

Platforms and Tools

‘Containers’

It is important to have a ‘container’ for your virtual exchange where you can communicate with all participants, organise your dialogue sessions, post content, share activities and facilitate communication between participants. There are many tools available that can be used for ‘free’ but of course, nothing is free and each also has disadvantages and limitations. Below is a list of some of the most widely used, many of which have been shared by youth workers that took part in previous courses.

1. **Google Classroom** is a free web service developed by Google for schools and non profit organisations that aims to simplify creating, distributing, and grading assignments. The primary purpose of Google Classroom is to streamline the process of sharing files between educators and learners.
2. **Google Drive** (drive.google.com) Most of you are probably already familiar with Google Drive, which lets you share and collaboratively edit Google Docs with anyone else who has a Google account, for free. Sweet. Being able to collaboratively edit documents and worksheets opens up a world of possibilities for interactive classroom activities and projects.
3. **Edmodo** (edmodo.com) This multi-platform, device agnostic, safe platform is recommended for active learning – share content, have a dialogue (in or out of the classroom). It has a rich set of features including collaboration-enabling functions like Learning Communities and Discussions.
4. **Yammer** (yammer.com) Yammer is a private social network. Work in groups, share files, co-edit content and more with their free Basic plan.
5. **Wiggio** (wiggio.com) Wiggio is a free workgroup application that provides meetings, to-do lists, messaging, calendars, polls, and file sharing. This is a collaboration environment, and it’s free (there is a premium service, but this is really only for organizations looking for a branded workspace and priority support – the primary functionality of Wiggio is totally free).
6. **Slack** [Slack](http://slack.com) allows team members to send direct messages and files to independent users and allows teams to organize chats into specific channels for separate projects or general team conversations (for example, a subject-related chat and an “fun only” group for good-natured fun). You can drag, drop, and share files with ease, though it’s not a great solution for cloud storage.
7. **Facebook groups**. One advantage of Facebook groups is that if participants DO have Facebook it is easy for them to access, and they will probably access it more often than other external platforms. However not all youth may have FB accounts nor should they have to create accounts. [HOW TO USE FACEBOOK GROUPS FOR YOUR ONLINE COURSE PLATFORM](#)

Synchronous communication tools

8. **Skype** ([skype.com](https://www.skype.com)) This popular, widely known platform provides for group meetings tools that can be particularly effective for remote participants to come together. The disadvantage for privacy is they have to share usernames to be able to communicate. Allows for screen share.
9. **Google Hangouts** (www.google.com/hangouts) Google Hangouts is becoming an increasingly popular alternative to Skype for bringing remote groups of people together to communicate and collaborate. A couple advantages Google Hangouts has is the potential to have a Hangout recorded, and the fact that you are less likely to have the occasional availability issue that the free version of Skype can have.
10. **Zoom** ... Free version allows a number of elements. For more frequent, intensive use, there is a paid for professional version. Zoom meetings can be recorded. Allows for breakout rooms.
11. **Jitsi** ([Jitsi.org](https://jitsi.org)) presents itself as an alternative to Zoom. It is encrypted, open source, and you don't need an account. The set of projects that allows you to easily build and deploy secure videoconferencing solutions. At the heart of Jitsi are Jitsi Videobridge and Jitsi Meet, which let you have conferences on the internet, while other projects in the community enable other features such as audio, dial-in, recording, and simulcasting
12. **Teams** (<https://www.microsoft.com/en/microsoft-365/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software>) Microsoft Teams, also referred to as simply Teams, is a unified communication and collaboration platform that combines persistent workplace chat, video meetings, file storage, and application integration. There are basic free versions. Often used internally (amongst colleagues but can also be with clients, students and others less formally linked to an organisation holding a corporate account). Participants can use a web version, or download an app. The latter allows use of more functionalities.
13. **Facebook Livestream** Useful when intending to be low threshold and anyone can join.
14. **Youtube Livestream** Allows for livestream sessions to be set up beforehand and for interested participants to receive a reminder for the session.
15. **StarLeaf Cloud** High definition cloud video conferencing endpoints for meeting rooms, desktops and mobile

Pinboard-type collaborative tools

16. [PADLET](#)
17. **Twiddla** (www.twiddla.com) Twiddla provides a really easy to use collaborative online whiteboard. This “no setup web based meeting playground” is quick and easy – inviting others to collaborate by just hitting the green GO button to start a session and then use the Invite option. This app provides a great set of tools. You can easily add an image, web page, or document as a background to markup. There is a color palette tool, pen width tool, a shapes tool, and text can be inserted. There's even a chat option built in.
18. **Bubbl.us** (*that's it ...* [Bubbl.us](https://bubbl.us)) This free tool* allows users to easily create bubble maps, that can be exported in various formats, saved (by exporting and re-importing them in an appropriate format), and edited collaboratively. **The Basic plan lets you create, share, and collaboratively edit 3 Bubble Maps.*

19. **ConceptBoard** (<https://conceptboard.com/>) is a collaborative interactive white board. Not only can you create a collaborative whiteboard online, you can upload images and document and write over them, have a discussion around them, and more.
20. **Cacoo** (cacoo.com) Create flowcharts and diagrams online with real time collaboration. This a very useful tool in a wide variety of disciplines, and being able to collaboratively edit them makes Cacoo a powerful application. Here's a link to learn about and access their free Academic plan: <https://cacoo.com/lang/en/academic>.
21. **Bounceapp** (www.bounceapp.com) Review, notate, share, and discuss any web page with Bounceapp. Bounceapp makes it really easy to grab a web page screenshot and make notes on it. This can then be sent to others. Users can share ideas on the same site by each grabbing, notating, and then sharing their work. For a more collaborative experience, Bounce will work with Notableapp.com to let a workgroup collaborate (Notableapp is not free, but there is a free 30 day trial).
22. **Google Keep** Part of Google's ever-expanding dominance of all things "the Internet", Google Keep is their note-taking rival to Evernote and OneNote, and it has quickly become one of the best tools online. Quickly take and save notes, photos, voice memos, and checklists, and share them with your team. With integration into Google's suite of services, it's impossible to beat the flexibility and convenience.
23. **Trello** ...a web-based list-making application. At its core, an online corkboard. You **use** it to organize "cards" into lists—those cards can be tasks, notes, projects, shared files, or anything else that helps your team work together.
24. **Mural** (<https://app.mural.co/>), a visual workspace that helps you design. You can make virtual stickie notes and comments on a wall. You can get a 30-day free trial.

Social Media Tools

25. **Twitter** (twitter.com) just search out a unique hashtag and you're in business. Using a hashtag and a tool like Tweetdeck (also free), where you can dedicate a column to a specific search phrase (your hashtag in this case) and bam!, you've got a live stream of all content posted with that hashtag. Collect and share research or news, create a class poem or story (one student posts to the hashtag at a time, taking turns to build out the content), search out subject matter experts and follow them, and so on.
26. **LinkedIn** (linkedin.com) It is business and employment-oriented online service that operates via websites and mobile apps. It is mainly used for professional networking, including employers posting jobs and job seekers posting their CVs. It includes opportunities to display blog-style contributions, display badges and become a member of groups (many are open, some are closed/ require conditions to join) and/ or follow themes, topics and issues by selecting a hashtag.
27. **Facebook** (facebook.com) allows you to make open and closed (can be found in search but content of group not visible to non-members), even private (group can't be find through search; participants need to be invited or given the specific URL of the group) groups
28. **Instagram** (Instagram.com) is a photo and video-sharing social networking service owned by Facebook

Visual tools

1. **MakeBeliefsComix** (www.makebeliefscomix.com), this tool, available in multiple languages, allows users to create comic strips. Comic modules can be used as conversation starters for two-member teams of friends, with each person questioning the other for their responses.
2. **Biteable** (<https://biteable.com>), a tool with many templates that can be used to quickly make video content.
3. **Youtube** (Youtube.com) is an American online video-sharing platform headquartered in San Bruno, California (USA).
4. **Vimeo** (vimeo.com) is a video hosting, sharing, and services platform headquartered in New York City (USA). Vimeo operates on an ad-free basis, and instead derives revenue by providing subscription plans for video content

Audiotools

1. **Anchor** (www.anchor.fm), is an easy way to make a podcast
2. **Soundcloud** (soundcloud.com) is a European online audio distribution platform and music sharing website based in Berlin, Germany that enables its users to upload, promote, and share audio
3. **Mixcloud** (mixcloud.com), is a British online music streaming service that allows for the listening and distribution of radio shows, DJ mixes and podcasts, which are crowdsourced by its registered users

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