

# CONNECTING CLASSROOMS



## Using social media

Best online platforms to use for your international school collaboration

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This resource looks at the various online platforms available for use to enable you to support your international school collaboration.

Please refer to your school's guidance on using the various online platforms regarding safeguarding of children while using these platforms including but not restricted to age limit, audience restrictions and information shared

## Conference calling

Using VOIP, these platforms allow everyone to get involved in the conversation, meeting or conferences.

### Skype

<https://www.skype.com/en/new/>

Skype is a (VoIP) service available on every platform.

#### Why use this in a partnership?

A very useful feature is Skype Translator; this can translate what you or your partners say. The current version supports speech translation to and from English, French, German, Chinese (Mandarin), Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, and Russian.

#### Limitations:

Skype uses a lot of bandwidth and therefore the picture and speech can sometimes be

## Zoom Cloud Meetings

<https://zoom.us/>

Zoom brings together video conferencing, online meetings and group messaging into one easy to use application and web based software.

### How can it be used in a partnership?

A major benefit of Zoom is that only one person has to download the application. Then everyone else can simply click on the meeting link and join in from their phone, tablet, or desktop.

During video conference calls you can share photographs, children's work and videos, and these can be annotated by the students and teachers taking part in the call.

### Limitations

Free group meetings are limited to 40 minutes, after this they will be cut off.

### Benefits

These platforms allow you to share files quickly and easily with your partner school.

## Padlet

<https://padlet.com/>

Padlet is a free application to create an online bulletin board that you can use to display information for a topic.

### How can it be used in a partnership?

By using a Padlet students and teachers can collaborate, reflect, and share links and pictures, in a secure location. It is easy to change who is able to view your Padlet, making it a secure way to share large quantities of information.

It is simple to add all the work from a project and use it as a portfolio to share with parents, the local community and partner school.

## Limitations.

Notes are limited to 150 characters. Sometimes the site runs slowly.

## WeTransfer

<https://wetransfer.com>

WeTransfer is a cloud-based computer file transfer service. Free users can send files up to 2GB.

### How can it be used in a partnership?

WeTransfer is one of the most useful applications to use in a partnership as it can be used to transfer large amounts of children's work quickly and easily.

A major benefit of WeTransfer is that the software is easy to use and no account needs to be set up.

## Limitations.

If the internet connection is poor, WeTransfer can be slow to download the file causing it to occasionally fail.

## Benefits

These are online platforms that allow you to play fun, interactive and educational games with your partner classroom or school.

## Kahoot!

[www.kahoot.it](http://www.kahoot.it)

Kahoot! is a web based tool to administer quizzes, discussions or surveys about any subject area. It is a game based classroom response system played by the whole class in real time or as a challenge in their own time.

### How can it be used in a partnership?

Children can make a set of questions about a joint project, which can then be shared with the children in a partner school.

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## Limitations

Heavy on ICT equipment as children need access to their own tablet/smart phone or laptop.

## Benefits

Online diaries

## Blogger

[www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com)

Blogs are apps or web-based tools that make it simple to publish web logs.

### How can it be used in a partnership?

Blogging can improve the standards of children's work. When pupils are asked to write for an audience outside of their class, they can be more enthusiastic than if they only write for their teacher.

## Limitations

Blogs can be time consuming to keep up to date

## Benefits

These are sites or apps which allow for socializing and collaboration. Some of these are blocked in certain countries; view a full list [here](#)

## Facebook

[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

Facebook is a social networking website and service where users can post comments, share photographs or other interesting content on the Web, play games, chat live, and stream live video.

### Why use this in a partnership?

Through Facebook you can engage with a wide range of people in a project, for example the local community/ parents /other classes in the school and partners all over the world.

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Both schools can share lessons, school events and activities with their partner school using the live video function.

## Twitter

[www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)

Twitter is an online news and social networking service where users post and interact with messages, "tweets", restricted to 280 characters.

### Why use this in a partnership?

Twitter is an easy way to share photographs and short pieces of information about a project. This can be shared with a wide audience.

Twitter can help to get around time-zone trouble: Use Twitter where time difference is a problem. This might also allow for some varied communication; for example students communicating with others in their own time.

If linked with the Periscope app, live videos can be shared with partners.

Twitter can be used to promote a positive picture of the learning that is taking place. Like Facebook teachers can use polls as an interactive teaching tool in their Tweets.

### Limitations

You need to consider who you want to see your tweets.

### Benefits

These platforms allow you to share videos with your partner school.

## YouTube

[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

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YouTube is a free video sharing website that makes it easy to watch online videos. You can create and upload your own videos to share with others

### Why use this in a partnership?

Videos on YouTube are accessible to students and anyone. As a school, you may not want anyone outside of your school partnership to see your video, however there are options that can limit your audience and block posting. Find out [more](#).

### Limitations:

YouTube is blocked in many schools due to bandwidth limitations and the site's potential for distraction

### Benefits

Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) are apps which allow you to make phone calls using the internet rather than your phone's connection. VOIP is banned in certain countries see a list [here](#).

## FaceTime

FaceTime runs on iOS devices; each participant must have FaceTime installed. To view devices which can use Facetime, visit [here](#)

### Why use this in a partnership?

A major benefit of FaceTime is that it is less prone to interruptions due to bad connection as other video call applications are. FaceTime is also free to use on a WiFi connection.

### Limitations

Facetime can only be used for Apple to Apple connections.

## Periscope

Periscope is a free application that allows users to broadcast a live video stream to public or private audiences.

### How can it be used in a partnership?

Within a partnership it can allow you take virtual field trips, you can go on a tour of the school or local area (depending on mobile internet coverage) without leaving your classroom.

As VoIP (for example Skype, Facetime, WhatsApp) is banned in some countries, you can get over this using Periscope although these will be only one way videos.

### Limitations

Periscope videos will only be available for 24 hours after their live broadcast and will need to be downloaded to view after that time.

## Viber

<https://www.viber.com/>

Viber is an application that enables the user to send messages (video, voice, stickers or GIFs) and make phone calls (both audio and video calls) to other Viber users for free.

### Why use this in a partnership?

A major benefit of Viber is that you can use the add-on: Viber Out. With this you can call from Viber on your phone to any landline and mobile in the world – even if they don't have Viber – at low rates. [Find out more](#)

### Limitations:

Using Viber Out is not free and you need to buy credit upfront, (it is cheaper than using the landline to call long distances).

## WhatsApp

<https://www.whatsapp.com/>

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WhatsApp Messenger is a freeware and cross-platform instant messaging service for smartphones.

### Why use this in a partnership?

Use the Group Chats feature to create groups. Through this, you can share ideas and activities with the members in the group. You can add over 250 members into a group.

WhatsApp can be used to make voice and video calls. It can be used as a 'conference call' between two classes.

WhatsApp has optimized the video calling for slower networks, providing a way around the internet connectivity problem in some countries.

### Limitations

WhatsApp video calls can charge the user with a high data usage; other video calling apps like Skype and FaceTime ensure that you use less data.

### Communicating with China

Most Western social media applications do not work for communicating with China, due to restrictions imposed by the Chinese government. If your partner school is in China then WeChat is the only option. Any of the activities above can be run using WeChat.

## WeChat

<https://www.wechat.com/en/>

WeChat allows you to send images and text, make phone calls and run video conferences