Using Tools for Teaching Online

Some faculty find that moving online with the best possible technological hardware and online tools enriches the teaching and learning experience online. However, remember that faculty comfort with the teaching technology is one of the biggest predictors of online instructional success from the student perspective! Please note that the lists below are not exhaustive nor are they promotional in any way.

Softwares for Educators

The Division of IT on Campus has a list of available software that has been vetted through their security team, as well as information on what is and is not recommended for use. You can access the software catalog here: https://swcatalog.umd.edu/ .

ODL and Smith IT cannot recommend or support something that has not been appropriately vetted through DivIT.

If you would like to discuss a product for use and the process for integrating it into your classroom, please email smithteach@umd.edu.

Hardware

Headsets / Microphones

When considering what hardware to buy consider your specific teaching style before making a purchase but all faculty moving online should own a good headset (having a good microphone reduces static noise and ensures your students can hear for live-session delivery or asynchronous video filming). Here are a few ideas:

- Reach out to Smith IT at helpme@rhsmith.umd.edu before purchasing a microphone for in-person instruction in order to ensure it's supported by their specialists
- Sennheiser SD Pro 2 Double-Sided DECT Wireless Headset
- For podcast quality audio: Shure SM7B Mic (Cardioid Dynamic to isolate background noise), Scarlet Solo 2-in/2-out USB audio interface, Cloudlifter Mic Activator, and Rode Microphone Boom Arm
- Logitech USB Headset H390 with Noise Cancelling Mic

Cameras

Oftentimes, your built-in laptop camera will be of sufficient quality for teaching online, but if you're unhappy with it or are hoping to record yourself for your students, you may want to consider more advanced options:

- Your built-in laptop camera!
- Logitech HD Pro Webcam C920
- Logitech C270 Desktop or Laptop Webcam, HD 720p

Tablets

For instructors who prefer to use whiteboards or who normally annotate on slides or images, a tablet can be a valuable addition to your online teaching. Tablets generally have a longer learning curve, so give yourself time to adapt to it! Also, if you're unlikely to use annotating or whiteboards, a tablet is not necessary.

- Wacom Intuos Pro (or other wacom tablets as they have an extensive range to meet your needs)
- Surface Pro 7 - very portable tablet PC that can be used at home and in classroom - you can connect to a larger monitor if needed - because the tablet is part of the screen you do not have hand-eye coordinations that you might with a separate Wacom device.

For faculty who use iPads for instruction - Smith's own Stephen Brown and Samuel Handwerger of the AIA department have successfully used **AirsketchPro** to turn the iPad into a wireless whiteboard, and annotate PDF slides or and images. Watch the **AirsketchPro demo video** made by Stephen Brown.

Additional Monitors
For instructors who are teaching live sessions, and particularly those using Zoom for in-class or case-based discussions, as well as those who give demos e.g. in coding or data mining, having a dual monitor can be a tremendous asset as you can see your whole class on one screen and share your material on the other screen.

- Your own television!
- Name brand UHD 4K Computer Monitor with 60Hz Refresh Rate, and 3840 x 2160 resolution or higher

As Smith's own Paulo Prochno of M & O shares:
" I've been using zoom with dual monitors by connecting a TV to my computer through HDMI cable. With that, I can see up to 49 students on the TV with gallery view (or 30 if your computer doesn't have an i7 chipset) and use my laptop for the slides, whiteboard, sharing screen, chat, participants list. You have to enable "dual monitors" in the settings and select the "extend" mode when adding the TV to the laptop. I think this setting works well. Some faculty prefer to do two logins, one with laptop and one with tablet (or desktop) - this is the best solution if using webex, for example. "

Other Items
You may want to consider some of the following in preparing your 'home office' tool kit for online teaching

- A USB port (hundreds of options) just ensure it works with your computer
- A good lamp for lighting when recording videos
- A green screen

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