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Using Free & Open Tools: a holistic selection process centered on digital literacy

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Using Free & Open Tools: a holistic selection process centered on digital literacy

Presenter 1 Title

Digital Media & Learning Librarian

Session Type

45-minute concurrent session

Abstract

This session will cover free and open tools as well as teaching strategies for creating and implementing digital/web literacy and digital media instruction. The session will also be useful for people looking for free and open tools for their own projects, including how to get started and how to learn necessary new skills.

Considerations such as terms of use, privacy, accessibility and licensing can be as or more important than functionality. Additionally, adopting open tools can advance conversations about open licensing which, in turn, can promote the application of creative commons and public domain licenses to appropriate works. Knowing about the platform, software, or service and selecting one that fits your needs is not always straightforward. This session aims to demystify the selection and learning process, providing a strategy for adoption and implementation that is used at Humboldt State University for decision making.

Location

KIPJ

Keywords

Digital literacy, open source, open licensing, privacy, accessibility, platforms, software, digital tools, web literacy

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Tim Miller

Tim Miller is the Digital Media & Learning Librarian at the Humboldt State University Library where he focuses on teaching digital and information literacy using interest-driven methods in which students have the freedom and confidence to design their learning experience, explore new ideas, learn new skills and engage with peers to innovate, create and learn. Tim is particularly interested in web literacy and creating projects on the web using open tools and platforms.

Using Free & Open Tools: a holistic selection process centered on digital literacy

45-minute Concurrent Session

Abstract

This session will cover free and open tools as well as teaching strategies for creating and implementing digital/web literacy and digital media instruction. The session will also be useful for people looking for free and open tools for their own projects, including how to get started and how to learn necessary new skills. Considerations such as terms of use, privacy, accessibility and licensing can be as or more important than functionality. Additionally, adopting open tools can advance conversations about open licensing which, in turn, can promote the application of creative commons and public domain licenses to appropriate works. Knowing about the platform, software, or service and selecting one that fits your needs is not always straightforward. This session aims to demystify the selection and learning process, providing a strategy for adoption and implementation that is used at Humboldt State University for decision making.

Description

Individuals and organizations are often pensive about adopting free and/or open source software, platforms or services, epitomized with the admonishment that “free isn’t free.” Whether adopting such programs for instruction or courses, or for personal or individual use, these worries are more complicated than a simple black and white decision. The decision process itself is an educational opportunity to introduce concepts about intellectual property, copyright and creative commons, open software licenses, freeware and other related concepts. When implementing a digital project, another often overlooked consideration is the learning outcome of the project. In many courses, the outcomes are centered on the content rather than the format or mode of creation, yet the choice of software can overshadow the content if it requires acquiring a new skillset. By being mindful of this, adopting appropriate programs that facilitate engagement with the course content that are perhaps viewed as less technically glamorous, the

teaching strategy can still incorporate digital literacy concepts and scaffold the learning experience. Additionally, learning how to learn the platform, software or service should be a major factor in selection. Often, open source programs have a robust community of users and programmers developing the software and sharing lessons learned and tutorials. Open collaborative platforms that promote sharing and remixing can be a major boost for learning and teaching.

Free and open software and platforms allow creators to truly take ownership of their work and helps to build a more open and collaborative network of creators and people pushing the programs forward, from development to tutorials. This session will highlight strategies for teaching and learning as part of the selection process. We will examine specific platforms, software and services that have been used at Humboldt State University and how they have been integrated with courses as well as being used in the library internally. We will also share a method for carrying out the selection process by centering licensing, privacy and accessibility as well as teaching/learning and functionality.

Software, platforms and services that will be included and demonstrated in the discussion: Glitch.com, GitHub, A-frame, Unity, Blender, Inkscape, and Audacity (subject to change).

Learning Outcomes

1. Identify software, platforms and services appropriate to a given project, including an assessment of functionality as well as intellectual property, privacy, accessibility and other considerations.
2. Understand the value of centering software, platform or service selection as a way to introduce concepts that creation and dissemination of projects.
3. Identify strategies for teaching and learning software, platforms or services, including learning as a consideration for selection.

Keywords

Digital literacy, open source, open licensing, privacy, accessibility, platforms, software, digital tools, web literacy

Presentation Requirements

Computer with projector, speakers, and internet connectivity.