad.com/>

Basic online white board. Create a page and share the link with your students. Each user edits in his or her own color and changes appear instantly. One of the easiest tools to use, but Google has purchased the company and the online app will soon not be available.

WriteBoard

<http://123.writeboard.com>

Similar to Etherpad, but doesn't offer as many features. You can create a common space and share links with other users. However, only one user at a time can edit the text.

Google Docs

<http://docs.google.com>

Create shared documents directly in Google or import Word documents. Share documents with other users and track revisions. Requires a login to access the collaboration features.

Zoho

<http://www.zoho.com>

Similar to Google Docs, Zoho offers many collaboration and sharing features including creating public documents. Requires a login to access the collaboration features.

Project Collaboration

Use these tools for collaborative assignments. Create public or private web pages where students can post and review their work.

Microsoft Office Live

<http://workspace.office.live.com>

Share Word and other Office documents and track revisions. Useful for projects involving many documents because entire document folders can be uploaded at once.

PBWorks

<http://pbworks.com/>

An easy-to-use wiki which is great for course projects. Several law schools have used PBWiki to manage legal research and writing assignments. See: <http://law1510.pbworks.com/> (basic page from Nova) and <http://legalresearchprinciples.pbworks.com/> (class website from Ottawa).

Skype

<http://www.skype.com/>

You probably know that Skype can be used to call anyone over the internet. However, you can also install plug-ins to add additional features such as sharing your desktop screen and Word files. Calls to other Skype users are free; there is a charge for other calls.

Google Wave

<http://wave.google.com>

Google's collaborative workspace. Any invited user can edit a Wave space at any time. Edits show up instantly. Users can add files, images, and other content to a Wave. A few faculty in higher education have been using Waves as collaborative class spaces, but the Wave project itself is still in beta-testing and access is limited to users who have received invitations.

Annotating Presentations

These tools are useful for annotating presentations – mark up PowerPoints, websites, Word files, and more.

PowerPoint

Includes built-in annotation tools including a highlighter and a pen. Right-click during a presentation to access the tools.

Interwrite Workspace

http://www.einstruction.com/support_downloads/downloads.html

Annotate anything on your screen, from a website to a spreadsheet to a Word document. Annotation tools include text, highlighters, arrows, and pens. Annotate any Word document with a stylus or mouse and save the annotations to share with students. See a video demo here: <http://bit.ly/axwflu>.