**Andrea Homburg**

**Technology Critique**

**Five Criteria**

Usability: The most valuable technology is one that is easy for both the teacher and student to use. The given technology should not demand overwhelming amount of training to understand. The best technology is easy and straightforward.

Cost: Free or low cost technology is the best. Districts today do not have the financial strength to purchase technology, especially technology that is sparsely used.

Reliability: Is the information I am getting reliable? When we use different technology we need to make sure it is giving us correct information from reliable sources.

Instructional Worth: Is this something I can use in the classroom all of the time? Is this better than what I was doing before?

Security: Is it password protected? Is it easy for my students to plagiarize?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Usability | 4 3 2 1  Very Easy Very Difficult | Is it easy to use? |
| Cost | 4 3 2 1  Free Very Expensive | How expensive is it? |
| Reliability | 4 3 2 1  Very Reliable Not Reliable | Is this a reliable source of information? |
| Instructional Worth | 4 3 2 1  Very Useful Not Useful | Is it useful in the classroom? |
| Security | 4 3 2 1  Very secure Not Secure | Is it secure? |

**Aggregators:** I have never used these before but after playing around with them for little while I began to like it. I am a news junky so these are perfect for me. I am not sure what their use would be in the classroom. I could see using it for secondary students if we were doing something with current events. Some of the RSS feed extensions were confusing, especially the Wizz RSS. I liked the google RSS extension for the chrome browser. It was very simple to use, it took about 1-2 minutes to figure out.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Usability | 4 |  |
| Cost | 4 |  |
| Reliability | 2 |  |
| Instructional Worth | 3 |  |
| Security | 2 |  |

**Social Bookmarks:** Can be a handy tool for sharing with friends. It is very easy to use and doesn’t require lots of training. Not sure how this would be valuable to learners. Most sites like this are blocked by school districts.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Usability | 4 |  |
| Cost | 4 |  |
| Reliability | 1 |  |
| Instructional Worth | 2 |  |
| Security | 3 |  |

**Internet Search Tools:** Very useful for the classroom. Students have very little knowledge on correct ways to search. It is very useful to show them different search engines and the results they get.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Usability | 3 |  |
| Cost | 4 |  |
| Reliability | 4 |  |
| Instructional Worth | 4 |  |
| Security | 4 |  |

**WebStart:** I could see WebStarts being a useful tool when students are doing research. They could access the teacher’s WebStart page where they would then find useful links or a starting off point in their research. This could be a good way of limiting what sources the students are allowed to use.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Usability | 2 |  |
| Cost | 4 |  |
| Reliability | 2 |  |
| Instructional Worth | 2 |  |
| Security | 3 |  |

**Weblogs:** I believe these are useful tools for teachers. From my experience this requires some time to learn the basics, I would say an hour or two. This could be a great “teacher website” where documents and other information is stored. It could also be a great way to encourage student discussions as well as a place for them to be able to ask the teacher or other students any questions they may have.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Usability | 2 |  |
| Cost | 4 |  |
| Reliability | 2 |  |
| Instructional Worth | 2.5 |  |
| Security | 3 |  |

**Assessment Tools:** Assessments are very important in the classroom. As teachers we need to assess constantly in order to see what our students know and what they don’t know. I really liked rubistar for creating rubrics. It is easy to understand and makes creating rubrics easier than doing it in Microsoft Word. Survey monkey as well as another I have used called zoomerang is a quick and effective way to survey students. I like this assessment tool because sometimes when anonymous assessments are used you will get honest feedback that you otherwise may not receive.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Usability | 3.5 |  |
| Cost | 4 |  |
| Reliability | 3.5 |  |
| Instructional Worth | 3 |  |
| Security | 3.5 |  |

**Screencasting/Podcasting**: I think podcasting and screencasting could be a useful tool in certain situations. I think its greatest benefit would be for those students taking an online course. This would be a great way for the teacher to share information, lectures, etc with the students. I don’t see using this in the classroom with my students. Also, some of the programs can be very time consuming to learn. Also teachers will have to know how to upload the podcasts/screencasts and get district approval to do so. I actually prefer the apple program garageband to audacity. I think it is simpler to use and understand.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Usability | 2 |  |
| Cost | 3 |  |
| Reliability | 2 |  |
| Instructional Worth | 1.5 |  |
| Security | 2.5 |  |

**Surveys/Polls**

I believe surveys/polls can be a great tool in the classroom. This can be a great way to get students opinions on many different things. Students can be polled on how they like the class or the teacher and the things they would like to see changed. I believe students are more honest when these remain anonymous.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Usability | 3.8 |  |
| Cost | 4 |  |
| Reliability | 3 |  |
| Instructional Worth | 3 |  |
| Security | 3 |  |