

IT tools recommended for telecollaborative exchanges.

Tools and services presented here have been successfully used to facilitate numerous telecollaborative exchanges. We have divided them into the following categories:

- [Platform-like tools](#)
- [Online presentation tools](#)
- [Communication tools](#)
- [Tools for collaborative activities](#)
- [Other useful tools](#)

Some of the tools have been listed under two or more categories, depending on the character of their main functionalities. All of them are **free** in their basic versions. Very few, such as Skype or Moodle, require installation. A great majority are cloud-based.

The overview is far from being exhaustive. A lot of other tools can be successfully used in telecollaborative situations and new solutions come up almost on a daily basis. If you come across a tool which, in your opinion, is worth sharing with the Uni-Colaboration community, report it please to our [community forum](#).

Many of the tutorials we refer to have been created by **Russel Stannard** and published on his website at <http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/index.html>. The site provides free step-by-step tutorials (in English) on how to incorporate technology into your daily teaching. You can also search **YouTube** for more tutorials in other languages.

1 Platform-like tools

These tools and services can serve as the main repositories of project materials. They can host in-group communication, file uploading or collaborative activities. For more information read the description and watch the suggested tutorials.

Name of the tool	Description	Suggested tutorials
Edmodo	A highly recommended free social learning platform for teachers, students and parents. It offers, chat, forum, polling, file sharing, and material storing. The teacher can easily create groups and classes. The students do not need email addresses.	A general overview: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-KBwriCO-Q Step-by-step tutorials: http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/edmodo1/index.html http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/edmodo2/index.html
Moodle	The most popular institution-hosted (!) platform for online learning. It offers a relatively teacher-controlled environment with plentiful of useful in-built functionalities such as forums, chat, wiki or quizzes. It has a very clear, classroom-like structure. It works particularly well for supporting long-term exchanges.	Moodle is a relatively complex environment. Numerous tutorials in various languages are available from You Tube. Mind to look for Moodle 2.0 tutorials . For a brief introduction watch: http://youtu.be/6ih0d-pEI_s
Pbworks	A professional wiki tool which offers space for collaboration and content sharing. Collaboration is the main functionality of any wiki site as all the users, depending on their editing rights can add, change and update each other's work. The space can be either closed or publically seen. The service is available in English, only. A similar wiki service, Wikispaces , offers interface in local languages.	http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/pbworks/index.html

Wordpress

A website tool which allows the users to create a website or a blog. By inviting the students and giving them the editing rights you can create a closed space for online sharing and publishing. The forum feature can be used for feedback and student-to student communication.

<http://wordpress.com/#video> – an informative video
<http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/wordPres/index.html> -a step-by-step tutorial.

Blogger

A Google-owned blog publishing service. You need a Google account to get started, so if you want to use it, ask all project participants to create Gmail accounts. In addition, a Google account gives you access to other useful services such as forums, discussion lists and Google Drive – all of them extremely useful in online exchanges. Blogger is very flexible in terms of design. You can easily add various types of content and structure it in form of pages and subpages.

<http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/newBlogger/index.html>

Weebly

A very intuitive tool for professional web design. It uses a simple drag-and-drop technique for creating professionally-looking websites with multimodal content. It allows for collaborative editing, although the central functionality is that of presenting content rather than communication. It can be used also by the students as a space for presenting their collaboratively- created products online.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ciz-UQuzuco>

2 Online presentation tools

At the beginning stage of the exchange the students are often asked to present themselves and/or their home cultures to their partners. They may also need to present the outcomes of their work to other groups, either online or in-class. The following applications lend themselves very well to such tasks – they can be used for creating, sharing and presentation multimodal content. Some of them also offer a co-editing option, which is particularly useful in case of tasks requiring joint product creation.

Name of the tool	Description	Suggested tutorials
Sliderocket	Sliderocket is an online slide-based presentation tool which offers very interesting editing options and breathtaking visual effects. It is based on the idea of slides but breaks with the linear predictability of Power Point. It is cloud-based and, importantly, it offers the option of collaborative editing. On signing up choose Sliderocket Lite – the free version.	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2WetbfgElg An additional tutorial created by the SlideRocket team is available after you sign up.
Prezi	One of the most attractive cloud-based presentation tools. It combines the concepts of whiteboards and slides . Prezi offers online collaboration in real time, with users being able to work on the presentation simultaneously (they can work online and, communicate via a simultaneous Skype session). Presentations can also be presented online (in real time) to invited users.	A handful of very informative manuals is available from the site itself: http://prezi.com/learn/

[VoiceThread](#)

Voice Thread is a very interesting **voice-based** tool which can be used to create audio discussions. Users can upload images, video, webcam recordings and add text and voice to them, with voice being the main medium. Voice Thread lends itself very well to collaboration, as students can relate their contributions to the previously recorded messages and build up a discussion.

<http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/voiceThread/index.htm>

A very interesting article by S. Brunvand and S. Byrd:

<http://voicethread.com/media/misc/support/JTECVoiceThread.pdf>

[Glogster](#)

It is a free tool for creating visually attractive interactive online posters, either individually or in collaboration (in the educational version). **Glogster** enables the user to put together text, images, audio and video files. It is very popular with teenagers. Warning: The EDU version is paid. Preview examples of glogs from [Glogpedia](#)

<http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/glogster/index.html>

[About.Me](#)

About.me is an application for creating one-page personal introductions, each with a large, often-artistic background image and abbreviated biography. It hosts pictures and text and can link to relevant external sites, and popular social networking websites. **About.me** works well in tasks in which students are to present themselves without putting too much effort into design. Similar functionalities are offered by [Flavors.me](#).

<http://youtu.be/9STrAOELw0Q> (ignore the background music)

[Fotobabble](#)

A free tool for creating **picture-supported voice recordings** (audio e-cards). The users upload pictures and record voice messages shared via a link. Simple and intuitive. The recordings can be easily edited.

<http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/fotobabble/index.html>

3. Online communication tools

Providing tools for effective communication is one of the imperatives in any online exchange. Before making any decisions you need to consider the following aspects:

- Do I want my students to communicate in real time? Is this possible? Can I synchronise my class time with that of my fellow teacher? Are our time zones close enough?
- Do I expect my students to elaborate on the language they use? Should they have some thinking time before they post their ideas? – Asynchronous communication e.g. forums, emails is better suited if you want to concentrate on form.
- Do I want to follow students' communication? Do I want to archive their discourse for future use? (asynchronous communication is easier to archive and analyse).
- Is the mode of communication (written vs. oral) of importance to the project objectives?

Depending on how you answer these question, you can find a lot of free tools for online communication. View the list below to check which of the tools will work best in your situation.

Name of the tool	Description	Suggested tutorials
Tools for synchronous communication		
Skype	<p>Skype is the most popular and probably the most transparent tool for hosting synchronous voice, video and chat communication. The students can easily arrange multi-user conferences and communicate with their telecollaborative partners in real time. In case of video conferences for more than two participants you need a paid version.</p>	<p>http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/skype/index.html</p>

FlashMeeting

It is an easy to use **online meeting application** which hosts video, voice and chat communication as well as slide sharing. It allows a dispersed group of people to meet and communicate online from anywhere in the world. Typically, a meeting is pre-booked by a registered user and a URL, containing a unique password for the meeting, is returned by the FlashMeeting server. The 'booker' passes this on to the people they wish to participate, who simply click on the link to enter into the meeting at the arranged time. The meetings can be recorded and replayed at a later time.

<http://flashmeeting.e2bn.net/quickstart.html> - print manual.

<http://www.iprimary.co.uk/tutorial.php?tutorialID=007> - a video tutorial

WiZiQ

This **online e-learning platform** offers much more than simply a communication channel. It allows for real-time communication and content sharing. You can run online classes and meetings, and deliver slide-illustrated lectures in real time. It is paid but users with the EDU email extension can use it for free. The free version has certain limitations, though, as the meetings cannot be recorded for absentees.

An extensive list of WiZiQ tutorials is available from here: <http://www.wiziq.com/tutorials/wiziq-tutorial>

chat

Chat is very popular with students. It combines the written mode of communication with a speech-like type of discourse. Chat functionality is commonly offered by **messengers** and other **communicators, Gmail, Skype or Facebook**. The main problem with chat, though, is that it is 1) private, 2) ephemeral. This can be avoided if the teacher is invited to join the chat and saves the script. In particular Skype offers archived transcripts.

Tools for asynchronous communication (either text or voice)

Forum

A forum feature can be found in practically all Web 2.0 tools. Forum is very practical when we want to focus on accuracy of students' language production or whenever preparation is needed. Forum exchanges are easily archived and as such lend themselves well to discourse analysis. Stand-alone forums can be easily set up under Google Drive or SkyDrive.

email

Email, the most traditional of all online communication channels, is frequently used in telecollaborative exchanges for individual communication between the teacher and the students. It can also be used for negotiation and on-task discussion, although this will take more time than synchronous communication. The teacher may request to be added as a CC in order to have access to student's discourse.

[MailVu](#)

A one-click tool for recording and sending video **webcam messages** . The recordings can be up to 10-minute long. A great tool for providing individual feedback .

<http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/mailVu/index.html>

[Eyejot](#)

A free tool for creating **video emails** from the computer or a mobile device. The messages can be emailed or embedded into a website, blog or a wiki. They can also be downloaded and saved onto the computer.

<http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/eyejot/index.html>

Voice Thread

Voice Thread, previously presented in the section on presentation tools can also be used for communication. The good thing is that **the messages are recorded** and, thus, easily accessible to the teacher and other students. However, the asynchronous mode can make it difficult to discuss tasks or particular solutions.

<http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/voiceThread/index.htm>

4. Tools for (tele)collaborative activities: (some of the tools have already been covered in the previous sections)

Name of the tool	Description	Suggested tutorials
Wallwisher	A free wall-like tool which can be used to collect ideas, pull up links, give comments and feedback, create a repository of links or to brainstorm for ideas. Anybody with a link can add a virtual sticky note with either textual or multimodal content. Very simple and intuitive.	http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/wall/index.html
Storybird	A collaborative tool for visual collaborative story telling . Students use collections of art to be inspired to write stories. Once the art is chosen, students are able to build a story by dragging and dropping pictures and creating a story to match. Although at a glance it seems to address young learners only, it can be used by teacher trainees as a tool for task design.	http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/storybird/index.html
Wiki sites: Pbworks and Wikispaces	Both tools offer space for collaborative content sharing and publishing. Students can write, discuss and build webpages together. In Wikispaces sign up as a teacher for a free account.	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nifezbdV4SA http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/pbworks/index.html
Prezi	Collaboration is one of the main assets of Prezi – a very attractive presentation tool. Under Prezi Meeting, teams can collaborate live or simply present prezis with up to 10 people in a prezi at one time.	A handful of very informative manuals is available from the site itself: http://prezi.com/learn/

5. Other useful tools

Name of the tool	description	Suggested tutorials
Scoop it	A free tool for curating and organizing interesting online content. It can be used for collecting and sharing materials.	http://youtu.be/dkCqDLhTvgo
Doodle	Doodle is a free tool for scheduling meetings and other appointments. It is quick and requires no registration. Yu simply set up a poll, send a link and the respondents confirm when they are available for the event.	http://youtu.be/KR8QLDSba7s
Dropbox	Dropbox is a free cloud-based service that lets you upload photos, docs, and videos to your personal online space and retrieve them from anywhere. Selected folders can be shared with other users. The free version gives you 2Gb of storage (under and share them easily. Never email yourself a file again!	http://youtu.be/A_ZvB0GE5_A
Survey Monkey	Survey Monkey is a great tool for creating online polls. You may need one at some point, for example to get feedback from the students on how they found the exchange or what could be improved in future projects. The survey can be distributed via email, social networking sites or embedded to the project website. Under the free version you can create 10-question quizzes and interrogate as many as 100 respondents. Survey Moneky automatically scores and analyses the results.	http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/monkey/index.html

[Screecast-o-matic](#)

Screencastomatic is a very handy online tool which records the screen of your computer and your voice. Under the free version you can record up to 15 minutes of screencasting, which can be then saved to YouTube or to mp4 or avi files. It can be used for creating video tutorials or for adding voice to otherwise mute presentations. It works well with Macs and Windows machines, but does have some issues with Linux.

Tools with similar functions: [Screenr](#) and [CamStudio](#).

<http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/omatic/index.html>

- screencast-0-matic

<http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/screenr/index.html>

-screenr

[Facebook](#)

This **social networking** site is so popular that it does not need any particular introduction. In telecollaborative projects it is popular with students as the main channel for informal communication. Teachers may also wish to create a private group for project members. In particular, it can boost socializing and students' informal relationships.

A basic tutorial on how to set up your Facebook profile:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6Lq-P4jeTQ>