

Additional Tools and Resources

While Diigo, Pageflakes and Blogger are three of the best free tools available to educators interested in shared bookmarking and annotation, RSS feed reading, and blogging, there are a range of other services that might be worth exploring. This handout details some of the most common.

Social Bookmarking and Annotation Services	
Service	Features
<p>Delicious http://www.delicious.com</p>	<p>Delicious was one of the first social bookmarking services to draw widespread attention from the Web 2.0 world. Working just like Diigo, Delicious allows users to install a bookmarking toolbar in their Internet browser and to begin organizing public, web-based collections of bookmarks that are sorted by tag. Users can also easily search and follow the bookmarks of other Delicious users.</p> <p>The main advantage of Delicious is the size of the community of users. There are literally millions of web links added to Delicious each day, creating a vibrant community worth exploring for researchers interested in any topic. The main disadvantage is that Delicious doesn't offer protected student accounts or the ability to annotate websites together.</p>
<p>Google Sidewiki http://www.google.com/sidewiki/</p>	<p>Seeking to capitalize on its position as an information provider, Google has recently introduced a new shared annotation tool that users can add to their Internet browsers called the Sidewiki. Much like Diigo, the Google Sidewiki allows viewers of websites to engage in conversations around any content posted online. Readers can add reviews to sites spotlighting products and services, or can express individual viewpoints on sites tackling controversial topics.</p> <p>The main advantage of the Sidewiki is that as a Google product, it is likely to continually improve over time and to gain the attention of web users from across continents. The main disadvantage of the Sidewiki is that it is a relatively new service, and as such, there aren't many users! What's more, Sidewiki doesn't allow users to form into study teams or to target the additions of a select group of likeminded peers.</p>
Content Aggregation (Feed Reading) Services	
Service	Features
<p>Google Reader http://www.google.com/reader</p>	<p>One of the common complaints that students and teachers have about new digital work is that keeping up with usernames and passwords for dozens of different web services can be completely overwhelming. If this describes your general feelings towards life in the 21st Century, you may want to consider exploring the Google Reader. Working much like Pageflakes, Google's Reader will monitor updated content on the websites that you visit the most.</p> <p>The main advantage of the Google Reader is that you can access your content with the same username and password that you use for any other Google service—the Google Calendar, Gmail, Blogger (Google's blogging service), Sidewiki—so your online life is instantly simplified. The main disadvantage of the Google Reader is its no-frills interface. While your content won't look pretty, it will definitely be organized and easy to access.</p>

Blogging Services

Service	Features
<p>Typepad http://www.typepad.com</p>	<p>While Typepad is not a free service—users can pay anywhere from \$9 to \$90 per month, depending on the number of blogs and amount of storage space they are interested in hosting—it is one of the oldest and most popular blogging tools available online.</p> <p>Along with the basic features offered by all blogging services—posting via email, moderating comments, easy-to-use editing toolbars—Typepad bloggers have clean blog templates to choose from, more storage for music, image and video files, and support from customer service professionals. If you're planning on making your blog a sophisticated digital home for your work or for the work of your students, the money spent on a Typepad account may just be a worthwhile investment.</p>
<p>Edublogs http://edublogs.org/</p>	<p>Edublogs is one of the only free blogging services completely dedicated to teachers and students. As a result, they are constantly evolving, adapting to the unique needs of digital writers in the K12 community. Like Typepad, Edublogs offers users all of the basic features provided by other blog services, including easy-to-use editing toolbars and the ability to embed multimedia content into posts.</p> <p>Edublogs also allows teachers to create multiple user accounts for one blog, enabling student writers to contribute with their own usernames and passwords. What makes Edublogs most valuable, however, is the collection of education-based resources and conversations that can make blogging easy for classroom teachers.</p>
<p>Pageflakes http://www.pageflakes.com</p>	<p>Interestingly enough, Pageflakes—one of the best content aggregation tools available online—also allows users to blog about the websites that they are following. With a few digital clicks, blog widgets can be embedded directly in public pages of feeds. That means students following the blogs of their favorite authors can read and react to new books immediately. Student research groups following sites tackling controversial topics can share initial reactions to new ideas.</p> <p>While blogging with Pageflakes enables writers to easily connect their thinking directly to the content that they are studying—and for readers of blogs to independently explore the topic under study—Pageflakes blogs are overly simple, making it difficult to embed content and to read longer entries. What's more, posts can't be sorted into categories and comments are difficult to follow.</p> <p>Blogging with Pageflakes might be just right, though, for teachers and students sticking their toes into new digital waters! While your work won't be fancy, it will be centered on content and easy to start.</p>