I am Quinn O’Brien and I tutor over at the Student Learning Center. I tutor in chemistry and what I'm starting to tutor in is study skills. And part of study skills are using the right tools for the right situations. So, today we're going to be talking about becoming a tech-savvy student. Using online tools to improve your education experience hopefully make it easier, make it a little bit more fun, being a little bit more useful. So today, I'm going to be giving you a background of a couple different--different tools that you can use. I'm going to be giving you a list of all of the sites that I'm going to talk about today at the end. I'm going to send out an e-mail trying to conserve, be green. If you guys want, you can put it an e-mail on that list at the end. So you don't need to take too many notes. I'll try and take care of that for you. But if you're habitual note taker like me, go for it, 3 or 4 pages minimum so I'm asking for them, okay. So, let's go ahead and get started.
So you're in college and up until now you use notebooks to study and pencil, papers is basically what you go off of. Judging by the room here that is probably through. No computers up, I like it. It will work for now.
And so far what you use the internet for is research, talking to fellow students, talking to your professors, all of that good stuff, right? Not of that other stuff, just purely, purely educational nothing else.
Just kidding, I know that’s a lie. I mean I’m a student too.
We use the internet for what, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, no? People are good? I think there're a couple of liars here, a few liars in the room.
But any of that is actually very useful. You can use a lot of things on there to help you as a student. I mean sure you're going to still use YouTube and I'm not going to bash you for it but you might have some time and time want to use it for your studies.
So, this super cool presentation for example was made exclusively online.
And probably the best part about it was it was for free. Everything I'm going to show you today is going to be free online tools. You shouldn't have to spend an extra dime 'cause I mean prices are already going up and we're getting less education, we might as well try now the internet to help us out. Everything is legal, too. No pirating. You know, you're not going to have the feds come knocking on your door. You're fine. You're good. Trust me.
Now, this is just exploring the depths of this program. It's awesome, right?
So here's what I'm going to show you. First, I'm going to show you Google on all its glory and why we eventually are all going to bow down to some sort of Google god at some point.
I'm going to show you how to access all your files anywhere that has an internet connection and in some cases, anywhere that doesn't have an internet connection.
I'm going to show you super cool ways to take notes and you actually want to remember them and study them. I know an interesting concept, but we'll see if we can get there.
We’re going to also show you how to study and not hate it. And finally, how to give a presentation that people will stay awake for.
And let's begin. On one little side note, I am going to mention that all of these programs are not going to be for you. Some of them you're going to like, some of them you're not. If you take out 3 or 4 of these programs and use them, that is perfect. That is ideally what I'm teach today. If you hate 4 of 5 of them, that's fine. I can accept that as long as you like a couple, that's what I'm going for, okay.
So let's start out with Google and all of its glory. I will say this quite a few times today. Google is awesome. I love them. I like to think they love me.
First, everything is really easy to use whether you're first time user of the internet to season pro. They've got something for you.
Secondly, it's accessible anywhere that has an internet connection. Pretty much every single service that Google uses is accessible anywhere. You can use at home computers, laptops, any sort of computer as well which is perfect for students, say you have 10, 15 minutes of between class, you can actually get some work done instead of just walking around doing absolutely nothing or checking Facebook because things have happened in the last hour. And finally, again, everything that I'm going to show on Google is free. Free! God, I really like this program. So let's start with Gmail.
Gmail is your e-mail client on steroids. And again for all Google products, it's basically, you know, how iPhone o Apples used "I" in front of all their products? Gmail is basically done the exact name thing by adding G in front of everything. So, they didn't even try any words. They just created a contraction between them. So it is your e-mail plan on steroids.
Minus the roid rage.
Basically, here is what one looks like and this is the e-mail--the Gmail client for Santa Clause, really cheesy little picture. But basically from what you see here--oh, actually no, I changed it. This one is my Gmail, just kidding. Not nearly as exciting, okay. So you see here, it's kind of like simple, you know, what you've seen, what you haven't seen, if you also see it's got some ties here that are for different e-mail clients. I actually have three different e-mail addresses, personal, school and a work one that all synchronized into one e-mail client. Aside you have tabs that you can really color-coordinate and organize because, let's face it, we're simple minded humans that really like shiny colors and shiny colors really help us organized. So we got that over here. Also it synchronizes with all other sorts of Google apps that you are currently using. It's got the best spam blocker because so many people use Gmail that they have a much bigger source of information that come into them that I don't get spammed. And my spam folder is overflowing every single day but I don't think a thing of that in my inbox which is really nifty in my opinion.
And I'll let you explore a little bit on your own. If you are really dead set on an e-mail client that you currently have, that's fine. But this one really helps you with another one, like as a synchronization tool that is really useful for all of your needs.
Next comes Gmail's brothers, Gcal and GTasks.
Gcal or the calendar competes with Outlook which is considered the business essential of synchronizing all of your to-do's, your calendar, and your e-mail. Unfortunately Google Calendar is just as good if not better and you can access it anywhere which is something that is fairly difficult for Outlook.
And again, it is accessible anywhere, and free.
This is what one looks like. This is my mine for a week.
You see here, again we can color coordinate because we really like that. Over here we see that we can have certain calendars accessible and visible at the time and certain ones not. I always keep one for anything that is related to school or related to work, related to any sort of other activities that I'm going to have. One thing that I found really useful is I made one specifically for all of my teacher's office hours. So, if at any time, instead of looking through 4, 5 syllabi, I can just look in one simple place and it's all there. There're so many different little tools that you can do in order to make this really useful for you. One of the really cool things about this is it can synch up with anybody else's as well. So if you have other friends that used Google Calendars, their programs and services that even Google offers where you say, I need to meet with one of you and we are both using Google Calendar, it will find time that both of us can actually meet. So, instead of doing awkward 5 minute conversation of where we can finally meet, it does it for you. It's awesome, I'm telling you. Some of the other really cool features, it's very easily searchable for finding out what you're trying. It allows you to use multiple calendars views so you can have whatever types of things that you want on. I know a lot of people do like their favorite TV shows and when those are like when they can possible watch those that aren't conflicting with other things. I mean I have TV hours on set there but again as I showed, we have the multiple calendar views and shown up, and we have some that are X out and currently not being used.
It has notifications that you actually pay attention to. This is possibly the biggest reason I use this. I forget things, I'm human. Fortunately, Gmail accepts that embraces me for it and sends me text messages telling me that I have an appointment in whatever amount of minutes that you set. So before this meeting, I got a text 15 minutes ago saying "Hey, you have a presentation to go give," and fortunately I was able to make it here in 15 minutes. And you can do this for all sorts of things. Set it for birthday reminders so you remember to send a happy birthday wish. Basically anything Gmail has got you covered. And it synchs very nicely with Google Task.
Now, if you look back here, you see over on this side we have Google Task up here. It basically can capture all of those things that you forget because again we are human we do forget quite a bit of what goes through our mind.
And it helps remember things.
Like the exam that you have in 2 weeks.
Or the reading you needed to get done...2 days ago.
It really helps you with all sorts of material whether it'd be personal, whether it'd be educational, work related, it really helps you get this done. One of the things that I think is really cool is you can keep multiple tasks or multiple task lists.
So if you have a personal, a work one, you can keep that all separated or you can just have one big one that list everything that you are going to do, whatever view works for you is how you can use that one.
And Google has just one more program that I like to discuss that is made just for you. That's right. Just for you, and that's Google Scholar. Now, imagine you use your library service before here. EBSCOhost is what most of us use for it. And you have a little bit of frustration. One, because it's a little foreign, you never really use it and you're not really sure what the information is telling you. Google again has listened to your prayers and they have given us this.
It's a lot like your library of search engine but it's a whole lot better.
Basically it uses the power of Google search and incorporates your school's library search. You type in your credentials that say I am from X school and it is able to transfer all of the stuff from your library school over into this specific Google search engine for you. One of the things that really is not very good about EBSCOhost is that it has such a broad amount of information that its search engine is actually not capable of accessing a large portion of it. A lot of what you're actually paying for as a student, you can't access simply because of how their search engine works. Google a little bit more advanced. They're able to access everything that your library has to offer as well as import stuff from other school libraries that have given their information up for free. I think you heard of a couple of schools like MIT and then have given all their information up for free and this utilizes both that and what you can get from your own schools.
It can also alert you when new stuff arrives. If you look here, it has in a little like e-mail alert button up here. So if you are looking at up to date information on some sort of research project, it's got you covered. It can e-mail you anything, any new search or any new article has been released related to your topic, it will give you the amount of relevancy it has so you can either ignore it or go along with it.
It's also a lot faster and a lot more thorough because it is Google, you don't have to do that excessive wait time to figure out your results and again it is much more thorough it has a much broader scopes you go through. And when you are researching things you want to try and look through as many articles at once. And it gets to be as fast as possible.
Okay, and now it's time to leave Google and move on to how to access your files from anywhere that has an internet connection.
Now flash drive suck. I really do not like them.
They work like half of the time I don't know if it's just me, it's all compatible or I need to update or it's broken or there's a virus on it.
And the other times I either lost them because I've gone through so many of the freebies and the extra 2 gig ones that I thought I'd used.
I'm pretty sure I've lost six of them. And everyone I haven't lost, I've forgotten at home when I needed at school. So, here are the tech sav solutions.

Or I forget them at home when I need them at school. So it's just never a good situation for flash drives.
So, our tech-savvy solution, we have a couple actually.
First off, I need to say that Google is awesome because, again, they've got you covered. You need something, they listen, they make it happen.
So the first thing is they've given us Google Docs. Google Docs is their document viewer. Again, this one does synchronize with Gmail and with Google Calendars. It's got you covered on that basis. Basically anything that you're looking within your Google mail it will show you that you have the options to download it onto your computer which is fine or you can view it into Google Docs. If you view it as Google Doc it stores there. You have the storage base of Google which is basically infinite. I've used Google for like 2 years and I think I'm at 1 percent of my total capacity. As long as, you know, you're not some sort of major hacker, you're going to be completely fine with the amount of information that they do. You're able to also create, upload and download things into this source. I used to upload them from your computer or from whatever computer you're on and you are able to download from this onto your computers as well.
And you can think of it just like a folder on your computer except that you can access it from every computer because it is so universal.
And it can create files that are compatible with all of your Microsoft Office Suite program that you’re used to, so PowerPoint, Excel, OneNote and Word. And they're highly compatible. I've seen PowerPoints that are put onto Google Docs that had over 200 different scripts and all of them but one work, so for as far as compatibility between two different file types, that's ridiculously good. It's very, very powerful.
And speaking of programs like a Microsoft Office ones, we should look at Windows Live.
Now, what if I were to tell you that I can get you the Windows Live 2010 Suite? That was just released a couple of months ago. I can get you access to that online.
I can get you an online version of that and it will be able to replace your flash drive. Basically what this is Windows Live here allows you to create Word, Excel, PowerPoint and OneNote documents. It allows you to hold them online, create them and edit them in realtime. So one of the cool things is that you used OneNote, what you can do with the couple of students in your class if you're taking notes on a computer you can actually be working on the same document at the same time, updates in realtime. So if you missed something, somebody else in your class might be able to catch that for you. It's actually a really nifty idea to use, if you're in a really fast pace class or one that requires you to get down a bunch of notes and also trying to figure out what your professor is saying at the same time. So, the beauty of this is you can send it back and forth between other people. It's very easy to share. And again, it is all completely for free, okay. But the best replacement for flash drive and I will say this if you were to take one program away from this entire presentation, it’s dropbox.
Dropbox is this really cool little invention that they made that basically allows you to keep your programs on everything. It backs up things onto the internet. And you can synch it in between two computers, three computers, infinite amount of computers, also with mobile devices and you can access them from anywhere. It's literally a folder that you can access from your computer anywhere else. It's right on my desktop. I can drag files into it just like any other folder that you have but then it's also uploaded into the internet and I can access it from other computers and for my two main computers. The thing that I used this mainly for, is I've got a small little netbook that I take notes on but it would be very tiresome to actually like use this anytime so it synchs up to my home desktop where I can then look over my notes and edit them from there. So it's really useful tool if you have multiple means of either note taking or any sort of organization that you have. And it looks exactly like a normal folder.
Some of the creative uses obviously, to back up important files, God forbid your laptop gets stolen, and it has that paper that you been working tirelessly on. Well, it’s on the internet as long as you have put it into your dropbox folder, or like I did where I keep all of notes on there.
Also it helps you share files between friends and classmates. One of the most beautiful things about Dropbox is you can create subfolders where if you have a biology project that requires a semester's worth of work and you have 4 or 5 group members that are working on it, you can give them access to that one folder and everybody can update that in realtime. So, instead of having to send e-mail back and forth, you can just go right into your Dropbox and just see the updated version instead of having to continuously download it, download and download.
And it can synch between multiple computers. It also works with iPhones, iPod touches, Samsung, droid market place, am I missing any of the mobile, Blackberry, all of them can access dropbox as well. And there are so many more other options. People have used them as their exclusive music database. People have hosted websites off of dropbox. It's as simple as you need to as advance as you need.
And the next, we're going to look at some cool ways to take notes. So, are there any questions so far, going to fast, to slow? Good, okay. So, most people's notes look something like this.
This is my notes one day when my battery run out and I don't know in my personal perspective. I got some numbers. It's really linear. If I were to look at this I have to basically look over the entire thing to figure out what was important, when notes could just as easily look like this.
These are the notes that I took when I didn't forget to plug in my battery, very colorful, very, very easy to determine the structure. I can really see the entire day's work in a matter of seconds and I can where I understood things, where I didn't, much more visually stimulating and a lot more of how our brain works, okay.
So, here are some programs that will make your notes definitely more enjoyable to take, obviously, for making this colorful little map of everything I'm learning or actually not fall asleep in that class so that you'll actually take them. And obviously, if I'm asleep, I'm not taking them. We'll make it more interesting to look at so you will actually look at your notes, not take them and they will be vanished to the bottom of your backpack until test day. And finally, you make it more useful in the learning process so you'll actually learn something from them. If you just take notes for the sake of taking notes, it won't help you too much. But if your notes actually help you learn, then we're getting somewhere. So let's start with a mind map.
The first program I'm going to show you is called XMind. Now, this is one of the maps that I've created in XMind.
And again, I thought it was really fitting that I did it on the topic of Tango because all colorful, jazzy, spice up. I thought it was good. So you see here, this is very much how our mind works. We aren't just robots that see one thing, it moves to next, then the next, and then next. That's not how we work. Instead we create these relationships between everything. We see that from Tango, all of these things branch off in this specific situation. From here, you can also go step further and if you find that a star of Tango is related to the sounds and steps of Tango you can create multiple relations like that just like how your mind really works. The beauty of this is it can basically simulate what you're thinking. That's why when you started writing papers and like elementary school, they made you do a brainstorm. Brainstorms often look a lot like that. This is basically doing that for you except on the internet so it's a lot more clean and neat and tidy. Okay, so again, your thoughts aren't linear so why should your notes be?
This is one little way to fix that. They really help you to see the relationships in your material. From this, you can also branch it off. I've known some people that did an entire class. It was one mind map. So everything was related, whether it would be from day 1 all the way to the end of the semester and everything in between. You're able to create any sort of relationship that you want.
And they're really simple to take. That was made in class. It's not like I spend an hour or two afterwards. You don't even need a mouse for most of these things or anything that serves as a mouse. Everything can be done through keyboard shortcuts that are simple to understand and not that intensive. But some people don't like mind maps, some people do like linear structure and that's perfectly fine.
For them I suggest Evernote. Evernote is a really good program because it is--its main values are its versatility and its synchronization with all else that you do. Basically, your brain is really bad at remembering things like really, really bad at remembering things. So Evernote, you know, understands this and they'll help you with it. Basically any sort of idea that you have, you're able to put it on Evernote.
Here is just one example. This is a really old version of Evernote. But as you see here, what you're able to do is you can do text notes, you can do ink notes that like this one. So if this is how your brain operates, it's perfectly fine. You're able to do multiple different categories. You can do it by categories, by tags, by notebooks. You can organize things by date. It's very, very versatile. And pretty much everything that you can think of Evernote can collect in any format. And that means you can type things out, you could write yourself a hand note and scan it on there. You can take pictures. You can take the audio clips, video clips. Take clips off the internet. Incorporate other images from other programs put into Evernote. I can't think of any other format that you could possibly want to do. Christine joked that she would put a video footage of her saying what she needed to do on--then walk over to the front desk, the whole 20 seconds away and view that to figure out why she came in, in the first place. Literally, it's so expansive, you can do whatever you want and put it on there. And again, there we go. Yeah, I did get it off, good. Okay, and it could be really organized. You can put it by date, by amount of editing, by size, into notebooks, tags, categories, all these different organization tools or if that's not your thing, you just like putting it all on there and looking for it later. Its search engine is really, really powerful. As long as it can identify a letter to from what you had wrote on there, you're fine. One of the cool things also is if you're doing handwritten notes or a lot of things you'll do is put business cards on there or coupons on there or receipts. It has text recognition that can pick those off of pictures. So it can search through your images as well.
And this is just an example of the more updated version where you see here how you can choose through notebooks and learn how to find through things. This is an example of one person's day of all the notes they've taken whether it would be a little clips of websites or notes that written to themselves. You can check it out in thumbnail view or you can also scan it like normal documents where it's just a list of editing. You can zoom in and out to make these thumbnails bigger or smaller. And again, you could really shrink this down by searching for specific things if you have that one thing that you're looking for in mind.
And now it's finally time to check out how to study and not hate it. Now, studying is definitely probably everybody's least favorite part of school and I can understand that.
And one of the things I hate is figuring out how to study. I'm not really sure what I know and what I don't know, I just go over my notes again until everything seems to be in there and not really going between what I did know and what I didn't know just going at everything all at once. And fortunately for us the internet can help us out.
Now, the first program we're going to use is Quizlet. Quizlet is a very, very powerful flash card application.
At first, it looks pretty simple where you just have your flash card heading and then whatever it is the information you give on the back is a standard flash card explanation which is fine. But as you'll see later, it's actually very highly adaptable and it can help you in many different ways to learn the material that you need. So if we look back here, we start out with this one. If you have to go through any of these learn is you basically get one side and you have to be able to type in the other. The thing that I find really useful about this is instead of your normal flash cards where you look at one side, look at the end and you're like "oh, okay, I know that." You go to the next one, you look at one side, look at the other and so you know that. You really have no check to see if you actually know it. This one you have to type in your answer and once you type in your answer you either know it or don't know it. It tells you if you're correct or not. It can also give you test that are in multiple choice, fill in the blank, true, false formats. And you have a couple of games here that really help you make studying interesting. They're not just going from one fact to the other. There are ones that test you based on how fast you can do this, ones that can test you on how you can organize one thought to another. It's really useful actually. And they keep stats for you as well. Now as you see here this just some of--standard users set that I found. It shows what subjects you're studying, what you're studying the most over here, how you're studying them. So if you're using any of the different tools, it shows you if you're in any sort of groups, so one of the cool things about this is you can use this with your friends or any of your classmates that share any the same class as you, it shows up here all the study sets that she has created. How many terms and when they were made. Down there on the bottom, you see the statistics of how many sets, how many terms, so much data that you can find that can help you know how much you need to study.
A lot of people when they study, they get that mindset of "I've haven't studied enough." This shows you that "hey, I actually did study enough. I put in the hours. I put in the amount of time I needed to succeed." And it is a cross platform so if you have a Mac, if you have a PC, this also works with plenty of mobile devices. And because of that, it's very easy to share and it's very easy to perform what I would call virtual study groups. Now, that could be, again, a couple of people in your class where everybody is supposed to contribute X amount of note cards everyday. That's what I actually working with tutor or with the kids that I tutor where everybody contributes to a collective of whole of study cards. So by the time that test day comes up, we'll have 30, 40, 50 cards about everything that went over--that we went over through the class. That's easy to do for anybody else as well. But sometimes we’re lazy and we need a little bit of extra push and or to get us to actually study. So I mean it's a little hard to study when I could watch the music video on YouTube or catch up on Survivor 'cause I'm sadly still stuck on watching Survivor, a little embarrassing.
But Popling is there for you. Popling is that little show that gets you to study. So basically when I was making this presentation I had Popling up. Popling is this tiny little thing that shows up in the bottom right corner of your screen, very, very tiny and it says what set you're looking for, where you looking for it, and it gives you the terms used. So from there, you either choose to accept it which you probably should if you're screwing around, doing something else.
And once you accept it, it opens up into this where from here you're able to put in your answer. Now from here, you put in one answer, it tells you if you're right or wrong and you can continue studying if you feel like "alright I got that one wrong. I should probably keep doing until I get one right," which hopefully if you study enough if not too many. Or you can just keep going on a row. The cool thing about Popling is that it shows up every X amounts of minutes that you've decided. So if you're feeling very studious, it can show up every minute. If you are not, it could show up every half hour. The cool thing about this is it basically studying when you don't think you're studying. You don't realize that you're actually putting some time in your studies you can be cruising around the internet doing whatever you want to do. But every couple of minutes you are refreshing yourself and your memory on what it is that you need to be focusing on.
And it also sends you weekly reports of how well you're doing. So it sends you this, and e-mail, of, in this case I knew 58 out of 86 Spanish vocabulary words. Not the best number but I don't take Spanish in a couple of years. So give me a break. And it shows you what percentage you've done and how many you've done that week. So, again, if you're one of those ones that really feels that you haven't studied enough. If it shows you that you've studied a thousand flash cards that week, that's a pretty descent number. that isn't something to be like ashamed of you know you're putting in the time. And again I promise Facebook we'll be there in the 15 seconds that it takes you to actually take this one little study session. It really is able to chop up your study time in such microbits that it's very easy to do.
And finally, let's look at how to get presentations that will people stay awake for. So I really do love PowerPoint presentation. Don't get me wrong, they're awesome. In fact there are some of the best sleep that I've ever had 'cause let's face it we have slide 1 and slide 2 and slide 3 and I'm not really sure if there's anything pass slide 3, usually because I'm already out. But why use PowerPoint when you could use something like this.
This is a program called Prezi. It's very visually stimulating or at least I think so. Flashy colors, things spinning around, special effects, while we all watch Avatar.
And it's ridiculously easy to use and super powerful as considering it's a free application.
All of this was really easy to make. I’d never made one before this presentation and it’s very, very intuitive. Almost kind of like futuristic like Minority Report where they’re using those crazy little boards for all their things. It looks like that. It just very, very easy to use. It’s also stored online so you never had to worry about forgetting it at home and since all of school has Wi-Fi coverage you’re set there. It will always be on the computer that you’re trying to present on. The only little down side is be sure when you’re doing this do not make the viewers dizzy because if you’re to do something like this, keep going back and forth, you might have a problem and somebody might be puking in a bucket somewhere. So, only one little caution, my surgeon’s general warning right there.
But some people do like the structure of PowerPoint and if that's really your thing I will forgive you and I will give you an option that doesn’t actually require PowerPoint but it's very similar. And this is called slideshow is really coming popular in the business world because if you are in a place that doesn't have PowerPoint downloaded onto the computer or you can also integrate this into web pages and e-mail, it's a very simple process to put those on there.
Now, if you see here this is a sample slideshow. You see down here, it has very similar process of what you see from PowerPoint. You have a start button, you have fast forward. You can see you have a certain amount of slides and you can also e-mail this. And it will give you the comfort of slides, but it's also very much more accessible than you would get from something like PowerPoint. And it helps you stand out which a little known fact if you stand out when giving presentations, that's actually a good thing. So if you're the only one to use something that's a little different, a little bit more unique and something that is more stimulating.
In fact, slideshows are commonly used to make resumes, not suck. One of the cool thing is instead of sending an online resume to an employer, you send them a slideshow showing what you've done. If you ever have time to go on the website this is one of their most popular ones. You want to hire the guy; and two, you realize, "Wow, I kind of want to make a resume on slideshow." It's a really useful thing and from you can see down here, how so many people on Facebook have even like this. It's showing you that it's gaining a lot of popularity and the business world is actually really taking this up. It's a really big thing on a link upon as well or linked in. So there it is, the presentation as a whole. I hope that out of the bunch of new programs that I showed you something stands out that you really like.
And if you leave learning only one thing from this presentation, I hope that it is that you should experiment. And again, if you spend 15, 20 minutes with each of these programs, just looking at them a little bit, you'll find 'hey, this one isn't for me" or "hey, I think I can use this really well in such and such class or for such and such purpose." Some of these programs I used and some them I don't use too much just because they don't fit my needs. It's depending on the classes I'm taking, depending on how I am learning the material that I'm at, some programs really help, some don't. If I didn't spend the 20 minutes to find out and actually experiment with these I wouldn't known at all, okay? So, with that I say thank you and hope you guys enjoy it.