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Beyond Google Docs: Using Free, Web-Based Tools for Management and Collaboration in your Library

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Beyond Google Docs

Using Free, Web-based Tools for
Collaboration and Management in
Your Library

We as librarians regularly find ourselves needing tools to accomplish a certain task but can't afford or justify an enterprise-level solution for all of these needs.

Like magpies, Liz and I gather ideas about some of these tools and enjoy experimenting with them; sometimes they're successful for our intended purpose, sometimes not. We're very lucky to have a library ITS department made up of really cool and flexible people who regularly pass on great ideas for tools – several of which we've ended up including here -- and are not hampered by a culture that requires us to use only software that has been sanctioned at the institutional level.

We'll show you several tools that have struck our fancy or that have recently started growing on us.

Common traits

free
require registration
in perpetual beta
effective for Macs and PCs
based in the cloud

The tools we have selected for today have several things in common:

Each is free or at least available in a free version.

Most require registration.

Many are in beta or perpetual beta, so expect changes periodically.

All seem to work pretty well on both Macs and PCs.

All based in the cloud; handy for access anywhere, but be cautious about security

Liz will start us off now with our first tool.

Wunderlist

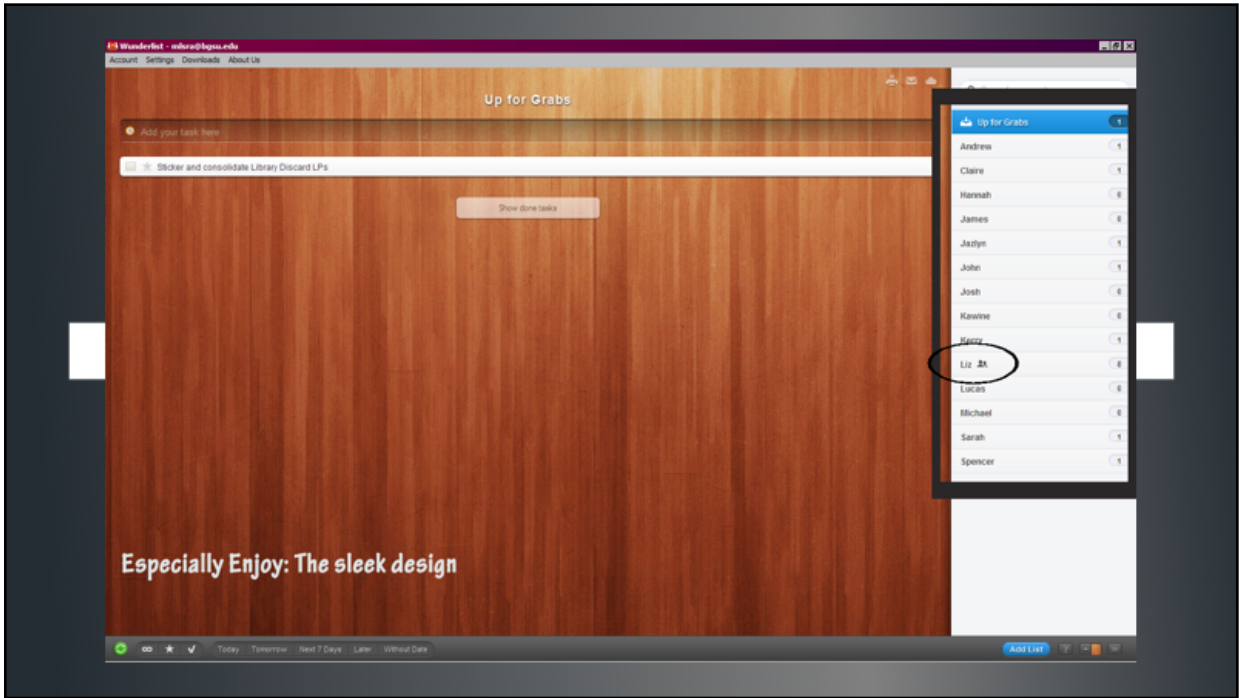
Best for:

task assigning when you're not there (physically, or mentally)

Also good for:

personal work

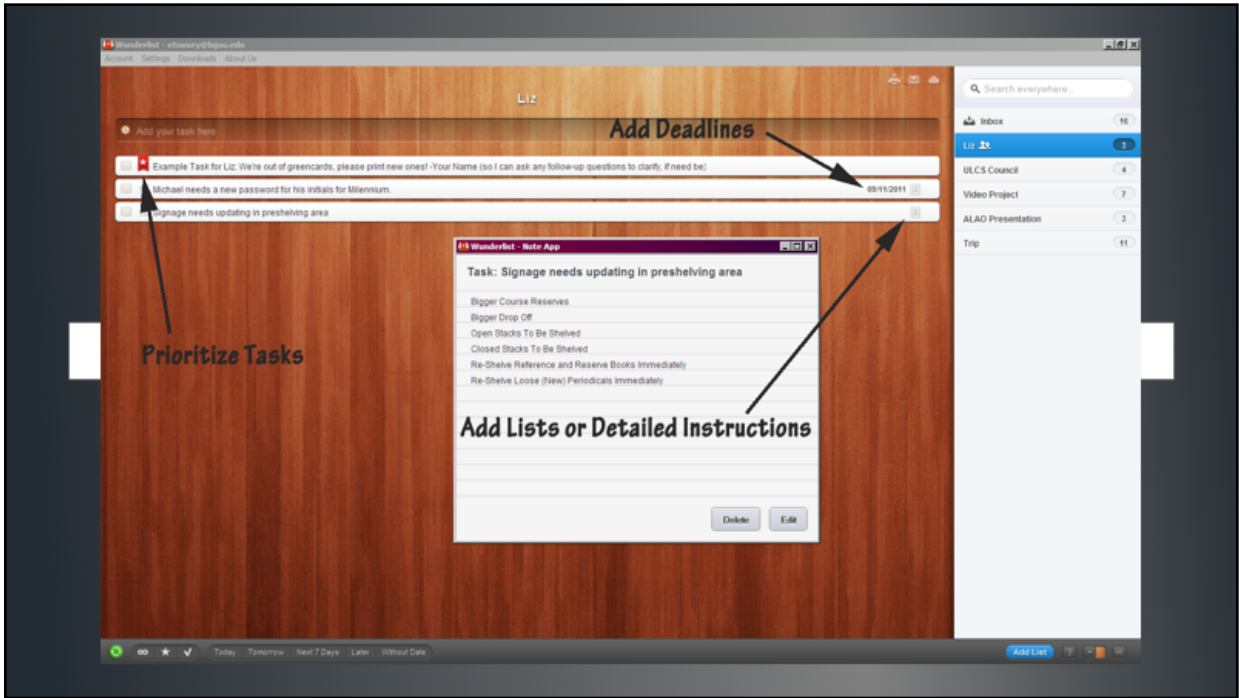
Liz



Liz



Liz



Liz

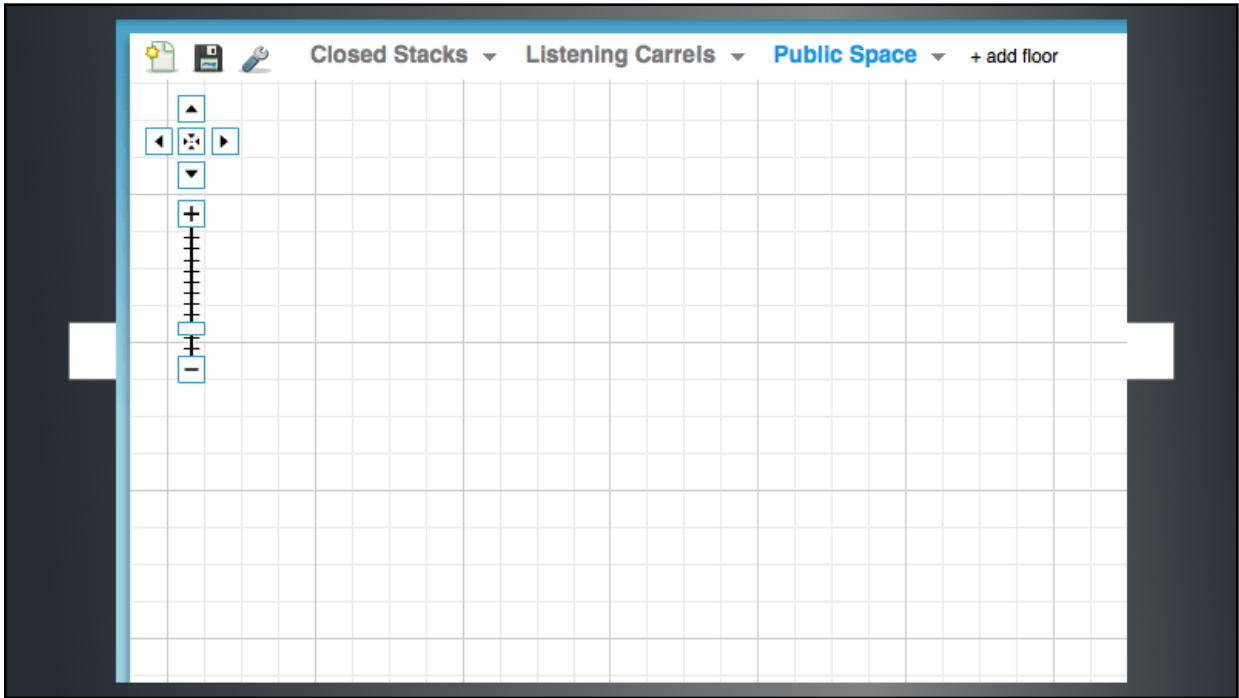
floor planner

Best for:
planning spatial projects

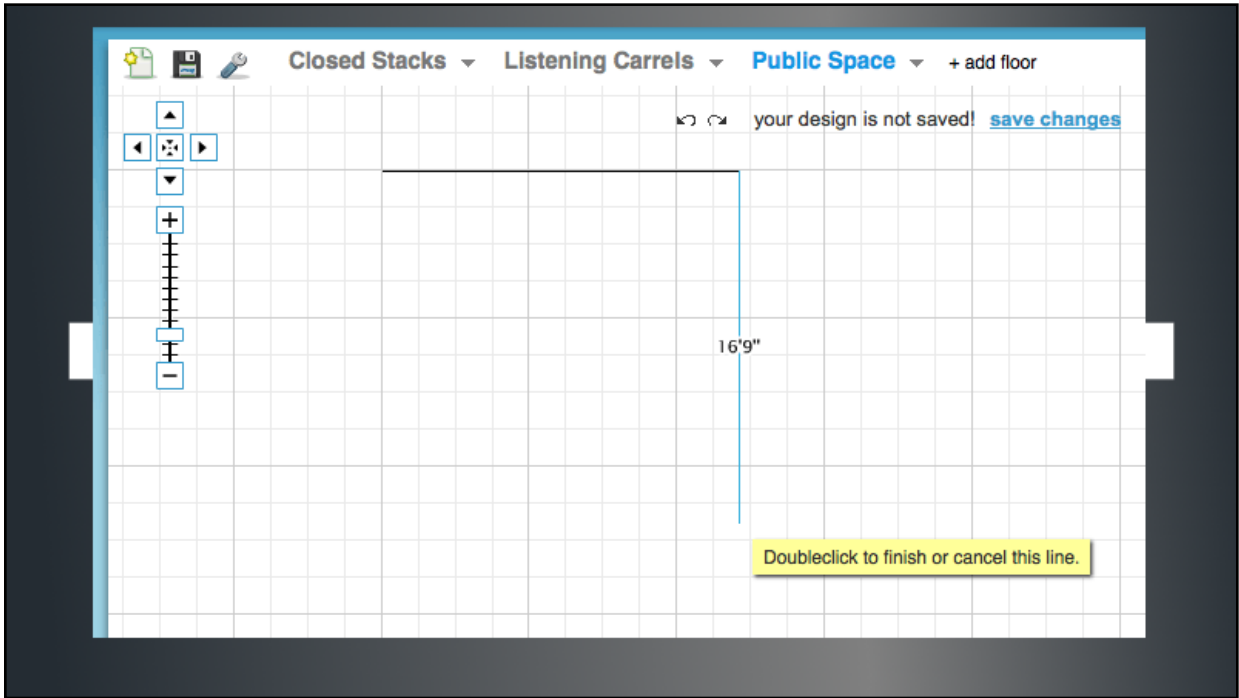
Also good for:
creating scaled maps of your space for
end users

Floorplanner is web-based tool to help you envision how changes in furniture and layout will appear spatially. We used Floorplanner in a recent renovation project when we were reconfiguring stacks and needed first to see if our ideal layout would work and secondarily, to communicate our ideas clearly to Stacks Management, who were building the shelves.

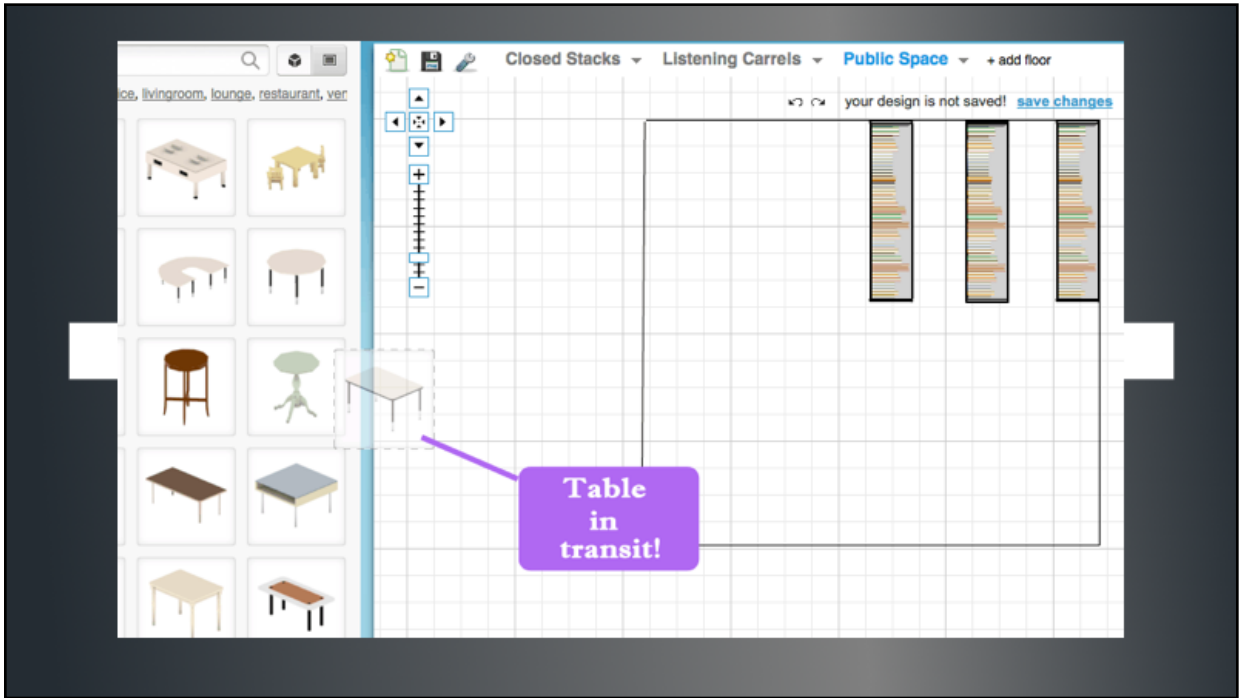
The most time-consuming part is getting the physical dimensions and laying out your room. Start a new room with a blank graph-paper background.



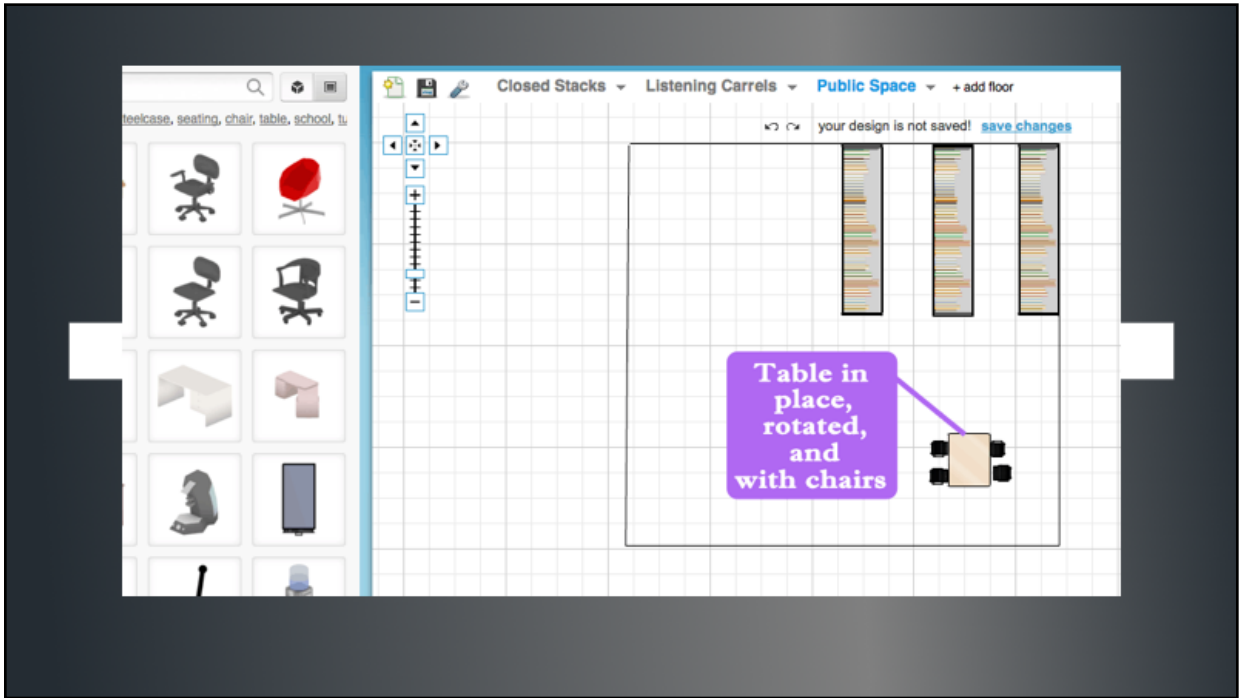
Start drawing walls. You'll notice that as you're drawing the wall, Floorplanner will give you the measurements of the wall.



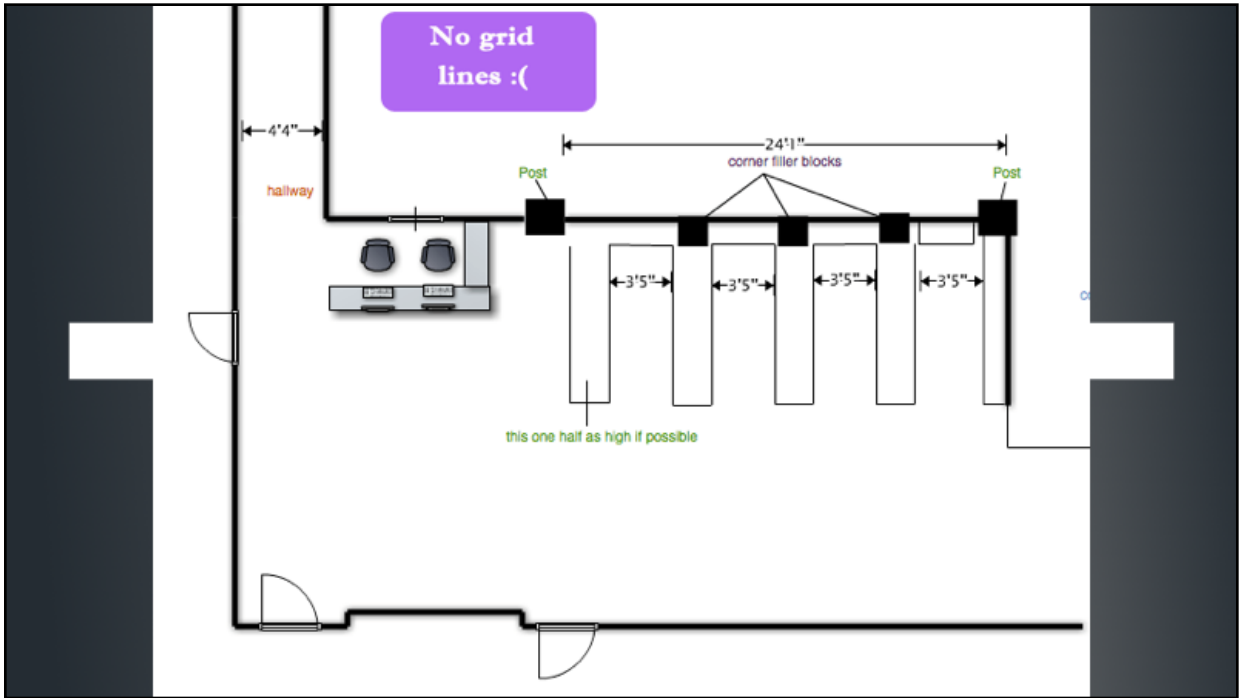
And continue to lay out your room to scale, placing furniture...



by dragging it from the inventory on the left, and see how things look when you move them around or rotate them.



The end result can be linked or printed...



but unfortunately, the only way in the free version to maintain the grid lines is to do a screen capture. You can also get much more fancy and 3D...



but we've stuck to simple and 2D so far. In the end, we've used this product quite a bit more after that initial stacks reconfiguration, including making stacks maps for training.

The basic, free version, gives you only one project at a time, but you can include multiple layouts in that project, so we haven't found it limiting yet.

The Doodle logo is displayed in a white rectangular box at the top center of a dark grey background. The word "Doodle" is written in a bold, blue, sans-serif font, with a registered trademark symbol (®) to its upper right.

Best for:
planning single events

Also good for:
semester-long scheduling

Liz

1. Describe

Title

Location (optional)

Description (optional)
It's that time again for our once per semester all staff meeting. Attendance is mandatory, but on the bright side, we have you for our time and you get free food. Below is a grid of secure options for the meeting. Indicate your availability and we'll try to find a time that is good for everyone.

Your name

E-mail address (recommended)

If you expect an e-mail address, you will receive the poll to administer your poll. This will not create a MyPollster account automatically.

2. Select Dates

the dates you would like to choose. [Calendar View](#)

November 2011						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1	2	3	4	5	
7	8	9	10	11	12	
14	15	16	17	18	19	
21	22	23	24	25	26	
28	29	30				

Selected dates:

- Monday, November 7, 2011
- Sunday, November 6, 2011
- Wednesday, November 9, 2011
- Thursday, November 10, 2011
- Monday, November 14, 2011
- Tuesday, November 15, 2011
- Wednesday, November 16, 2011
- Thursday, November 17, 2011
- Friday, November 18, 2011

3. Select Times

options for each day. If you do not enter an actual time span, a 30-day.

Time 2	Time 3	Time 4	Time 5
<input type="text" value="1:00 PM"/>	<input type="text" value="2:00 PM"/>	<input type="text" value="3:00 PM"/>	<input type="text" value="4:00 PM"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

or time slots
paste first row

4. Extra Settings

Settings
Yes-No-If-needed, Hidden poll, Limits and Extra fields

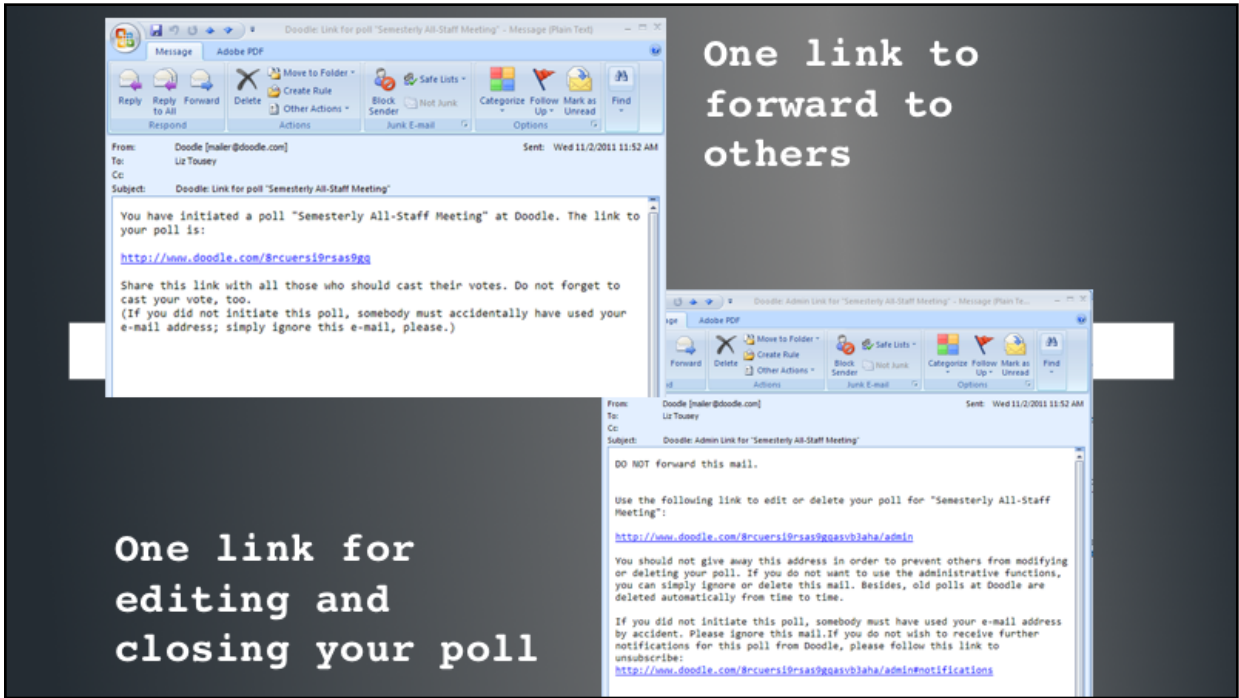
Yes-No-If-needed poll
Extra I-need-be vote for busy participants.

Hidden poll
Confidential participation: Only you can see the answers.

Participant can only choose one option
By default all options are selectable. This settings limits the choice to one option per participant.

Limit the number of participants per option
Poll as registration form: As soon as the indicated limit has been reached, respective option is no longer available.

Liz



Liz

Table View **Calendar View**

This poll is bigger than usual
Expand the view to participate in the poll.

Show all 24 options

6 participants	NOVEMBER 2011 Tue 15					NOVEMBER 2011 Thu 17	NOVEMBER 2011 Fri 18
	12:00 PM	1:00 PM	2:00 PM	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	12:00 PM	5:00 PM
Liz	✓	✓	⊘		⊘	✓	⊘
John	✓					✓	⊘
Lucas	⊘	⊘		✓	✓	✓	⊘
Claire		✓			✓	✓	✓
Joshua	✓	✓				✓	✓
James		✓			⊘	✓	✓
Your name	Yes (Yes) ⊘ No	Yes (Yes) No	Yes (Yes) No	Yes (Yes) No	Yes (Yes) No	Yes (Yes) No	Yes (Yes) No
	Yes 3 Ifneedbe 1 No 2	4 1 1	0 1 5	1 0 5	2 2 2	6 0 0	3 3 0

Especially Enjoy: the color-coding and tallies Save

Liz



Best for:

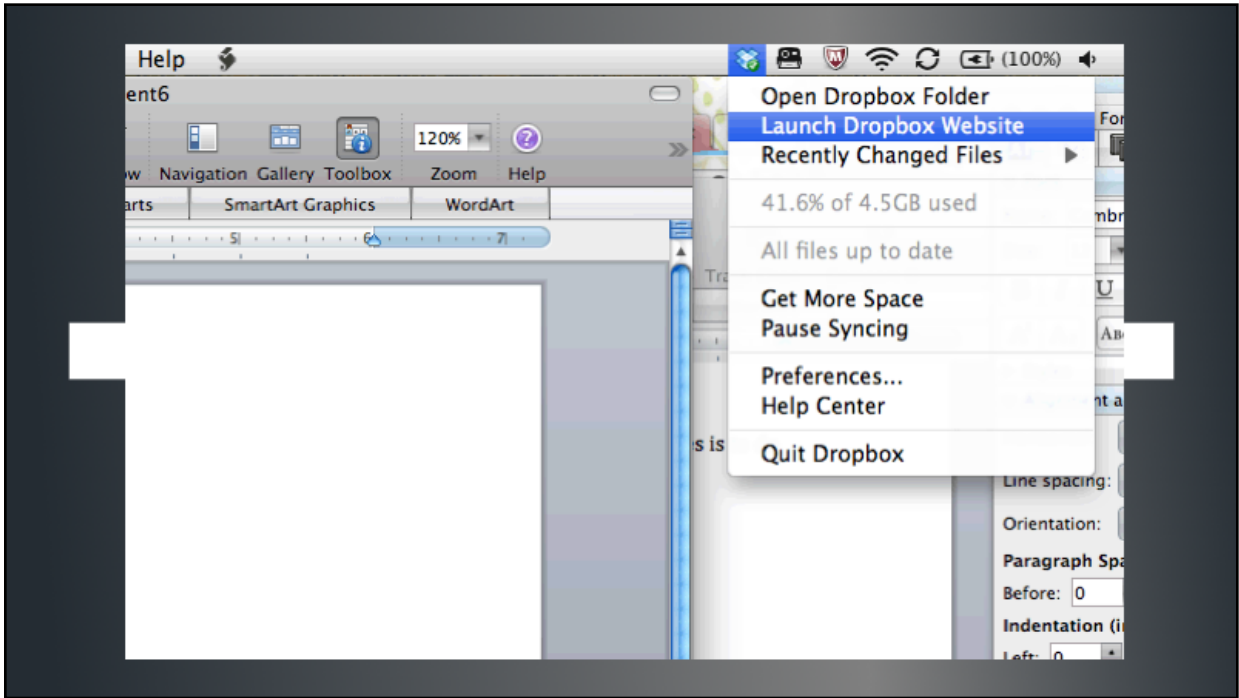
file sharing/sending and collaborative writing

Also good for:

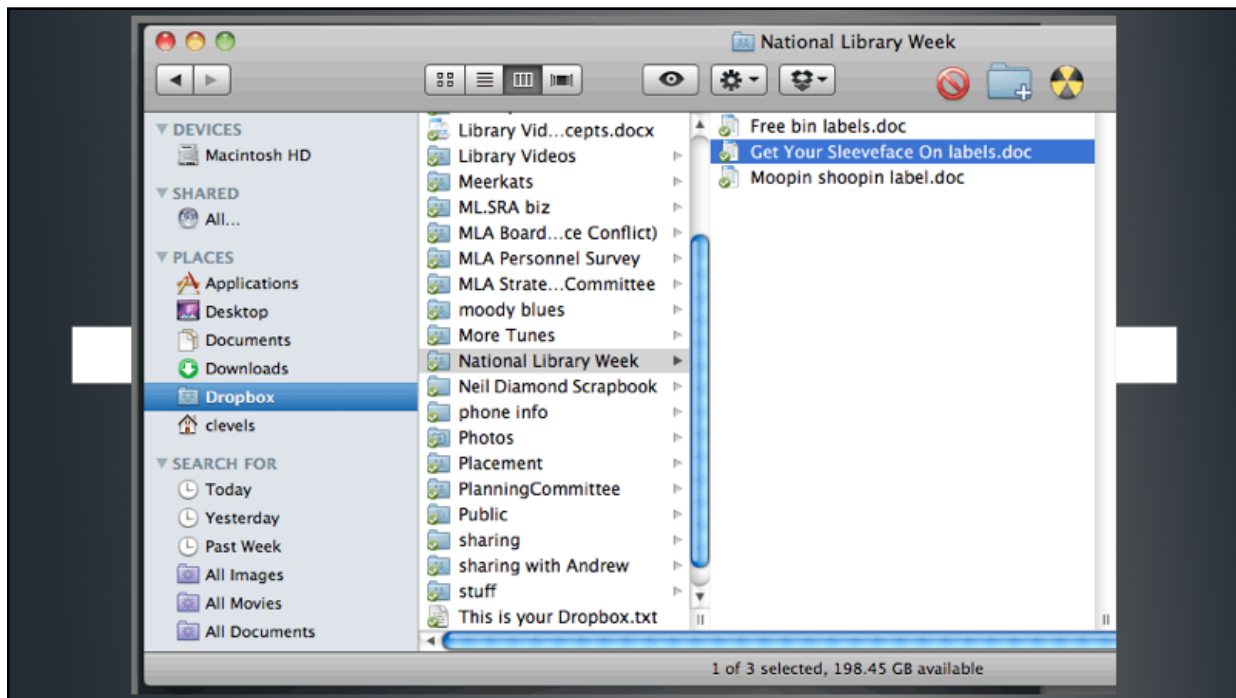
sharing files with groups outside of your local file network or intranet

Dropbox provides a spot for storing and sharing photos, documents, videos, or really any file, in the cloud. Think of it like an extension of your file management system that you can access from anywhere and share independently without reliance on internal network permissions, such as when you need to share documents with a committee in a professional organization. Each free account starts with 2 GB of space.

There are a few different ways to access and use Dropbox. Download the application to your desktop, and you'll be able to edit and save documents without having to remember to re-upload. Once installed on your desktop, you can access it via a shortcut,...

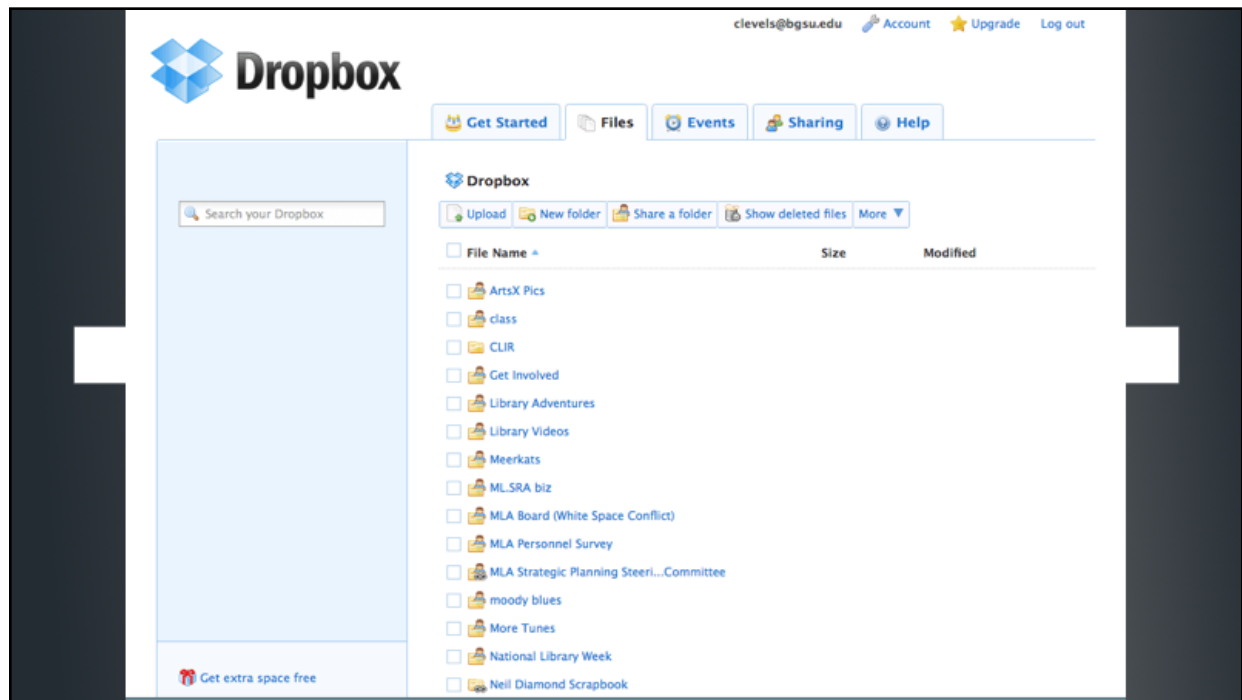


or via your file manager.



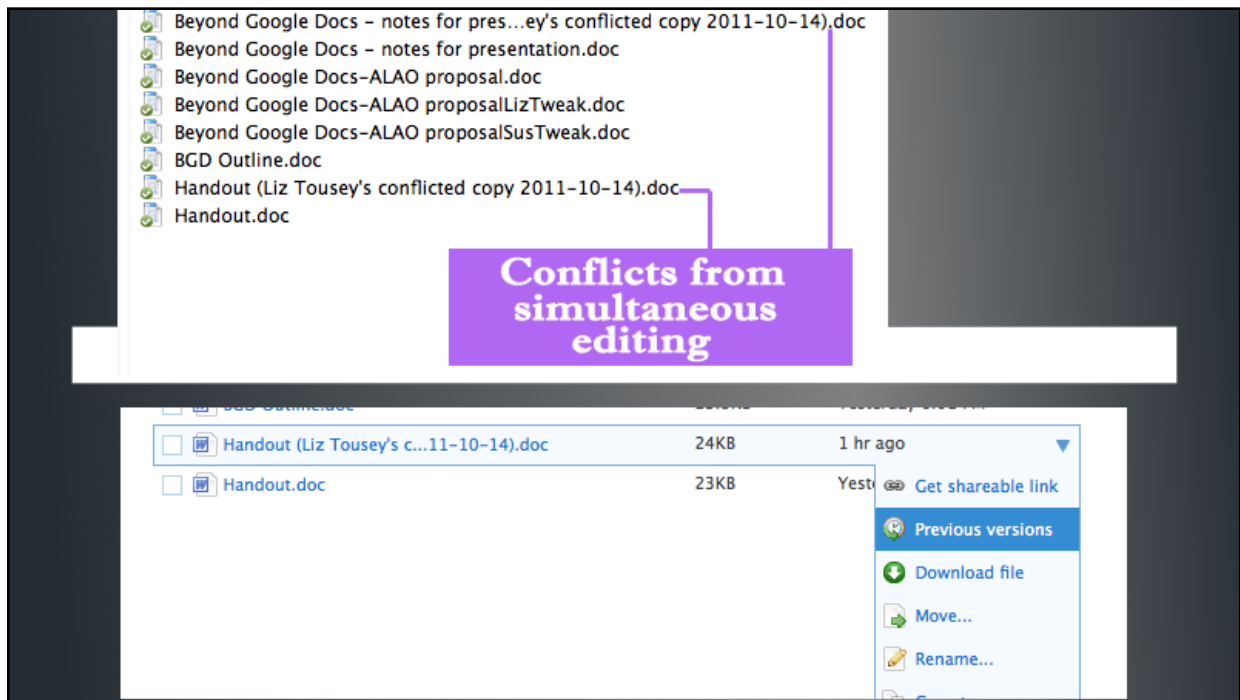
Do be sure that you only install the application itself on non-shared computers because the download is tied to your account, so there's no way to have the application on your desktop without it being a portal to your files.

You can also access files directly from the Dropbox site.



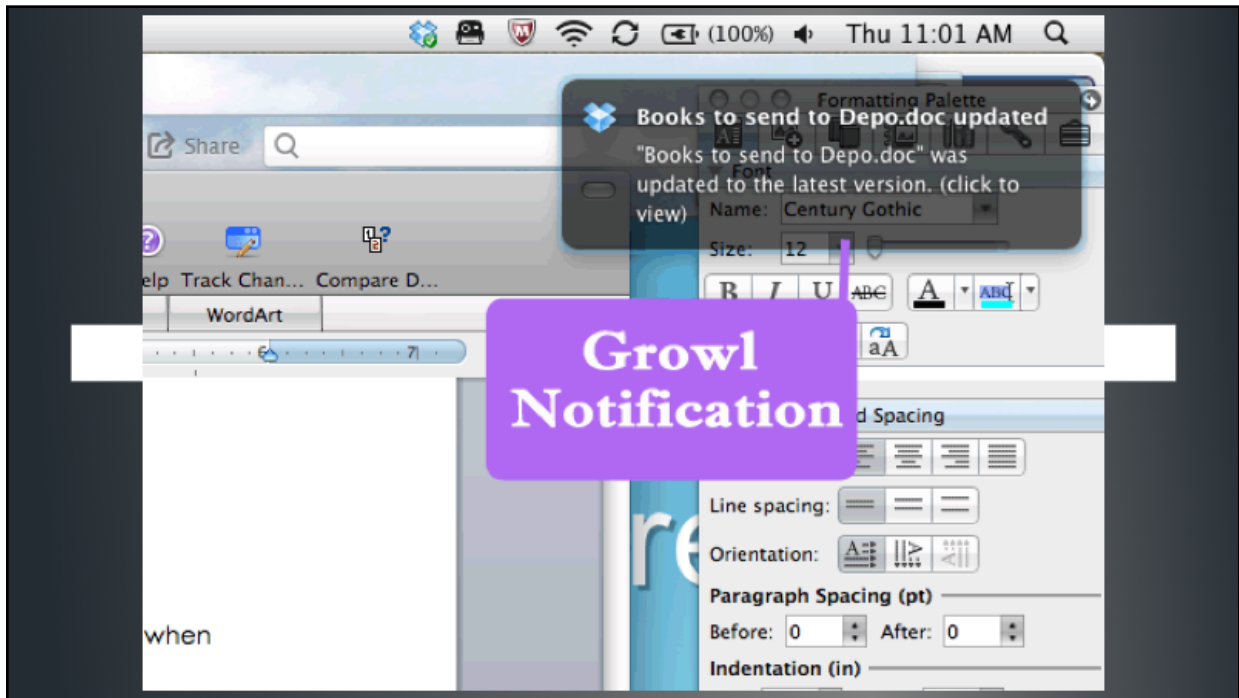
This is what we use to access our files if we're working on the reference desk or using any shared computer. If you choose this option, you'll need to re-upload the saved file when you're done editing.

There are a few downsides to Dropbox. One is that when two people are editing and saving a document simultaneously, there's no reconciliation of differences such as what you'd see in a similar situation in Google Docs. Rather, you'll end up with conflicted versions of the file,...



and you have to retrace your steps to figure out which version you want to keep. Fortunately, Dropbox does include versioning history to make this easier.

Another thing that bothers some people is that Growl – a notification program - comes bundled with Dropbox, so when you download Dropbox, you'll also get Growl, which tells you when anyone else saves a new version of a shared document.



This becomes problematic when you have a large group viewing files simultaneously, and everyone's autosave kicks in. You can uninstall Growl, but some people find it irritating to need to.

Finally, Dropbox's method for granting extra free space is clever, but offensive to some.

Ponzi scheme?

Invite your friends to Dropbox!

For every friend who joins and installs Dropbox, we'll give you both 250 MB of bonus space (up to a limit of 8 GB)!



It works rather like a pyramid scheme in that to get additional space for free, one must invite others to join Dropbox and download it to their desktops.

The logo for 'screenr' is displayed in white lowercase letters on a blue rectangular background. A small 'SM' trademark symbol is located to the right of the 'r'.

Best For:

screencapture video tutorials

Also good for:

on-the-fly reference assistance

Liz

**Navigating to the Music Library's
page from any BGSU page**

HowtoGettotheSite-screencast.mp4

Liz



Best for:

manipulating digital photos for blogs
and social media

Also good for:

creating signs, fliers and other
marketing materials

Liz

Photo Mosaic Maker

(Great for blog posts)



Liz

PopArt Creator

(Add flair to your LibGuide)

The screenshot shows a LibGuide page for 'Trumpet Music Resources'. A circular PopArt Creator overlay is positioned over the 'Trumpet Pic' section, which features a green background and a white trumpet illustration. The page content includes a navigation bar, a search box, and several sections: 'Trumpet Pic', 'Call Numbers for Browsing Scores' (with sub-sections for 'Solos and Duets' and 'Brass and Wind Ensembles'), 'Music Library Links', and a profile for 'Liz Tousey'.

University Libraries > LibGuides > Trumpet Music Resources Admin Sign In


Trumpet Music Resources

tags: [brass_instruments](#), [cornet](#), [music_research_guides](#), [trumpet](#)
Last updated: Oct 12, 2011 | URL: <http://libguides.bgsu.edu/trumpet> | [Print Guide](#) | [RSS Updates](#) | [SHARE](#) | [6.92](#)

[Browsing the Stacks](#) | [Finding Books and Scores](#) | [Bibliographies and Histories](#) | [Trumpet Method and Studies](#) | [Finding Articles and More](#)

Browsing the Stacks [Print Page](#) Search: All Guides

Trumpet Pic



Copyright by author from Flickr.

Call Numbers for Browsing Scores

Solos and Duets

- M 85-89 Solo Trumpet Music
- M 182-185 Trumpet or Organ
- M 260-261 Trumpet or Cornet with Piano
- M 289.4 Duets, Two Brass Instruments
- M 288-289 Duets, Two Wind Instruments
- M 290-291 Duets, One Wind and One String Instrument
- M 296-297 Wind Instruments and Guitar/Harp
- M 298 Wind Instrument and Percussion

Brass and Wind Ensembles


- M 357.4 Brass Trios
- M 457.4 Brass Quartets
- M 557.4 Brass Quintets
- M 657.4 Brass Septets
- M 757.4 Brass Septets
- M 857.4 Brass Octets
- M 957.4 Brass Nonets
- M 358-359 Wind Trios
- M 458-459 Wind Quartets
- M 558-559 Wind Quintets
- M 658-659 Wind Septets

Music Library Links

All Research Guides for Music

[Music Library \(MLISRA\) Home](#)
[Ask Us at the MLISRA](#)
[About the MLISRA](#)
[Basics of Using the MLISRA](#)
[Services](#)
[Hours](#)
[Directions](#)
[Contact](#)

Liz Tousey



Liz Tousey

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ltousey@libguides.bgsu.edu
419.272.7776
3rd Floor, Jerome Library
[Send Email](#)

Links:
[Website / Blog](#)
[Profile / Guides](#)

Subjects:
[Music](#)

Liz

Lolcat Generator

(For signs with a little whimsy)



Liz



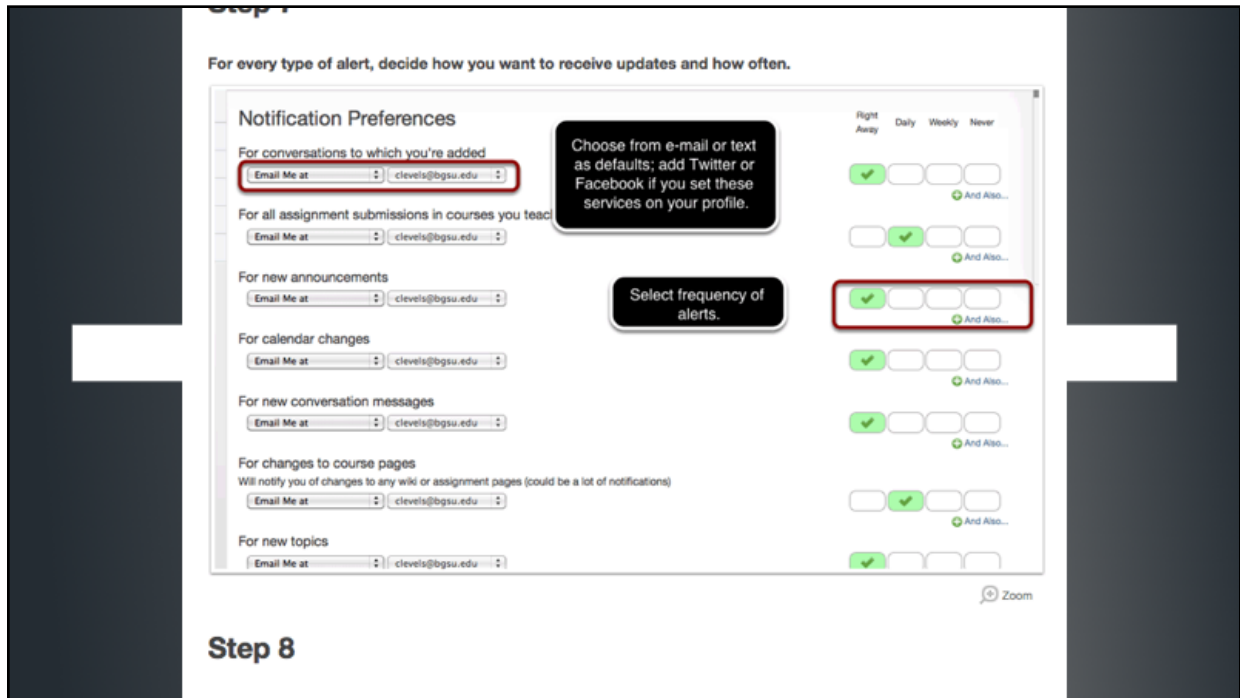
Best for:

creating quick static screen captures

Also good for:

creating in-depth tutorials with annotations

On to Clarify. This is a tool that gives you a quick and simple way to integrate screen shots with annotations, pointers, and so on. It's a great way to set up brief visual introductions to a topic when you don't need or want a time-based format like video.



Step 8

Download it from their site to run it from your desktop. You can move seamlessly from typing instructions, capturing screens, uploading images, or layering shapes like when you want to point people to a specific place on the screen.

Outputs include posting to the web with a simple URL, or exporting as a PDF. I've used Clarify to create brief instructions for new applications and step-by-step instructions that needed visual cues to be clear.



Best for:

quick presentation creation and editing

Also good for:

creating interactive teaching tools with embedded content

And finally, Sliderocket. This is a super cool web-based presentation platform that we're using for this particular presentation. Its interface is very intuitive and easy to learn. Here's a sample video of inserting first an image, then a plugin into a slide.

Adding an image and plugin using Sliderocket

Sliderocket-screencast.mp4

Notice how, when you're aligning an image, guide lines appear to let you know when you have the image placed in the center of either axis. In this example, we're also embedding a live Twitter feed.

Another of my favorite plugins is the quotes feature.

Search for Quote

Search: Search

quote	author
Consistency requires you to be as ignorant today as you were a year ago.	Bernard Berenson
Consistency is the last refuge of the unimaginative.	Oscar Wilde
A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines.	Ralph Waldo Emerson
Such is the inconsistency of real love, that it is always awake to suspicion, however unreasonable; always requiring new assurances from the object of its interest.	Ann Radcliffe
Consistency is the quality of a stagnant mind.	John Sloan
This imputation of inconsistency is one to which every sound politician and every honest thinker must sooner or later subject himself. The foolish and the dead alone never change their opinion.	Bernard Berenson
One isn't necessarily born with courage, but one is born with potential. Without courage, we cannot practice any other virtue with consistency. We can't be kind, true, merciful, generous, or honest.	Maya Angelou

"Consistency is the last refuge of the unimaginative."
- Oscar Wilde (1854 - 1900)

Open it, do a keyword search, select a quote, and it will be inserted into your page with attribution! The word definition feature works in the same basic way.

Sliderocket has several built-in themes that you can edit, or you can create your own. You can set slides to advance on click, after a particular interval, or at the completion of audio or video playback.

Cool features you can get with purchase include the ability for people to add comments during your presentation and embedded polls.

You can export Sliderocket presentations as executable files for Mac or PC, as PowerPoint presentations, or as PDFs, but one **major** downside of this program is that you can only export presentations with a paid subscription; without that, you can only use them on the web, so you can't access your presentations without a live internet connection.

Free web tools used for this presentation

SlideRocket

created presentation

Dropbox

shared text and parked images

Screenr

created screencasts

Jing

created screenshots

Liz