

Remote Teaching and Learning Preparedness Task Force

June 11, 2020

Recommendation – Define and deliver a baseline of supported tools for remote course delivery.

Use a limited set of software tools and services that are promoted and supported for use in remote online course delivery. Tools not on the list may be used but cannot be supported by the on-campus support team.

- Supported tools for delivery are divided into a core set that should be considered to deliver a complete course online and those that may be used to enhance the course materials where possible and appropriate.

Core Online Delivery Tools

Moodle

- **What is it?** Moodle (moodle.stfx.ca) is the university-supported learning management system. A learning management system is a platform that enables course content to be delivered online.
- **Why would I use it?** Most online instructors use Moodle as the primary vehicle for making course content available in a clear, logical sequence that allows students to keep track of where they are in the course and where they are expected to be. Face-to-face instructors also rely on Moodle to make content available in a structured way.
- **Additional information:** Course content includes files that you create and upload (or link), third-party apps or resources that are accessed through a link (or uploaded if there is no copyright issue), activities that are leveraged through Moodle (e.g., discussion forums, quizzes, wikis), links to activities that are delivered through a third-party website, and submission links for assignments.

Blackboard Collaborate

- **What is it?** Blackboard Collaborate is an educational web conferencing platform that is used by many courses delivered through StFX Continuing & Distance Education.
- **Why would I use it?** Collaborate is used for holding synchronous (i.e., “live”) classes online and can be integrated seamlessly with Moodle.
- **Additional Information:** In addition to standard web conferencing features such as audio, video, screen sharing, and chat, there are many pedagogy-enhancing features such as breakout rooms, uploading slides to the main room and breakout rooms, whiteboards, polling, and timer.

Microsoft Office

- **What is it?** Office refers to a subcollection of Office 365 apps that historically formed the core part of Microsoft's software offerings.
- **Why would I use it?** Instructors should encourage their students to install the MS Office desktop apps from the Office 365 portal if full functionality of those apps is required. (Cloud-based versions of Office apps have some limitations in functionality.)
- **Additional information:** These apps consist of Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneDrive, and Outlook.

Microsoft PowerPoint (with voiceover option)

- **What is it?** MS PowerPoint has features that allow the creation of a prerecorded slide show with slide narration and optional timing and video recording options.
- **Why would I use it?** Prerecorded slide shows are a common way of providing direct instruction for asynchronous, blended, or flipped learning.
- **Additional information:** The prerecorded slide show can be kept in PowerPoint format or saved as a video file.

Additional supported tools:

Microsoft Teams (Class)

- **What is it?** MS Teams is a multifaceted app within Office 365 that is designed to facilitate collaboration within teams whose members may or may not have access to a common physical space like an office or a classroom.
- **Why would I use it?** Teams allows the sharing of files and facilitates cooperatives work on those files, enables communication through online chats and web conferencing, and facilitates straightforward access to many other MS apps, including Office apps.
- **Additional information:** When creating a new Team for an online or face-to-face class, it is best to choose "Class" as the team type.

Microsoft Teams Meetings

- **What is it?** MS Meetings is a feature within MS Teams that enables live online meetings between members of a Team.
- **Why would I use it?** Meetings may be used to hold synchronous (i.e., "live") online classes or meetings.
- **Additional information:** Meetings has standard web conferencing features such as audio, video, screen sharing, and chat.

Microsoft Teams Live Events

- **What is it?** Teams live events is an extension of Teams meetings, enabling users to broadcast video and meeting content to a large online audience.

- **Why would I use it?** Teams Live Events is designed for one-to-many communications where the host of the event is leading the interactions and audience participation is primarily to view content shared by host.
- **Additional Information:** Live Events is used where real-time collaboration is not required; it is a webinar style tool. Up to 10,000 attendees can join a Live Events meeting.

Microsoft OneNote - Class Notebook

- **What is it?** MS Class Notebook turns MS OneNote, which is a personal digital notebook, into a classroom digital notebook.
- **Why would I use it?** Class Notebook also provides the instructor a place to organize and make available homework, class notes, handouts, and quizzes. It also gives each student a personal workspace, and also provides collaborative spaces for groups.
- **Additional information:** Notebook can be used to provide a classroom digital notebook in technology-enabled face-to-face classes or in online classes, where it complements the learning management system. Class Notebook can be leveraged as a standalone app or as part of MS (Class) Teams.

Microsoft Yammer

- **What is it?** MS Yammer is a social-media-like platform where groups within StFX can share ideas, including text-based messages, links, images, and videos. Yammer functions just like a Facebook group, but it is an intranet for StFX, so that no one outside of StFX can belong to a Yammer group.
- **Why would I use it?** An instructor might use Yammer as an informal alternative to a Moodle discussion forum, as when the objective is to elicit free flowing discussion or sharing of materials throughout a course (as opposed to an academically oriented discussion with citations and references, for which a Moodle discussion forum would be a better choice).
- **Additional information:** The instructor typically sets up a Yammer group for the entire class but may also wish to set up multiple groups corresponding to subsets of the class.

Microsoft Stream

- **What is it?** MS Stream is a video repository, i.e., a service in the cloud where videos can be uploaded, and links to them circulated for easy viewing on almost any device.
- **Why would I use it?** Stream can be used to store video content for your classes. Stream has functionality like YouTube, but it is limited to those with StFX accounts. No one outside of the institution can access the videos placed in Stream. In fact, instructors can restrict access of videos to members of a specified group, for instance, students within a class.

- **Additional Information:** Stream has accessibility features like (automatic) closed captioning and transcripts.

Screencast-O-Matic

- **What is it?** Screencast-O-Matic is a tool for screen and video/audio recording and editing.
- **Why would I use it?** Screencast-O-Matic can be used to create slides with voiceovers and optional webcam recordings, or to record walkthroughs of websites or apps.
- **Additional information:** It is useful for creating videos that provide direct instruction for asynchronous, blended, or flipped learning.

Rationale:

- Moving many of our courses online for the fall is a significant effort for everyone involved. Much of this involves the use of tools that may not have been used in the past or they may have been used in different ways.
- It is acknowledged that a factor in our success will be the ability to support faculty and students in creating, delivering and consuming the inline course material.
- Given there will be limits on the resources available to support a significant move to online teaching it is important to limit the number of tools faculty and students will be using.
- Limiting the number and type of tools helps build confidence and expertise for instructors.
- A standardized core set of tools will provide consistency between courses to ease the transition for students. It is desired the toolset students are exposed to will be similar between classes.
- A core set of tools has been developed and faculty are encouraged to use them to build courses that deliver an effective experience. A small additional set of tools will also be supported for those who feel comfortable using them to enhance their courses.

What's next:

- Deliver training to IT, C&DE & TLC staff to get them comfortable with the tools to be able to provide support
- C&DE, IT to gather/create resources for support information. Determine where the gaps are and how to address them.

What's next:

- Communicate this recommendation to internal departments for sharing with students through the appropriate channels.
- Share with Student Readiness working group for their potential action.
- If specialized software requirements impact these recommendations, departments will be responsible to inform ITS/Registrar's office to allow for communication with students