

THE
TEACHER'S
GUIDE TO
TECH
2016

JENNIFER GONZALEZ

a CULT OF PEDAGOGY digital binder

IS THIS BOOK FOR YOU?

A note from
Jennifer Gonzalez



When it comes to technology, the one complaint I hear most often is that people have trouble keeping up with it. Not that it's too hard, not that it's too "technical," but that there's **just too much to keep track of.**

If that sounds like you, then this book will be a game-changer, a filter that lets you sort through the wild mess of tech tools and quickly determine which ones are worth your time, which ones might be nice to learn later, and which ones you can ignore for now. I have gathered up over 130 tech tools, sorted them into categories, provided a clear, plain-language description of what the tools in each category do, and collected ideas for how each one can be used in your teaching.

If you're a **tech novice**, you'll find answers to the questions you're too embarrassed to ask. When someone uses a term or talks about a program

they're using, you can just come here and look it up. On every page you'll find explanations in plain, simple language – it will be like having a patient, tech-savvy friend sitting next to you at your computer.

If you're **tech-intermediate**, this book will help you up your game. You are probably pretty comfortable with a good handful of tools, but there may be whole categories of terms and tools you've never had the chance to explore. This book is your shortcut, saving you the time it would take to research new technologies and quickly decide if a tool is worth learning, or if it's just something you can introduce to an inspired student.

If you're a **tech junkie**, this book will enrich your work in two ways: (1) It will introduce you to a few tools you may not have heard of, feeding your insatiable hunger for more tech and further solidifying your status as a technology expert. (2) It can serve as a teaching tool, something you can point others to if they come to you for help and you don't have time.

Here's a closer look at what's inside...

What is a DIGITAL BINDER?

It's a big PDF file. Like a paper binder, it's organized into sections you can flip to easily. But it also contains hundreds of clickable links that bounce you around the binder at lightning speed. You can keep a copy on your desktop, your laptop, your tablet, or all three.



A complete table of contents is available at the end of this preview.

Wonderopolis

Although Wonderopolis may not technically be a research site in the strictest terms, it is definitely a place to learn. Users submit "wonders," questions about things they are wondering about. Once a wonder has been submitted, other users vote on the ones they find most interesting. Those with the highest votes are then selected by the site as [Wonders of the Day](#), questions that have been formally answered by the Wonderopolis staff, along with added photos, videos, a vocabulary list, and even a short quiz to test your understanding.



Wonderopolis is fun to explore and would make a great option for free time, sub days, or to explore possible [genius hour](#) projects. Because this site is still relatively new, there's a chance that more features are coming. I would love for the site to make it easier for students to use wonderings as springboards for academic research, whether by providing citation information for their own articles, links to other authoritative sources to learn more, or both.

Blendspace

Most flipped learning tools focus primarily on video. But what if you want to include other online content like blog posts, web pages, or even whole websites? What if you want to add your own file to a lesson? With Blendspace*, you can cobble together whatever content you'd like into one complete, interactive lesson.

Just like DocentEDU (featured on the next page), Blendspace lets teachers put lessons together with a combination of online resources: videos, PDFs, images, websites, even notes you create yourself, right in the platform. You can even drag files right in from your [Dropbox](#) or [Google Drive](#) account.



Website: tes.com/lessons
Difficulty: Easy
Platform: Web
Price: Free



This Blendspace lesson on Photosynthesis includes two videos, three images, and one PDF uploaded by the teacher. All items are embedded right on the page.

Students can vote on individual resources by giving them an "I like it" or "not a fan," so teachers can track which resources are working well. Students can also comment on the resources. This offers an opportunity for online discussion. And you can create quizzes to go with each lesson, then track which students understood the concepts and which students need more help.

And if you don't have time to create your own lesson, Blendspace also offers a [gallery of public lessons](#) created by other teachers.

*Blendspace's former name is EdCanvas.

Storybird

Here's how Storybird works: Users begin by browsing through a gallery of artwork until they find an image that inspires them, then they write a story or poem to accompany the image. The written piece can then be published on Storybird or purchased as a print book.

Using the "class" feature, students are grouped into a private class separate from the regular public Storybird community. Within this space, student work is published only for consumption by other class members. Other students can comment on their peers' work, and teachers can moderate those comments before the writers see them.

Users are limited to using Storybird's artwork, and layout is largely controlled by Storybird as well.

Although this could be seen as a disadvantage, what it



offers is a consistently attractive end product, and these limitations mean that students can concentrate on their writing.

In October of 2015, Storybird announced a new [fundraising](#) option, where schools can earn 30% of sales on student books for a specified period of time.

Similar Sites: [TikaTok](#), [Zooburst](#)

Pixlr

Pixlr has all of the same capabilities that PicMonkey has: photo cropping, resizing, rotation, adjustment of exposure, filters, and so on, plus more. For slightly more advanced users or those who want to be able to edit offline and on mobile devices, Pixlr is a good choice.

For one, its interface has the feel and functionality of a proper photo editor – much closer to Photoshop than PicMonkey. So users who will eventually move to the big leagues of photo editing, the Pixlr Editor will give them good practice.

Pixlr is also available in more ways: You can use the web app (either the simplified Pixlr Express or the full-featured Editor), the mobile app, or download the software onto your desktop for offline use.



Website: pixlr.com
Difficulty: Moderate
Platform: Web, iOS, Android
Price: Free for basic use; \$14.99/year for premium tools



The full-featured Pixlr Editor, which has the most sophisticated tools. Pixlr also offers more simplified tools in its Express and mobile versions.

With a free account, you can use the Pixlr Library to save and organize pictures you've worked with in the Editor. This allows users to work on more complex projects over time and save different versions of the same project.

To get started, go over to Pixlr's support section, where they offer over 35 different [tutorials](#) to help you learn how to use this tool.

* Pixlr's full name is *Autodesk Pixlr*.

Over 130 Tools Explained
in Plain English

Sorted by Function

All tools are grouped into categories based on what they do. Each section starts with a discussion of classroom applications.

Note Taking

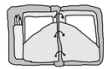
Evernote
Google Keep
OneNote

What is a Note Taking App?

Note taking apps are a lot more than digital versions of the paper we might ordinarily use in the analog world: They are more like big, powerful Trapper Keepers, helping us organize our notes into sections, giving us handy pockets to store documents we receive from other sources, and so much more. Plus, because they are cloud-based, we can access them from anywhere.

Classroom Uses

- Keep your own teacher stuff organized. For someone who is juggling a lot of tasks, and steadily collecting ideas and resources for future use, having a tool like this could be a real game changer.
- Students can use these tools to keep and organize class notes, study materials, and important documents.
- Rather than keep notes for a project or research paper on index cards or paper, require students to keep digital notes, organizing them into tabs, notebooks, or sections, and share the notes with you through a link.
- As part of a life skills, career planning, or study skills course, students could complete and share an entire notebook with their teacher for a grade.



In this section we feature three popular note-taking tools: Evernote, Google Keep, and OneNote. Last year, Google Keep was left out because it didn't seem to have as big of a fan base as the other two, but it is starting to grow in popularity. This article from the website Uptodown compares all three: [Evernote vs. OneNote vs. Google Keep](#)

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Note Taking

Evernote

In Evernote, users create notes (like word processing files), then organize them into notebooks, making it possible to store information for every area of your life in one place. But there's so much more:

- Evernote is cloud-based, so you can access it from any computer or device. And it syncs across devices: If you add a note on your phone, you'll see it the next time you open Evernote on your laptop.
- You can set reminders for a note – Evernote will email you reminders about due dates, etc.
- Audio clips can be used in place of notes.
- Notes can be shared with others.



- Whole web pages, images, or e-mails can be sent straight into Evernote.
- You can photograph or scan a document, and Evernote will scan it and store the text for future searching.
- Notes can be tagged, to make them searchable. You can also do a text-level search, where Evernote will search inside all of your notes for key phrases.
- You can add checkboxes to notes, which makes this a great tool for making to-do lists.

To start learning how to use all of Evernote's great features, watch this [12-minute tutorial](#).

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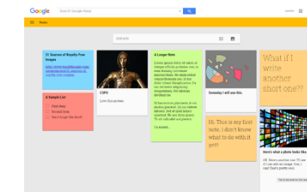
Evernote
Google Keep
OneNote

Google Keep

If Evernote and OneNote are a bit overcomplicated for you, but you'd still like a place online to store notes, consider Google Keep.

Google Keep is kind of a blank slate where you just start adding notes. Once a note is written, it is added to your Keep as a tile, looking a bit like a Pinterest pin, but unlike on Pinterest, you can rearrange the order in which they appear.

- Notes can be color-coded, and you can change the way you view your whole Keep by only opting to look at notes of one particular color.
- Notes can have reminders attached to them, which will then schedule a reminder to be sent to you at a designated time.



- The mobile version of Keep includes the option to leave a voice memo that is also converted to text.
- Notes can be shared, so you can build a note with others, regardless of location.

Getting started with Keep is a breeze, so if you already have a Google account, give it a try. Just go to the address above or click on the Apps icon (the grid of gray tiles to the left of your name along the top bar) and click "more" until the Keep icon pops up.

The Evernote dashboard with images, whole notes, and notes.

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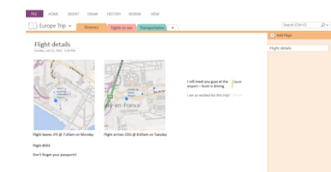
Evernote
Google Keep
OneNote

OneNote

Microsoft's OneNote is another robust note-taking tool, although it seems to be less well-known than Evernote. Fans of this option love how the visual organization of the notes is set up with colored tabs, like a clean filing system. Also, because OneNote uses the same set of text formatting tools found in [Microsoft Word](#), it offers rich possibilities for creating visually appealing notes.

Key features of this tool include:

- Syncing notes across all devices
- Placing files (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) directly into OneNote notebooks



- Optical character recognition, which scans images for text and stores that text for future searching – this now includes handwriting recognition as well
- Clipping content straight from the Web into a notebook
- Sharing notes with others for collaboration – even linking them to a specific paragraph within a note
- Record audio and video clips for instant storage within a notebook

To learn all of the features of OneNote 2016, take a look at this [complete video tutorial](#), courtesy of OneNote.

Website:
onenote.com
Difficulty: Moderate
Platform: Web, iOS, Android
Price: Free



In OneNote, your notes are organized into tabs across the top. You can access other notebooks through a drop-down menu beside the name of the current notebook.

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The Magic is in the LINKS

Hundreds of links make your reading experience even faster than online.

External links take you to related online resources.

Internal links let you jump from section to section.

hyperlinks to other tools in the same section

screenshot or photo of the tool in use

hyperlinks to all key sections of the guide

Collaboration


- Padlet
- Post-It Plus
- Realtime Board
- Trello

Padlet

Imagine an online corkboard where you can just pin notes, pictures, files, and links to other places. Think [Pinterest](#), except with a lot more flexibility: You can move things around however you like, make some items bigger than others, include regular files, write directly onto your board, and invite other people to add things, too.

That's Padlet. It is ridiculously easy and has so many awesome possibilities for the classroom including exit slips, group projects, and collaboration with students from other schools (check out these [20 fantastic ideas](#)).

To start, just open a new Padlet, double-click anywhere on the wall, and start typing a post. You can format the text with bold, italics, and underlining, and other [rich text](#) features, like numbered and bulleted lists.



Posts can be resized and dragged anywhere on the wall, and the background image can be customized, which makes this a nice platform for people who want more control over the aesthetics of their projects.


Users have SO MANY options for sharing a Padlet with others: Not only can you share it through the usual [social media](#) channels, email, printing, and direct [link](#), you can also export it as an image, a [PDF](#), or an [Excel](#) file, [embed](#) it directly in another website, or create a direct link to it with a [QR code](#).

Website: padlet.com

Difficulty: Easy

Platform: Web

Price: Free for basic use. \$45/year for additional [educator features](#).



Padlet simply gives you a wall, which has its own unique URL, where you and your students can place text, images, files, and links to videos or other web pages.

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direct link to the tool's website

direct link to a video showing the tool in use

hyperlinks to terms in the glossary

Pages are 8.5 x 11 inches, so they can also be printed and stored in a physical binder.

A-B

add-on: similar to a *browser extension*, a small piece of software used to enhance the performance of another tool

Android: the *operating system* used for many non-iOS smartphones, such as Samsung Galaxy and Motorola Droid

app: (short for *application*) a software program; (Any software, like PowerPoint, is an application, but *app* usually means a smaller software with a limited job, like tracking calories.)

avatar: an image or icon, often illustrated, representing a person in a video game, in social media, or in a software program

backchannel: a secondary discussion that happens at the same time as a larger event; (A backchannel discussion can be set up on [Today's Meet](#), allowing participants to type comments in an online chat room while another presentation is going.)

bandwidth: the amount of data that can be sent over an Internet connection at a given time

blended learning: a teaching style that combines traditional instruction with online learning


blog: short for *weblog*; basically an online diary, a series of posts that are updated regularly, unlike on a *static website*

Bluetooth: a technology that uses radio waves to let devices communicate across short distances wirelessly; (A Bluetooth headset lets you talk on your phone without actually holding it up to your ear or using speakerphone.)

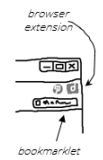
bookmarklet: a bookmark stored in your browser that allows your browser to do a specific task; like a browser extension, but it won't slow down your browser the way an extension will

browser extension: a tool added to a your *web browser* that gives it new functions, like letting you quickly add an item to your [Evernote](#) notebook, or pin an item on [Pinterest](#)

BYOD: Bring Your Own Device: a policy in which students are allowed to bring their own cell phones, tablets or laptops to school and use them during class to enhance learning



Bluetooth icon



browser extension
bookmarklet

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K-O

Kindle: Amazon's e-reader, which can hold hundreds of full-length books on one device and can download them with a wireless Internet connection

KB: kilobyte: A unit of measurement for electronic data equal to 1000 bytes; see conversion chart at right

link: an abbreviation for *hyperlink*

MB: megabyte: A unit of measurement for electronic data equal to 1000 kilobytes; see conversion chart at right

mobile device: a portable device like a cell phone, *smartphone*, *tablet*, or e-reader like Kindle (see above)

mobile-responsive design: an approach to designing websites that allows them to change for easier reading and a more pleasant experience when they are viewed on a mobile device

MOOC: massive open online course: A free online course, which can be taken at any time, open to anyone with Internet access

MP3: a type of audio file; an iPod is a popular type of *MP3 player*

MP4: a type of video file

one-to-one (1:1): an arrangement in which there is one device or computer per person

open source: usually applied to software, a term that indicates that the code used to build the software is freely available to anyone who wants to see or modify it for their own uses; [WordPress](#) is an open source software

operating system (OS): basically, the boss of a computer; the software that supports all of a computer's basic functions, like running other software, managing memory, and operating hardware; (Windows 8 and Mac OS are two popular operating systems.)

1,000 KB = 1 MB
1,000 MB = 1 GB
1,000 GB = 1 TB

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W-Z

WAV file: a type of audio file

web browser: also known as *Internet browser*, a type of software that allows users to use the Internet; popular browsers are Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer, Safari, and Opera


webinar: a blend of *web* and *seminar*, a live event that happens online, rather than in person

Wi-Fi: a technology that allows computers and other devices to connect to the Internet wirelessly; a *Wi-Fi hotspot* is a physical place that offers wireless Internet service


wiki: a website that allows multiple editors to edit its content; ([Wikipedia](#) is the largest and most popular wiki on the Internet)

WYSIWYG: (WIZ-EE-WIG) What You See is What You Get: a type of web editor in which elements are placed exactly where the builder wants them, as opposed to writing instructions out in code, then checking to see how they look online; ([Ullix](#) has a WYSIWYG editor, which is why it's recommended for people who have limited web design experience.)

Zip File: a file that contains a collection of other files that have been compressed – or reduced in size – to make them easier to send; to learn more, read [How to Make a Zip File](#) and [How to Open a Zip File](#)



a Wi-Fi icon



a Zip file icon

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Glossary of 80+ Tech Terms

Terms in the Guide are hyperlinked to the Glossary.

...and then there's the POWER INDEX

If you hear about a tool or a term you're not sure of—you don't even know what category it might be in, but you know it has something to do with tech—come to the index. If it's in the book, it will be in the index, along with a clickable link that will take you straight to the page where that term or tool appears.

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Click any page number to go straight to that page.

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edublogs
Weebly
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WordPress

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Code Studio

Collaboration

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Discussion Tools

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Google Drive
Kaizena
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Flashcard Creators

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Interactive Posters

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SMART Board

Language Learning

Duolingo
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Learning Management Systems

Blackboard
Edmodo
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Google Classroom
Schoolology

Live Streaming

Blab
Katch
Meerkat
Periscope

Mind Mapping

bubbl.us
Coggle
Popplet

Note Taking

Evernote
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OneNote

Parent Engagement

Remind
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Photo Editing

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Podcasting

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Presentation Tools

emaze
Google Slides
Haiku Deck
PowerPoint
Prezi
Slideshare

Productivity

Google Calendar
IFTTT
Noisli
Toggl
Wunderlist

Research Tools

EasyBib
Google Scholar
Wonderopolis
Zotero

Screencasting

Camtasia Studio
Explain Everything
Screencast-o-Matic

Social Media

Facebook
Google Plus
Instagram
Reddit
Tumblr
Twitter

Spreadsheets

Excel
Google Sheets

Survey Tools

Google Forms
PollDaddy
Typeform

Video Production

iMovie
Magisto
PowToon

Video Sharing

Vimeo
Vine
YouTube

Virtual Reality

Google Cardboard
Samsung Gear VR

Writing

Google Docs
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Microsoft Word
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WriteWell