

## Ethical Issues and Guiding Questions

*When choosing a platform or digital tool for teaching, consider these questions....*

**Access:** Is this platform accessible to users of all abilities? Is the platform/tool cost prohibitive? Does this platform/tool have paywalls? Is this platform available on mobile devices? Is this platform accessible in different languages?

**Control:** How is this platform/tool administered? Can I control how users interact with the platform/tool? Are there various levels of user permissions and privacy levels?

**Data:** What data is collected by the platform/tool? Who owns the data and content that is entered into the platform/tool? How will the platform/tool use the data they collect? Do I have the option to know what data they collect? Can I delete my data?

**Inclusion:** Does the platform/tool provide varying methods of engagement and/or content production? If content-serving, does the platform/tool allow for or include a diversity of knowledges and histories? What teaching methods and strategies does the platform foster?

**Intellectual Property & Copyright:** Do I exclusively own the rights to the work I create on the platform/tool? Can I choose the (open) license for the content I create?

**Privacy:** Who has access to my data? Is my data stored and saved by the platform/tool forever? Can I control who sees my data/content? Are there varying levels of privacy on the platform?

**Source:** Who owns this platform/tool? What is the platform/tools economic model? Is the source code openly licensed? What is the history of this platform/tool?



## Platform/Tool Lingo

*Look out for these words and phrases in the policies/terms of the platforms you use.*

**Cookies** (*Ethical Issue: Data*): Small data files collected in your browser from sites you visit. Cookies, for the most part, do not contain personal information. These files track the places you visit online in order to personalize your experience on each page. This personalization can include: retaining your login information and other page customizations, serve you customized ads, and track what you have viewed/clicked on other sites.

**Creative Commons** (*IP, Copyright*): a non-profit organization that provides widely recognized open licenses for digital work. CC licenses are “free, simple, and standardized way to grant copyright permissions for creative and academic works; ensure proper attribution; and allow others to copy, distribute” and use those works.

**GDPR** (*Data, Privacy*): The General Data Protection Regulation was passed in May 2018. It created strict rules for personal data collection, processing and retention for European Union citizens.

**Open Source** (*Control, Inclusion, Source*): Platforms and tools that share the source code with the public. Anyone can take that source code to create and modify their own version of the platform or tool. WordPress.org is a well-known example of open source software. Wordpress.com hosts the code/platform for users who do not want to take the code to create their own instance.

**Open/GNU Public License** (*Control, Copyright, Inclusion*): Widely used free software license that allows individuals to use, download, share, and modify the software. This license is commonly used to license software and code projects, whereas CC is typically used to license digital content (ebooks, publications, etc.).

**Retention** (*Data*): Platform/tool policy on keeping you information. Providing the option to delete your own information is ideal.

**Third Parties** (*Data, Privacy*): Outside entities that the platform/tool will share your information with. Sometimes, the tool needs to share your information so it can work- for example with cloud-based services or API integrations it may have to share your



information for the tool to work. In other instances the tool will share you information with advertisers.

**“You grant us a worldwide, non-exclusive, royalty-free license...”** (*Data, IP*): A version of this phrase is commonly used by platforms and tools that will retain the information you enter on the platform and use it to their own ends, either for sale, marketing or other analytic purposes.

