



AN EXPLORATION AND EXPLANATION OF DEVICE AGNOSTIC TOOLS

By Heather Moorefield-Lang

WHAT DOES DEVICE AGNOSTIC MEAN?

There are a variety of Web 2.0 tools and apps to be used in the classroom and library. Some can only be used online. Some are created strictly for IOS devices while others are made for Droid or Windows-based technologies. Some sites may limit users with Flash while still others may obstruct patrons by being only available via Chrome, Firefox, or Internet Explorer. According to PC Magazine (2013), when an online tool or app is not tied to any particular device, it is device agnostic. In other words, the tool is independent of any machine. Rouse (2014) takes this definition further to explain that a device agnostic mobile application will typically work on any handheld device in the same manner that it would on a computer.

For school librarians, online tools and apps that are device agnostic can be a boon for the classroom and library. It doesn't matter whether students bring in their own devices, if the system has a 1:1 laptop or tablet program, or if students are using classroom computers and labs. These tools will work across the board. You may know some of the following sites and apps while others may be new to you.

CLASS RESPONSE SYSTEMS

Poll Everywhere (www.polleverywhere.com).

Poll Everywhere has probably been around the longest of any tool mentioned in this article. As the name implies, it is a polling site. Presenters, teachers, librarians, and others can poll audience members and students to

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cull a host of different responses. Responders can answer from their computers, smartphones, cell phones, and tablets. As long as there is an Internet connection or a way to text, an answer can be sent to Poll Everywhere. Those creating the questions can use the site or embed question slides into PowerPoint or Keynote presentations. Presenters ask questions; responders answer via their devices, and everyone can see feedback live as it comes in. (The free version of Poll Everywhere allows for forty accepted responses. The five levels of professional versions of Poll Everywhere range from personal to enterprise, and range in price as well.)

AnswerGarden (<http://answergarden.ch>).

AnswerGarden is very similar to Poll Everywhere in that it is a polling site where presenters or teachers can create questions while students and other respondents can send in live answers via different types of technologies. It also works across multiple platforms and is considered device agnostic. The main difference between AnswerGarden and Poll Everywhere is the format. AnswerGarden is meant for more open-ended questions. When a presenter asks a question in AnswerGarden, responses come back in a word cloud format. The most popular answers are the largest in the word cloud. (The other main difference of AnswerGarden is that it is completely free. Whether you have 40 or 400 or 4,000 responses to your question, there is no charge.)

Socrative (www.socrative.com).

Socrative will take any type of technology that a student is using and turn it into a response system. This is a great site for engaging upper elementary and secondary students in classroom activities with educational exercises and games in real time, using smartphones,

laptops, and tablets. Socrative is easy to set up and features formats such as multiple choice, true/false, quick quizzes, short answer, and polling. Results can be viewed online in a Google spreadsheet or received via email as an Excel file. Teachers set up their accounts, and students simply sign into the teacher's or librarian's "room" to answer questions. The new 2.0 version can be student or teacher driven. (Socrative is free at this time; there may be a charge or "pro level" in the future.)

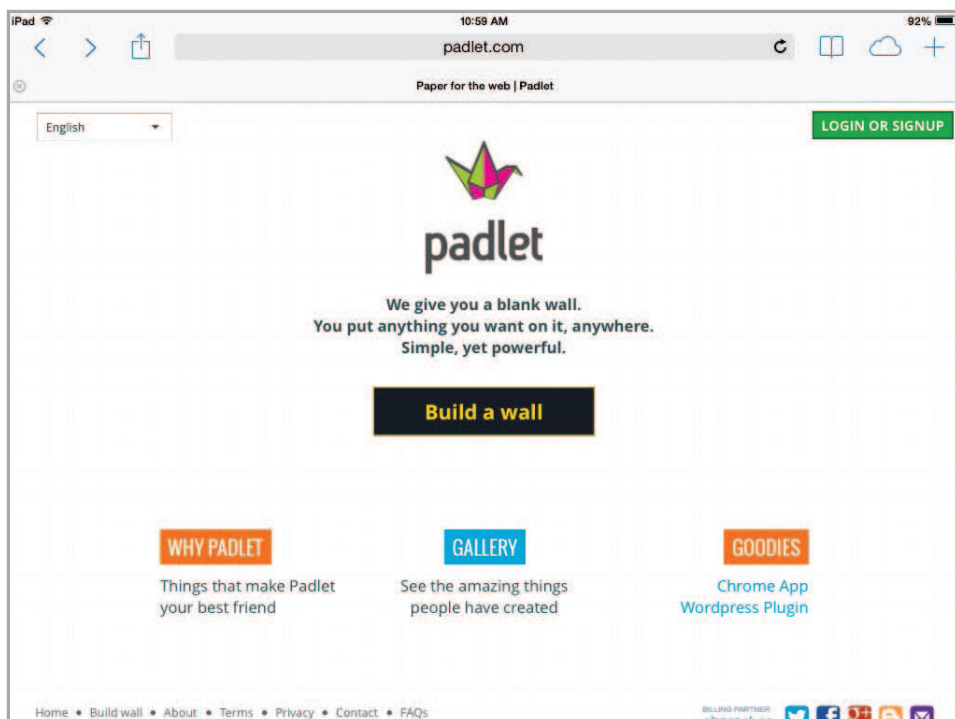
Kahoot (<https://getkahoot.com>).

Kahoot is another student response system where teachers and librarians can create quizzes, discussions, surveys (which they call Kahoots) for students to answer and respond. Kahoot supports HTML 5 and Flash-based tools, and this goes a long way to making this online tool and others device agnostic. HTML 5 gets users past the IOS Flash issues, and other devices can use Flash or HTML 5. No matter the Internet browser or the technology/device being used, Kahoot will work with it. If Internet is available, it is enabled. Kahoot has a very nice drag and drop feature when it comes to creating questions for student response. Students can also create their own questions. (Kahoot is completely free at this time.)

OTHER DEVICE AGNOSTIC TOOLS

Padlet (<http://padlet.com>).

Padlet, formerly known as Wallwisher, makes posting things on the Internet as easy as pinning notes on a bulletin board. Using the idea of a blank piece of paper, teachers, librarians, and students can put whatever they want on a wall by dragging and dropping documents and images from a desktop, copying and pasting links from websites or videos, or just typing notes on the created page. The Padlet backdrop can remain fixed or new backdrops can be loaded to match



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discussion themes. When users finish posting items to the wall, the Padlet's creator will be able to collaborate with others using a unique URL through a variety of social networks. Padlet is available in fourteen different languages, and because it is agnostic it can be used on a variety of technology-based tools and devices. (Padlet is completely free.)

ClassDojo (www.classdojo.com).

ClassDojo is a classroom tool that can help educators, librarians, administrators, and parents, with behavior improvement. It also captures and generates data on behavior that teachers can share with parents and administrators. ClassDojo reinforces good behavior with point systems, cool monster-style avatars for each student, as well as instant notification and feedback that can be shown on the board in the classroom or be shared with student devices. No matter the technology, ClassDojo works, making this a great device agnostic tool for behavior and classroom support. (ClassDojo is free at this time; there may be a charge or a "pro level" in the future, but they plan to keep it free for early adopters.)

Device agnostic tools and sites give educators and librarians the freedom to use and explore the technology while not being tethered to certain devices. More websites and apps are being released every month that fit this description. The sites listed in this article are only a few with which to experiment. Give them a try, and upon finding some you like, search for others that fit the device agnostic model. Find those that best fit your instruction and curriculum. Your students will enjoy the freedom and the excitement that these sites and apps will bring into your school.

Works Cited

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