

Student Academic Support
Web 2.0 tools and software to help you study.

The main points

The range of software and online tools available to help you in your studies is growing all the time.

A lot of software is widely available or free to download. This guide highlights a few of the most helpful

There are also online tools to help you gather information as you research coursework and to keep up to date with your subject area in general. This guide recommends some of the best.

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Appointments available or drop by for quick questions

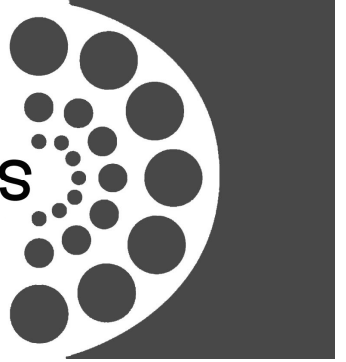
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- Want more?** Other guides available on Blackboard from Student Academic Support that you might find useful:
- Effective research.
 - Referencing and avoiding plagiarism.
- Online:**
- **LearnHigher** is a great starting point, full of excellent resources to develop all aspects of your approach to learning - including printable timetables, coursework planners, and more.
<http://www.learnhigher.ac.uk/students.htm>
- At Abertay:** Visit Student Services on level 2 of the library, including:
- **English as a foreign language:** Amanda Shaw - a.shaw@abertay.ac.uk
 - **Advice for disabled students:** Claire Allan - c.allan@abertay.ac.uk

How good are you at the moment?

Do you find it easy to stay focused and organised as you research online?

Yes: You are able to resist all the distractions when you are surfing the web and can focus on the information you have set out to find.

No: You find it easy to gather more and more information without really deepening your knowledge or recording the details of your sources that you will need for referencing.

For groupwork exercises, are you able to meet altogether ?

Yes: You are an effective organiser and leader, able to keep everyone in your group co-ordinated..

No: It is easy to find the different schedules of the members of your group make it difficult to meet. This guide has recommendations to help, including an online meeting scheduler and collaborative office tools, so you can work together even if you cannot actually be together.

Do you keep up to date with your subject area through the websites for professional organisations, etc?

Yes: You regularly visit the websites for the lead organisations in your subject area and subscribe to their RSS feeds to get updates. You also follow key people on Twitter and LinkedIn.

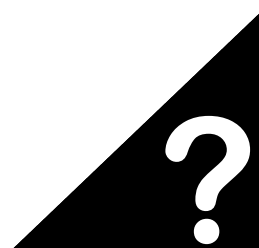
No: You concentrate on finding information relevant to each piece of coursework in turn and you are still to find the opportunity to develop a habit of checking latest developments in your subject on a regular basis.

How did you do?



If you answered 'yes' more than 'no', you are Making the most of the tools available to you. Use this hand-out for new recommendations.

If you answered 'no' more than 'yes', use this handout for examples of software and web resources that can help you become more organised, efficient and effective in your studies.



Information gathering:



- Identifying regularly useful sites.
- Tools to bring information to you.

RSS feeds allow you to subscribe to websites and receive automatic updates whenever new content is published. Tools such as Google Reader allow you to bring all your RSS subscriptions together.

GoogleAlerts allows you to set up specific searches and will also alert you every time new information becomes available.

Twitter, LinkedIn and other networking sites can be useful to make contacts with interesting people and to follow their activities.

Bringing it all together:



- Tools to aggregate useful information sources.

You can create your own webpage using tools such as iGoogle and Netvibes that brings together the online resources you regularly use, including email, Facebook, news pages, Google Reader and more.

Working together:



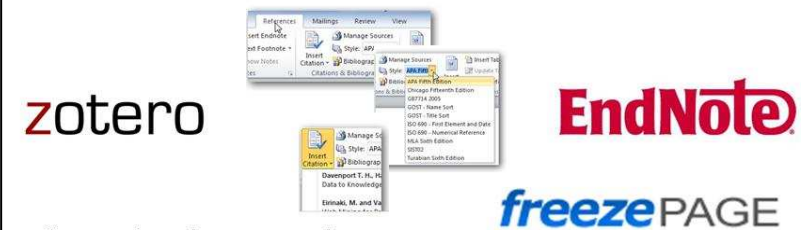
- Tools to help schedule meetings.
- Blogs to share news and track progress.
- Wikis to share resources.
- Collaborative online word processors.

There is a big range of online tools to help you work together, including wikis, such as PBWorks, to share resources, and online office software, including Office365, GoogleDocs and Zoho, so you can produce coursework together.

To help schedule meetings for groupwork, try Doodle.

Blogs, such as Blogger, WordPress and Tumblr, can be helpful as ways of charting your progress on a project and sharing draft work for others to comment on.

Keeping track of your sources:



- Organised research.
- Gathering the information you need for referencing.

A problem with researching online can sometimes be how much information you can find and how quickly, meaning that you can easily become overwhelmed and lose track of what you are finding and where it has come from. Use tools such as Endnote, available on all university PCs, or the new referencing tools in Word2010 to save the referencing details of your sources and to produce references in your coursework. Freezepage saves a copy of webpages so you can refer back to them, useful for fast-changing sites such as news pages. Zotero is an add-in to Firefox for saving referencing details and quotes.