

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 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 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: some examples

Online tools are available to help you with:

- communicating
- networking
- list sharing
- project management
- manipulating information
- creating content
- publishing
- and more.

They may be browser-based, or you might need to download them onto your PC or other device. You can browse apps for phones and tablets on dedicated sites, like Google Play Store for Android devices, or the App Store for Apple devices.

Let's look at three different examples of online tools and gadgets. The next three paragraphs have links to the tool sites, and brief descriptions of their features.

Animation

[Moovly](#) free animation software will help you create your own online animation videos using a variety of objects, backgrounds and sounds.

File sharing

Use [Dropbox](#) to upload and share documents via your web browser.

Task Management

[Remember the milk](#) helps you create and manage task lists online and will sync your to do lists across devices.

3. Making your choice

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

Make a few brief notes with your own ideas and then read our feedback to see what we thought.

Feedback

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

ACCEPTS

- **A** Access - how will you access it? Laptop, phone, iPad, etc.?
- **C** Comparisons - are there other similar tools which would do the job as well or better?
- **C** 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.
- **E** Ease of use - how long are you willing to spend learning how to use this tool? Will it be intuitive?
- **P** Purpose - how much functionality do you need?
- **T** Trust - does the site look trustworthy? Who put it there? Who is using it?
- **S** Shelf-life - is it important that it's still there in 3, 6, or 12 months? What would happen if it disappeared?