

Software Evaluation Worksheet

Software Program: _____

This evaluation is for use in conjunction with the article *Evaluating Software Programs for Your Course*, which discusses how to evaluate and select software programs for use in a community, college, or university course.

1) "Needs" evaluation

What skills you would like your students to learn when using this software?	Describe your primary motivation for including software in your course.
What topics you would like your students to learn when using this software?	How experienced are your students with microcomputers, software and the Internet?
Would you prefer to have the software installed and run on: <input type="checkbox"/> School/lab computers <input type="checkbox"/> Student computers	

2) Budget

What is your budget?	Are you interested in a site license (lab installation for multiple copies)? Yes No
How many copies of the software are you interested in purchasing?	1. Would you prefer to have the software purchased by: <input type="checkbox"/> Students <input type="checkbox"/> School/department

3) Software location

Would you prefer to have the software installed and run on: <input type="checkbox"/> Student Computer <input type="checkbox"/> Lab Computer <input type="checkbox"/> Running from Internet (only run from, already exists on a web site)	Computer Lab Installation: What are the lab computers' standard hardware and software configurations and multi-media capabilities? Operating System: _____ Multi-media: _____ Other: _____
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4) Technical evaluation

Keep in mind your students' degree of computer experience during your assessment.

Does the installation procedure appear complicated?	Please note any problems or errors during installation:
Ease of use: how well can your students use the software without needing the manual or a lot of help from you?	Would you want the students to use the software in a computer lab, due to its complexity?

Technical evaluation (continued)

Does software run cleanly and properly on your computer?	What problems (if any) have you experienced while using the program?
What are the software's system requirements? Operating system: _____ RAM: _____ HDD space needed: _____ Internet Access/speed: _____	

a) Technical Support

If tech support is available: <input type="checkbox"/> Free <input type="checkbox"/> Free for a specified time period after purchase (typically 30-90 days). <input type="checkbox"/> Costs long distance call charges <input type="checkbox"/> Costs technical support fees (find out if your students can contact technical support by E-mail, without incurring any charges.)	Does the customer service Web site include: documentation <input type="checkbox"/> A searchable knowledge base <input type="checkbox"/> Detailed "Frequently Asked Questions "FAQ's" <input type="checkbox"/> Contact information, including the technical support telephone number and hours
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b) Manuals and online help

Is the writing: <input type="checkbox"/> Clear and easy to read <input type="checkbox"/> Free of technical language other than the terms associated with your discipline	When skimming the table of contents and the index (or searching the online help) can you find specific topics, or search online help? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are specific examples using real data and illustrations of the screens used? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Notes: