Being digital

Selecting the right online tools

1: Introduction

The web is a great source of free online tools and gadgets that can help you with a wide range of tasks. But how do you judge whether or not the software is good quality and meets your needs? If you make a poor choice you could waste time or worse introduce viruses or malware onto your PC or other device.

In this activity we are going to look at:

- some examples of useful online tools

- questions to ask when deciding which tool to use.

Learning outcome

By the end of this activity you should be aware of some key questions to ask to help you select the right online tool with confidence.

2: Online tools and gadgets: examples

Online tools are available to help you with:

- communicating

- networking

- sharing

- manipulating information

- creating content

- publishing

- and more …

They may be browser-based, or you might need to download them onto your PC. Click on the tabs to see some examples.

Animation

[Xtranormal](#)

Create your own animations using a wide selection of characters.

File sharing

[Dropbox](#)

Upload and share documents via your web browser.

Tasks

[Remember the milk](#)

Create and manage task lists online.

3: Making your choice

What do you think are the key questions to ask when deciding which tool to use?

Stop here to make a few brief notes with your own ideas, and then continue reading.

ACCEPTS

Here are some of our ideas. We've created a mnemonic to help you remember them: **ACCEPTS**.

Access- how will you access it? Laptop, phone, iPad, etc.?

Comparisons - are there other similar tools which would do the job as well or better?

Cost - many tools start off free then require payment later, or offer a 'lite' version free with a fuller version that you need to pay for.

Ease of use - how long are you willing to spend learning how to use this tool? Will it be intuitive?

Purpose - how much functionality do you need?

Trust - does the site look trustworthy? Who put it there? Who is using it?

Shelf-life - is it important that it's still there in 3, 6, or 12 months? What would happen if it disappeared?

References

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