

Classroom and Scholarly Management Using Your iPad

3.24.11 – Michael Brady

- Disclaimer: These pointers and references are from the point of view of an end user, not a technical wizard.
- Remember that the iPad is best used as a personal device rather than something to be shared.
 - To make the most of it you will want to link it to many personal accounts and settings, such as email, calendar, web accounts, your itunes, etc...
- The iPad is also much better for consumption (reading, browsing, e-mail, etc...), minor projects (grading, e-mail, notes, etc...), and presentation (with some limitations). It is not a great tool for large writing projects and creating original documents.
- Models and cost
 - iPad 2 was just released in mid March and while faster, slimmer, and lighter, it does not offer any new functionality other than ability to use facetime (video chat) and taking video or pics.
 - The entry level wifi only iPad2 lists at \$499 with 16GB of storage. Models with more storage or G3 cell phone access cost significantly more
 - While supplies are still available the original iPad models can be found for \$100 dollars less
 - Currently, Denison will allow faculty to request a cash allowance through pd accounts that offsets this exactly, except for taxes.
- While you will be able to get rolling right out of the box, there are a few accessories which might prove useful.
 - Case or screen protectors (\$20-100+) – These will extend the life of the machine and protect the screen. The new apple only covers unique to the iPad2 seem really useful as both a stand, screen protector, and offer automatic shutoff
 - Stylus (\$15+) – If you think you will use it for handwritten notes or to markup documents one of these will be essential
 - VGA connector (\$29) – Essential if you want to display through an external device, but there are some drawbacks in what will actually display
 - Keyboard, Bluetooth or docking style (\$69) – Helpful for longer typing sessions or if using the touch screen keyboard is challenging

As you probably already know, the key with iPhones, iTouches, and iPads is making use of good 3rd party software. Here is a categorized list of programs I have found useful and a brief description of their potential use. Many other users have more comprehensive lists online, but these are all ones I have tried, many of which I use semi-regularly.

- Document and scholarly management
 - Dropbox (free – www.dropbox.com): To get the most out of this you should install it on every computer you use as well as your iPad. After setting up you account this will link all of your machines and any file you put in the “dropbox” on one computer will be backed up and synced to all other linked machines. On the iPad the software gives you access to any of the files in your “dropbox.” While you need an internet connection the first time you download them, they can be saved to the iPad for later use.
 - Mendeley (free – www.mendeley.com): If you use a lot of .pdf documents this might work really for you. Essentially this software will help you organize all of your .pdf files into a searchable library. Better yet it can be set up to sync with the free software for your iPad.
- Reading and editing documents
 - The iPad does not currently support the markup of MSWord files, but you can do amazing things with .pdf files

- Reading is pretty easy -- [iBooks](#) (free) uses iTunes on your primary computer to sync documents to the iPad. Books can also be purchased directly through the program when on the internet. [Amazon's Kindle app](#) (free to install) will also allow you to access and read their library of e-books.
- Dropbox and Mendeley will also allow you to read your archives directly from their software
- [Pages](#) (9.99) for Mac also has an iPad version which apparently many people like, but does not have all the features of a full word processor. Still, if you are willing to convert back and forth between Pages and Word you could read, create, and edit documents this way.
- The two best readers are also the best tools for marking up .pdf files. The possibilities here are growing and getting better, but the potential for class presentations, commenting, and grading are immense.
 - [Goodreader](#) (4.99) is great for reading documents of all types, allows versatile annotation of .pdf files, and can pull files directly from Dropbox
 - [iAnnotate](#) (9.99) is very similar to Goodreader and provides different types of annotation tools. One of the strengths is that it also allows for presentation to an external display and you can email an edited .pdf directly to someone directly from the program
 - If you plan to grade or markup .pdf files on the iPad you will need to be able to convert files to .pdf easily. While expensive you can convert many files at once using a version of Acrobat Pro. When I want to grade on the iPad my current workflow is to have students submit their papers via Blackboard in MSWord format, which I can download all at once. Using Acrobat Pro I then can convert a set of 20-30 papers into .pdf in less than 20 minutes, place them in my Dropbox, then download them from the iPad and begin grading whenever my iPad is with me.
- Note taking and presenting in class
 - While the pre-installed Notes program is adequate for typed notes, [Note Taker HD](#) (4.99) has a neat interface for handwritten notes and [Sundry Notes](#) (free) also allows for a combination of handwritten and typed notes plus audio recordings.
 - [Whiteboard HD](#) (4.99) offers you the versatility of a virtual whiteboard with the ability to present to an external display. You can also save the image to be shared with others
 - Powerpoint or Keynote style presentations can be displayed using [Keynote for iPad](#) (9.99) but this is not as intuitive as one might think (currently when you are presenting the slides only display on the external screen), but [ShowAnytime](#) (7.99) allows for external display while also showing your slides on the iPad with visible notes, it also includes a virtual laser pointer.
 - The default Safari browser while nice is horrible when you want to display to an external screen. [Expedition](#) (0.99) solves this problem and includes a virtual laser pointer too. [Perfect Browser](#) (2.99) also does this and allows for tabbed browsing
 - [GraphCalcHD](#) (1.99) is a powerful graphing calculator that also allows for external display
- Our own [blackboard](#) software also has an iPad app which might make using Blackboard easier than through one of the web browser options
- The strength of the iPad is really in the growing number of 3rd party applications that are being designed and updated regularly. Many of the programs noted below have already grown in usability since I first started using them in November of 2010. Surely many other new apps have been released that might be better – please let me know if you find any that you like and use.