



Educational Technology Review: Bringing people and ideas together with 'Padlet'

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Introduction

"You are beautiful"

With embedded messages like these, combined with its simplicity and versatility, Padlet (Padlet.com) is a joy to use. Padlet is a simple to create, simple to use and easy to collaboratively maintain platform. It allows the sharing of information and/or conducting conversations easily using posts, reactions and comments. The purpose of this review is to highlight the utility of Padlet for students and teachers. According to Mehta et al., (2021) Padlet "is an interactive platform used for collaborative learning". Being web-based, it is useful for creating online virtual 'walls', or pin boards for sharing relevant content in the form of posts. Some of our teachers in our undergraduate and postgraduate provision in our university have been using Padlet recently and share the insights below:

- "I love Padlet, and I use it all the time. I use it for introductions, recording group's ideas during class, for students to answer questions to stimuli, for assessment and for brainstorming and collating ideas when collaborating with my colleagues" (Dr Kelly Shoecraft).
- "Padlets are great for enabling students to become a resource for each other. They share personal perspectives on big questions ... make links between content and their life ... The variety of options keeps them engaged... in a safe and constructive environment" (Dr Ursula Kellett).

Engagement and group work

It used to be challenging to get students to engage with discussion boards or to ask questions in lectures, but students seem to engage more readily with Padlet. As an easily accessible platform, Padlet is useful in classes and for

self-directed learning situations to help students interact synchronously or asynchronously with content, and feel connected to, their peers (Sætra, 2021; Shoecraft, 2020). The option of anonymity of posting means students are more likely to engage (McDowell et al., 2019). Padlet is most powerful when sharing thoughts, creations, discoveries or experiences relating to the concept taught to help students socially construct new learning (Dianati et al., 2020; Kaya, 2015; Mehta et al., 2021). Teachers' presence in Padlet conversations also enhances engagement and critical thinking (Sætra, 2021; Shoecraft, 2020) This includes starting the conversation with anonymous posts to set the tone. Padlet has been successfully used in our university with small and large cohorts (>700) with positive feedback from students and teachers.

- "I liked reading others' thoughts and opinions about the topics and being able to contribute my own ideas also" (Student).
- "I loved the interactive aspects ... as we could collaborate and come up with examples together as students" (Student).

Padlet is well suited for supporting group work (Yap, 2018). Small group activity results can be recorded and reported via a shelf Padlet with one column per group, as a wall Padlet with one file post per group or each group can have their own Padlet. The authors have successfully shared group creations between 70+ groups using Padlet.

Teaching with Padlet

Padlet is a great tool for teaching. As a teacher you need to first identify your teaching purpose, then choose a Padlet from the list below to best support your needs. Many ideas for use and tutorials are available on the web. Padlet posts can include text, links, images, gifs, drawing, files or videos which display inline. Students can react to posts with likes,

Timeline

The Timeline Padlet can be used for representing a chronological timeline or any sequence of events (see Figure 7).

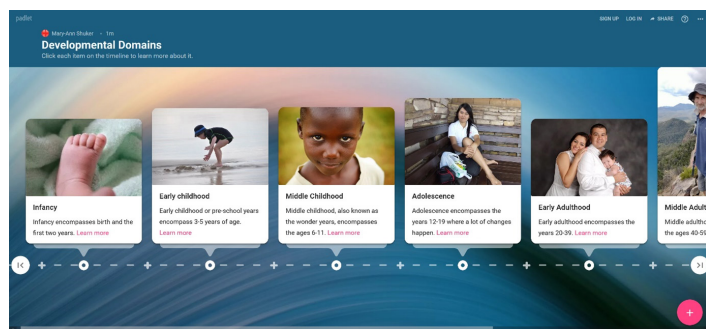


Figure 7: An example of a Timeline padlet.

Administration

Multiple collaborators can administer a Padlet. Visitor permissions include read, write or edit. Privacy settings include *Secret* (default); *Private* (direct invitation only); *Password-protected*; or *Organisation wide* for an enterprise licence. Deni and Zainal (2018) found passwords can be a barrier to accessibility so use them carefully.

You are able to share your Padlet as a link, QR code, LTI link or embed in your site, email or Google Classroom (see Figure 8). You can ask students to scan QR Codes across campus (or your course site), and post photos or information related to questions posed, e.g. "Your recommendation from the food hall?", "Share a study tip used successfully". Alternatively, a QR code can be used in a hybrid class so face-to-face and online students can participate synchronously.

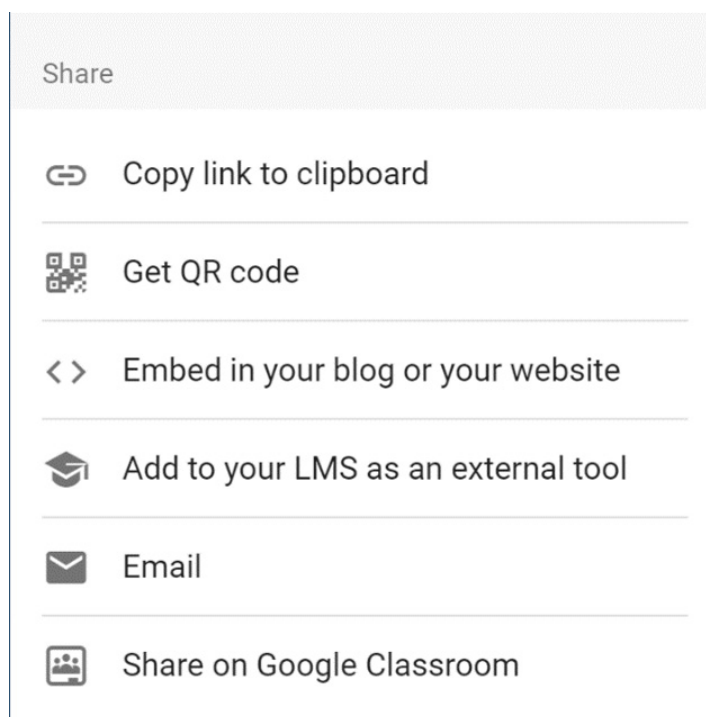


Figure 8: Padlet sharing options.

Padlet offers anonymity, attribution, moderation and/or a profanity filter. To post anonymously, you need to log out of Padlet in the browser you use to access a Padlet. Moderated posts display "Awaiting Approval" initially. Collaborators with Edit or Administer permission can *Approve* and *Delete* posts (see Figure 9).

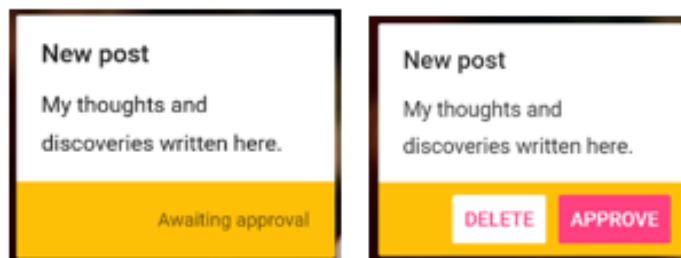


Figure 9: Student and staff view of pre-moderated posts.

Students and staff can export an image, PDF, csv or spreadsheet or print the Padlet (see Figure 10). The export also includes the first page of attached documents. The teacher can keep Padlet posts for reuse, clear the Padlets or Remake (copy) a Padlet. When you remake a Padlet, visitors must be given permission to write.

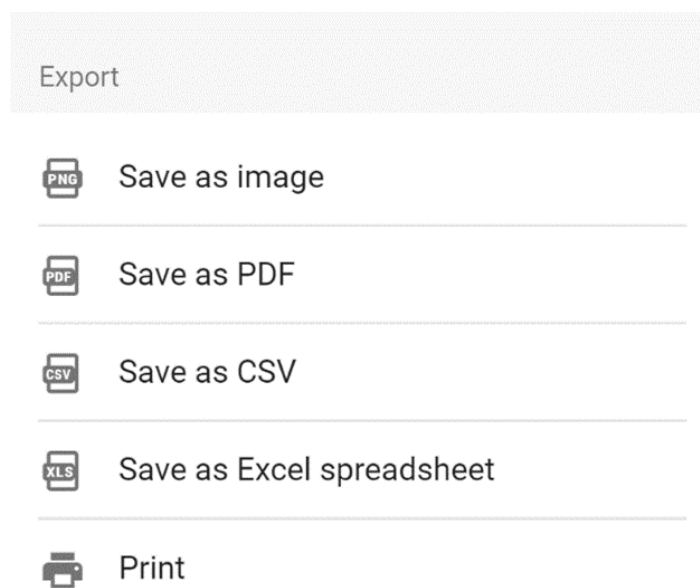


Figure 10: Export, save and print options.

Learning analytics include counts of posts, comments, reactions, and contributors (see Figure 11).

Posts	47
Comments	21
Reactions	40
Contributors	60

Figure 11: Padlet analytics.

Limitations

- Padlet is working towards compliance with accessibility standards (WCAG 2.1 level AA). Until then, students need reminding to add image descriptions in the text of their post.
- Padlet was initially free, then in 2018 it was priced at AUS\$1500/institution, now it is AUS\$2500/500 users. Take this into consideration when planning your enterprise budget.
- There is no visual indication of new posts unless moderated. You can receive notifications for each new post, but in a large cohort this may not be desirable. You can use the like reaction as a workaround – no like means not read yet.
- Animated gifs add interest but may trigger students who suffer from sensory hypersensitivity – set rules for engagement or *Export* a flat version if required.
- Dianati et al. (2020) reported students sometimes feel overwhelmed by the quantity of posts and disengage. A way around this is to ask students to like existing posts that say what they want to say rather than repost. Alternatively make multiple padlets rather than one heavily posted padlet.

Summary

Padlet provides the opportunity to bring people and ideas together face to face or remotely, synchronously or asynchronously. Its ease of use in a complex teaching environment makes it a highly useful tool for student and teacher engagement.

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