Activity: Hands-On with a New Tech Tool

Quick Overview:

We'll be trying out one of the tools used to enable lightweight teams, then sharing our results with one another.

Activity Steps:

1. Choose a team of 3-4 people. At least one person in your group should have access to a laptop with a WiFi connection.
2. Read the descriptions of tech tools on the other side of this sheet.
3. As a team, choose a tool that you are interested in using with lightweight teams in your classroom.
4. Research the tool online, and if possible, download and test the tool briefly.
5. Record the results of your research in the space below.
6. Be prepared to share your results with the wider group.

Name of Tech Tool: _____

PROS OF THE TOOL	CONS OF THE TOOL

What are your general thoughts about the tool?

Tools for Building Online Course Content

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Background: I compiled a list of online course development tools I use for class that are available free or are already licensed through MNSCU. All of these tools are available for Windows and Mac, with the exception of iMovie.

- **Lodestar: Create learning modules**
  Create online learning modules with slides and interactive quizzes. Allows you to add audio and video to the modules, but does not include the tools for creating audio or video files. (See Audacity, Jing, and iMovie for recording audio and video.) Exports to HTML so it can be uploaded to any course site, including D2L. Exports SCORM objects so the quizzes integrate with the D2L gradebook, although I've experienced glitches with the scores auto-populating in the gradebook. The learning curve is not as steep as Adobe Captivate, but the interface is not entirely intuitive, either.
  Learn more at: http://www.lodestarlearning.com

- **Audacity: Record audio lectures and podcasts**
  Record audio files in common formats, like MP3. Useful for creating audio lectures or podcasts for students. Files can be uploaded directly to D2L or added to Lodestar modules. The interface is reasonably straightforward and produces high-quality audio.
  Learn more about Audacity: http://audacity.sourceforge.net/about/

- **Jing: Record short videos of your desktop and capture screen shots**
  Of all of the tools I've used to create online content for my courses, Jing is by far the easiest to use. Jing records video and audio of your desktop and captures screenshots. You can automatically upload the video or image to Jing's server. Jing generates a unique URL for the video or image that you can share with students, or you can save the video or image. While I'm grading student work or answering questions, I often create a quick video to explain a concept and email the link to the student. If several students have a similar question, I can re-use the video over and over, or post the link in the course news feed. The only drawbacks to Jing are that videos are limited to 5 minutes and the compression that Jing uses creates low voice quality.
  Learn more about Jing: http://www.techsmith.com/jing.html

- **iMovie: Develop high-quality video productions**
  iMovie is free with newer Mac computers and iPad tablets. This tool allows you to record videos, add text and transitions, as well as sound effects and music. iMovie also features short video templates that mimic movie trailers. These can be fun to use to create a "movie trailer" about your course to build excitement among students.
  Learn more about iMovie: https://www.apple.com/mac/imovie/

- **PowerPoint**: **Narrate lecture slides**
  Good old PowerPoint contains a handy feature for narrating your lecture slides. To keep student interest, I add fancy slide transitions and animated graphics. Then I export the narrated slides to a video and upload the video to D2L. I've found this extra step is worth the time because students have many different versions of PowerPoint on both Windows and Mac, and the slides using advanced features do not always work correctly in older versions of the software.
  Learn more about narrating a PowerPoint file*: http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/powerpoint-help/add-narration-to-a-presentation-HA001230306.aspx*

- **CCMixter: Free cool music to enhance your audio**
  CCMixter is a site full of cool music that is free to use under the Creative Commons license. The artist stipulates how the music can be used, but generally, the songs are re-distributable for non-commercial purposes. CCMixter has everything from alternative, hip-hop, and rock, to dubstep. There even songs specifically for video games!
  I use Audacity to trim down songs into short clips to introduce my lecture modules and videos.
  Learn more about music from CCMixter: http://ccmixter.org

- **Creative Commons Search:** Free images, clipart, videos, and sound effects to enhance your course
  The Creative Commons website lets you search for all types of media to add to your course website or lecture slides. Media licensed under Creative Commons is free to use for non-commercial purposes. In course reviews, my students have mentioned how the images from Creative Commons made the course content more interesting for them.
  Learn more about media from Creative Commons: http://search.creativecommons.org