

Peer Review: Scribd by Cathleen Carlo
Date: Tuesday, November 15, 2011

Introduction

I chose to complete my two peer reviews using all three parts of the same two projects. I like the idea of reviewing projects in their entirety much better than splitting it up. This particular review is for a tool project that was completed by one of my peers and covers the use of a great technology tool called Scribd. The URL to view this project is as follows:

<http://cathleencarlo.weebly.com/>

Analysis

Ms. Carlo's analysis of Scribd was very well done. The tool's name was clearly defined, a very good description (both brief and clear) of what the tool does and how it can be used was included, as well as, how to obtain it and any associated costs. I especially liked the video located on the homepage of this project, in which the founders talk about Scribd in terms of what it is for, what it does, and how much it has grown in use in just a couple of years. Many reasons were stated pertaining to classroom use, including how Scribd supports the way people learn. Also pointed out, was how Scribd is a great example of the Cognitive Flexibility Theory in learning and many good reasons as to why are given. The summary of at least two research articles is required for this part of the tool project but only one is included. However, the analysis did explain that there are more reviews and opinions about Scribd than research and included the points about Scribd that most of these reviews and opinions agree on. I can see how research on Scribd can be scarce due to its age. Overall, I feel the analysis part of this project covered all criteria expected.

Demonstration

Ms. Carlo's demonstration of Scribd was very understandable and overall, includes all criteria listed in the rubric. It is very clear that Scribd is accessible via an Internet browser, meaning that there is no need for downloading an application to be able to use it. It also pointed out that those using MacOS X can download and install the Scribd Desktop Uploader. I think this is a great feature for those wanting to save the time of navigating to the Scribd Website, logging in, and uploading documents via an Internet browser. However, this only pertains to those using a MAC computer. It would be great if Scribd would create a desktop uploader for those using a Window's operating system as well. This part of the project clearly listed step-by-step instructions explaining how to create a Scribd account and log in, as well as, step-by-step instructions on how to upload a document. External links to areas of the Scribd Website are also included that lead to instructions for organizing and personalizing your Scribd

Account Homepage and personal preferences, as well as, links to Scribd's guidelines and frequently asked questions. The demonstration also included clear, step-by-step instructions on how to complete an easy assignment, which once completed, would show that the user understands how to search for a document within Scribd, as well as, how to upload one. The only thing I see missing here is an explanation on how to submit the link to the uploaded public document created when completing the assignment. However, I would assume that it is expected of those in the class who are completing this assignment to post the link to their uploaded public document in the tool wiki for this particular tool in the class portal.

Implementation

The implementation portion of this tool project includes all criteria listed in the rubric as well. A brief introduction of Scribd and how it supports learning, as well as, corporate businesses is clearly stated. The value of Scribd's use, assessment criteria for determining the tool's usefulness and cultural, ethical, and societal issues are stated clearly and very understandable. This part of the project also identifies more than three curriculum standards that can be achieved by students through the use of this tool and identifies and explains more than two types of student learning that is supported by using Scribd. Modifications necessary to accommodate people with disabilities are explained and include Scribd's zoom and text-to-speech capabilities, as well as, an external link to a list of disabilities and at least one relevant tests for each used to determine how accessible a product actually is. This particular link is a great addition to this project and can be helpful for those completing tool projects in the future. A lesson plan and adaptation is included that includes all criteria listed in the rubric. However, a "plan B" is not included that identifies what will happen if technical problems arise. Because Scribd is mainly accessed via an Internet browser, I don't see where a "Plan B" is actually needed. The only technical problems I know of that can inhibit the use of Scribd, would be the lack of an Internet connection or computer.

Peer Review Activity

I completed the activity for the assessment portion of this project and found it very easy to follow. I became a member of Scribd quite a while ago and am fairly familiar with it, but never really used it much. Reason being, I have my own Website with an extensive amount of server space where I can upload and link my documents without the use of an outside service. However, I can see how Scribd can be very useful for those who don't, especially teachers and students who need an inexpensive way to collaborate on, organize, store, and share documents. I can also see how I can benefit using Scribd in terms of sharing ideas with others and researching the ideas of others. This tool review points out the many uses of Scribd which go beyond just the storage of documents that I had not realized prior to reading it. Therefore, I am quite sure I will be utilizing it more frequently in the future.

Link to the document I reviewed:

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/1760149/Environmental-Protection-Agency-waters2>

Link to the document I created based on the review of the above document:

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/72788433/Scribd-Document-Review>

Comments

I feel that this is a prime example of a great tool review! In terms of accessibility, I especially like that a Website format was used to create it. Everyone has their own favorite way of viewing projects like this. However, I much prefer the ability to click on a link than downloading a document, regardless of the type. Great job!