



Web-based Software for Learning and Teaching

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The world of education is changing. Our students are changing in the way they approach their learning and what they expect from it. According to the website of the well-respected Australian market research company, McCrindle, “In an era of information overload, messages have increasingly become image based... Visuals are also the way in which the brain processes information best. [The brain] can retain visual symbols and images [better] than just written content. Our analysis of learning styles has shown the dominance [of] the visual and hands-on learning styles.”¹

On their website, McCrindle provides a spreadsheet of characteristics of the various generations. It looks at Builders, Baby Boomers, and Generations X, Y, and Z. When it comes to their respective preferred learning formats, they range from formal and instructive, to relaxed and structured; spontaneous and interactive; multi-sensory and visual; student-centric and kinaesthetic,² and that’s before Generation Alpha is brought into the picture!

The purpose of this paper is to showcase some of the free web-based applications currently available that could be useful to librarians for information and training purposes. The following applications can be built in a variety of ways that cater to a range of demographics, making them very useful. The examples I’m showing are all free. Paying for a subscription generally gives you more options and support. Please be aware that the instructions provided here are based on how the websites function at the time of writing, but they are constantly being upgraded.

¹ Ashley Fell, “Generation Z defined; The 5 characteristics of today’s students,” McCrindle, accessed 21 July 2022, <https://mccrindle.com.au/insights/blog/generation-z-defined-5-characteristics-todays-students/>



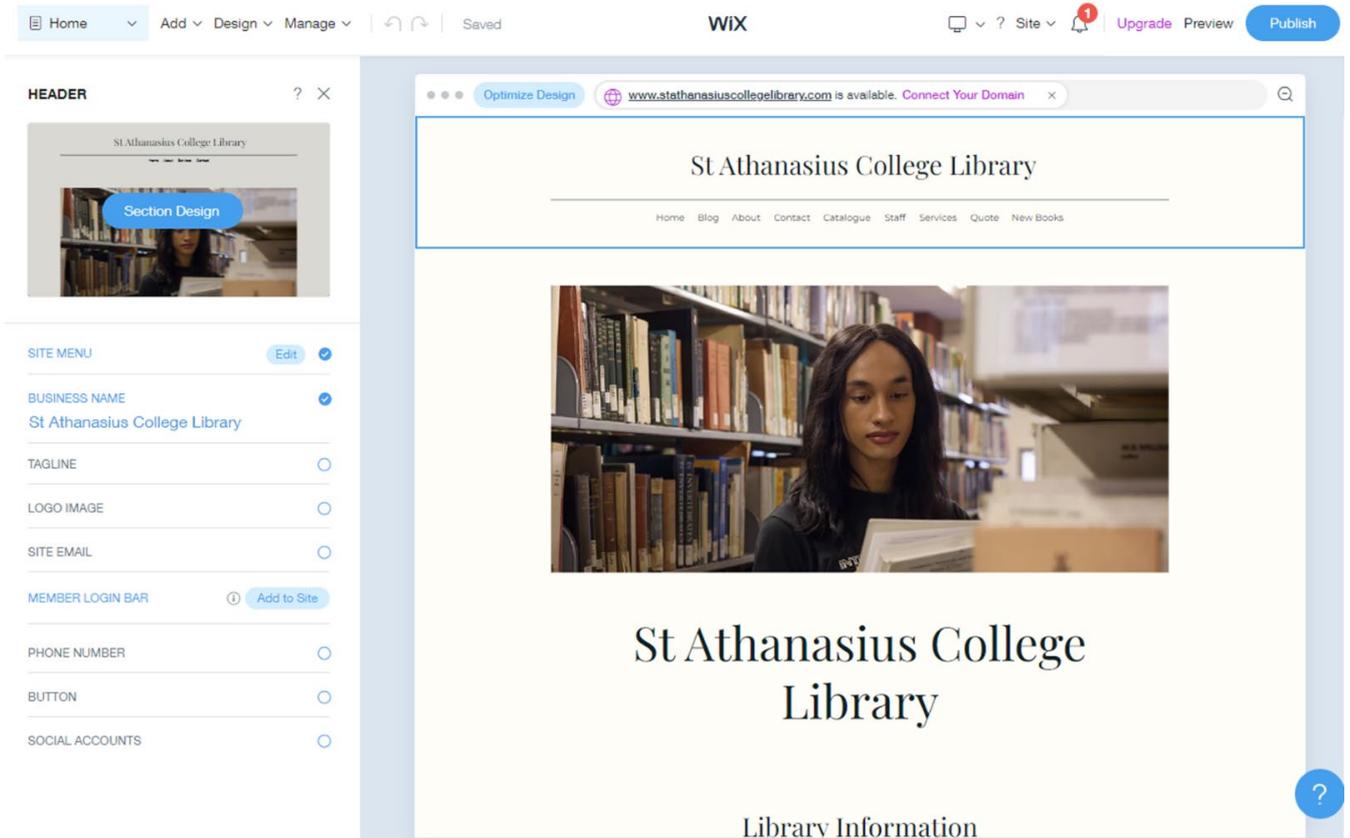
Wix

Wix (<https://www.wix.com>) is a free website builder that allows you to create a website quickly and easily, then publish it to obtain a URL. There is no coding required; the system will do most of the work for you – just fill in your details and select the types of pages you need. A template is then produced that you can easily personalise.

- Go to <https://www.wix.com>
- “Get started” and set up an account
- “Create new site”
- Type *library* and select from the list
- Select “add” options
- Select the Wix ADI option and follow the prompts for a template to be generated automatically.
- “Edit site” using the top banner
- Preview either full screen or mobile presentation
- “Publish”, which will give you a URL

Note: If you’re having trouble with the pages loading, try opening in an incognito window (click the three dots at the top right of the Chrome screen).

The image on the following page is a snapshot of the website created for the St Athanasius College Library based on my responses to the ADI questions. The banner at the top provides access to the other pages and allows the addition of sections and changes to the way the pages are presented. You can also see how the website will appear on a phone or tablet, and preview and publish. When a section is selected, the editing panel appears on the left, as seen in the image. You can choose to hide or show the different options available in each section.



Thinglink

Thinglink (<https://www.thinglink.com>) is for creating interactive images. It is useful for creating visuals of where to find things in your library, how to use your library catalogue, and how to navigate your library's online portal. To create a Thinglink, you need images. You can use photographs, import images, or use images created with PowerPoint, Publisher, Canva, or other similar tools.

- Go to <https://www.thinglink.com>
- Try for free” and set up an account
- “Create”
- Select *Image* and drag and drop (or browse for) an image from File Explorer. There is also the option to design on Canva, search for an image on Unsplash, or upload from a Drive
- “Continue”
- Hover over the image, click the 3 dots, and select *edit*
- Select the colour scheme for your tags; add tags and labels

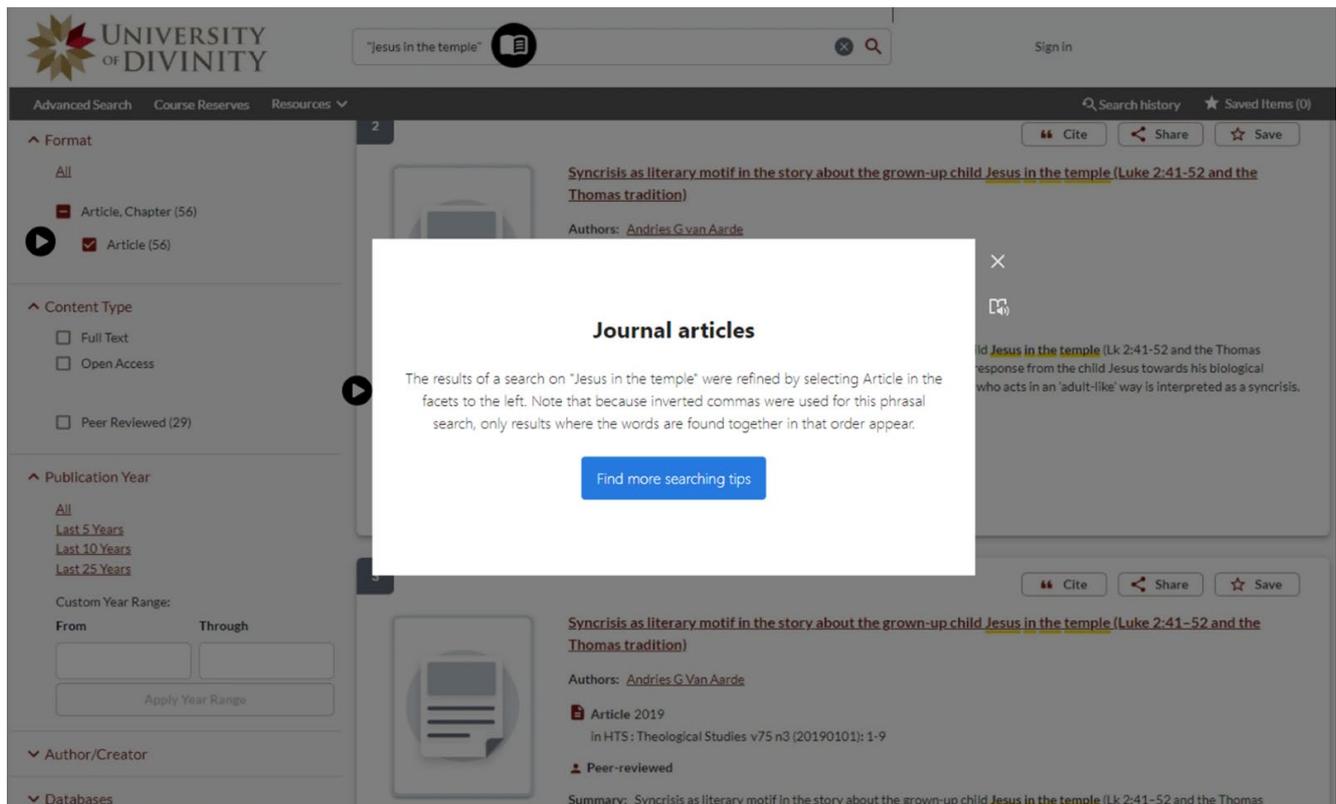
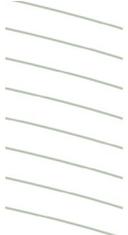


You can layer individual Thinglinks by creating them separately, adding a tag to the main image and selecting the “Create tour” option, then selecting the scene (Thinglink) you wish to embed. You can even make the transition conditional upon answering a question.

The following Thinglink was designed in PowerPoint and the snipped image was imported. Different styles of tags were used to indicate the type of information provided – text, image, questions, or live website.



The following page shows an example of an image with a pop-up text box appearing when the tag is clicked. This option gives you scope to write a lot of text if you wish. You can also include images or videos with the text. Text labels, on the other hand, enable you to provide a brief comment or instruction that appears when the cursor hovers over the tag.



Quizizz

Quizizz (<https://quizizz.com/>) is, “The world’s most engaging learning platform.” It works well as an instructional tool, with various possible layouts of text interspersed with links to other resources or Web pages and multiple choice or short answer questions to consolidate students’ learning. It can also be used purely for quizzes.

- Go to <https://quizizz.com/>
- “Sign up for free”
- “Create”
- Choose “Create your own...Lesson or Quiz”
- *Name the lesson* and choose up to 3 relevant subjects
- Select the level of teaching
- Select a theme
- Add or import a slide
- If adding, select one of the options shown on the left.

- Continue adding or importing new slides
- Add shapes, tables, or media from the far left
- Choose from text-only, text and image, video, or quiz slides.
- You can embed a website URL (link option) and it will remain “live” – great for presentations

The following example Quizizz, used as an introduction to the SAC Library in a shared screen scenario, included all three types of slides shown, with repetitions of text, live web pages, and an easy quiz question to follow, to keep students paying attention.

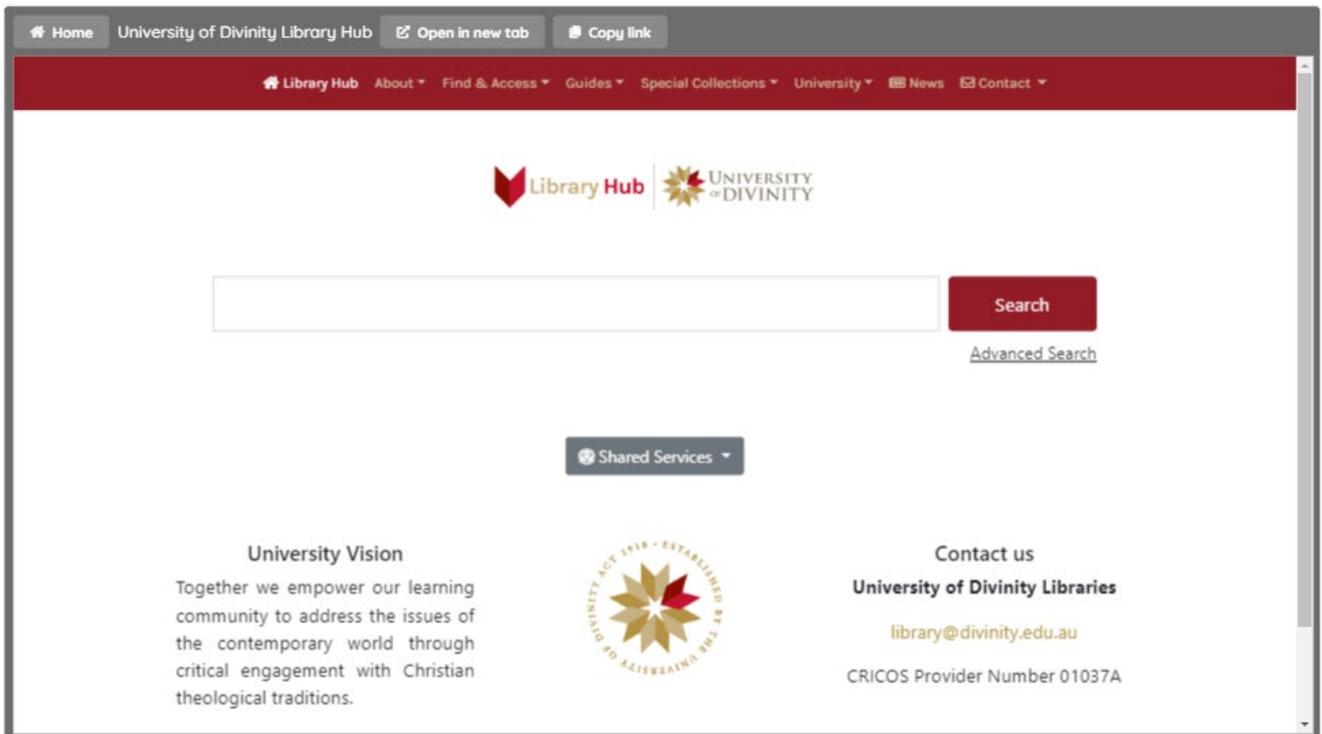
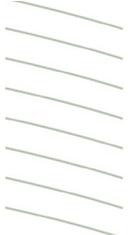
Below is an example of text slide. Note the live link at the bottom:

Finding what you need for your studies

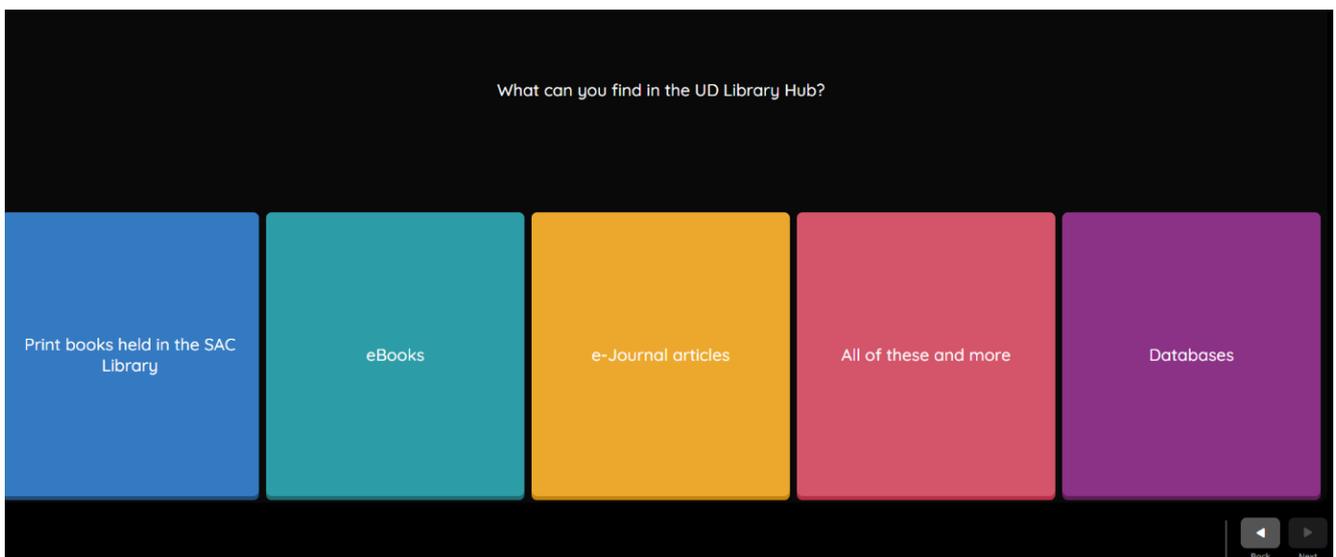
<p>Print books and journals</p> <p>The SAC Library catalogue is incorporated into the UD Library Hub as part of a shared catalogue, which means that the print books and journals held in the SAC Library will appear in the results of a search on the Library Hub.</p>	<p>Online materials</p> <p>Access to numerous e-resources, including eBooks, eJournals and articles, LibGuides, and databases is available to students of the University through the Library Hub.</p>
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<https://library.divinity.edu.au/>

The following image is example of live a website slide. Note at the top that it can be opened in a new window, and the link can be copied. Drop-down lists will open without leaving the window, and you can type into the search bar.



Below is an example of a quiz slide where the participant needs to click on the correct answer. Quiz questions must be answered before the participant can move on.



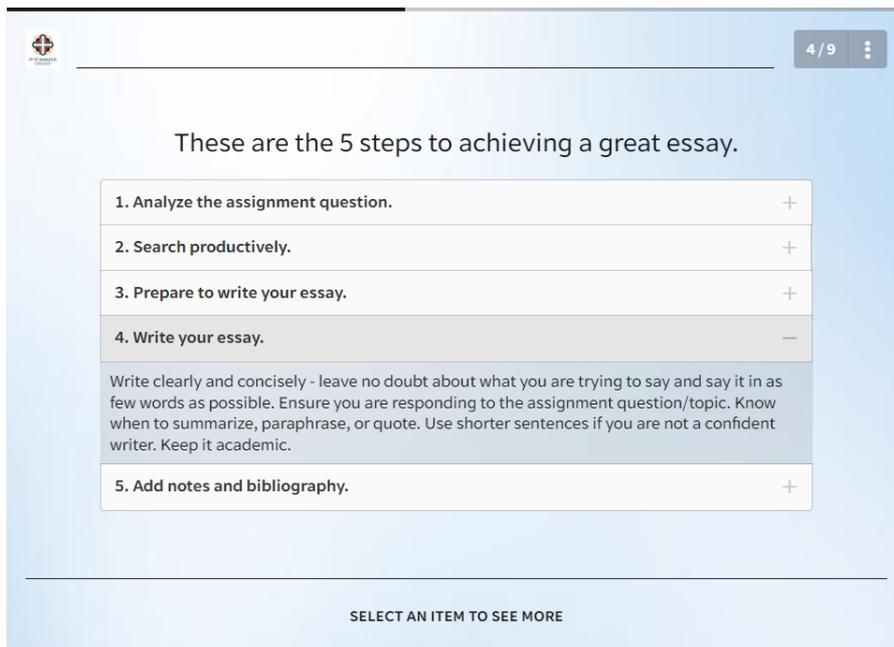


EdApp

EdApp (<https://www.edapp.com/>) is where you can, “Create a course in minutes, not months.” It is designed to create lessons, either on their own or as part of a larger unit, with multiple ways to reinforce and self-check learning. It is great for quick text-based lessons that can be done on the phone. The downside is that students need to download an app and log in to access lessons on their phone or use a link and log in on a computer.

- Go to <https://www.edapp.com/>
- “Sign up free” (You will subsequently be Admin)
- “Create course”
- *Name course*
- Manage “Course settings” in the menu above right - set a due date, make it mandatory, set prerequisites, choose a display image, and attach documents.
- “Create lesson”- the only option available on the free plan is a lesson.
- *Name lesson*, click “Edit content,”
- Set phone display from the list above the screen, then follow the prompts.

Provide information:



The screenshot shows a mobile app interface with a light blue background. At the top left is a small logo, and at the top right is a '4/9' indicator with a menu icon. The main content area has the heading "These are the 5 steps to achieving a great essay." Below this is a list of five steps, each in a white box with a plus or minus icon on the right. Step 4 is highlighted in grey and expanded to show detailed text. At the bottom, there is a button that says "SELECT AN ITEM TO SEE MORE".

Step	Action
1. Analyze the assignment question.	+
2. Search productively.	+
3. Prepare to write your essay.	+
4. Write your essay.	-
Write clearly and concisely - leave no doubt about what you are trying to say and say it in as few words as possible. Ensure you are responding to the assignment question/topic. Know when to summarize, paraphrase, or quote. Use shorter sentences if you are not a confident writer. Keep it academic.	
5. Add notes and bibliography.	+



Check understanding:

6 / 9

Match the words with their definitions

Summarize	IN your own words, give a brief overview of something you have read.
Footnote	USE another person's words exactly as written and enclose them in quotation marks.
Paraphrase	IN your own words, provide the details of something you have read.
Quote	CITATION found at the bottom of a page of writing, which refers to the source of in-text information, ideas, or quotes taken from other authors.

DRAW A LINE BETWEEN EACH PAIR

There are many options out there for creating engaging online learning opportunities. This is just a selection of tools that I personally found easy to use and thought had the potential to be useful to other librarians. The full scope of these applications has not been explored here, and of course, their use is limited to the user's skill sets and abilities. However, I believe there are opportunities here to create engaging and useful learning resources with these tools.