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Collaboration Suite vs. Single Tool

Harmonize is a suite of tools focused on collaboration. This includes discussion forums, Q&A boards, polling, PDF annotations, chat, video discussions, and more.

Yellowdig is a single tool for discussions. While you get a fuller suite of capabilities with Harmonize, this comparison focused on discussion boards.

Focusing only on Discussions

Course Integration and Instructor Adoption

There are many visual and structural differences between Harmonize and Yellowdig, but one of the most important considerations is its ability to integrate into your course. The question to ask is: does it do that in a way that is familiar to instructors and fits into the pedagogy existing at your school today.

At Harmonize, we don't want to change the pedagogy around how instructors teach, as that comes with a high adoption burden. Instead we look to enable and power that pedagogy.

Yellowdig lumps all classroom discussions together into a single, long running pool of commentary. You can equate this to a Facebook feed per course. If you're accustomed to the standard LMS paradigm: "in week 1 we are going to talk about..." and then structuring your class and existing discussions in your LMS around modules/week breakdowns in which there are different ideas to be discussed week by week, then this comes with a learning curve and a course redesign to make it fit.

Harmonize, instead, takes the paradigm used by the LMSes, which instructors are already familiar, and focuses on the implementation. i.e. creating discussion areas that are specific to a

topic and motivating students to go to that space to participate until they have accomplished their goals.

Grading

This differences in course integration structure cascades into grading because the Yellowdig grading system is not based on an instructor's notion of quality and expectations for a specific week. Instead, it's based on earning points in that single discussion thread. The instructor then defines "participation windows" when students can earn points. So if you generate a series of actions in the week 1 window, you're assigned points based on that.

Harmonize instead allows the instructor to roll up conversations for that week and either let the system auto-grade those based on the instructor specification of what should have happened that week and/or give a quality based grade based on the content of what the student has posted.

Content layout

Content is harder to discover and segment in Yellowdig because it's a single, long feed per course that sorts differently based on student behaviors.

In Harmonize, you will see content structured naturally segmented by weeks, as mentioned in the course integration, which makes it easier to come in with a singular focus.

Additionally, since our layout for a discussion post is a card, and the instructor/other students flips the card over to interact with that student's content, you segment and discover content at a much finer granular level where the students or instructor can select what they want to interact with.

Conversation Pacing

One of Harmonize's most popular features is the ability to define multiple due dates (called Milestones) for a specific topic. This means students are encouraged to participate early and come back often. This promotes engagement throughout the duration of the topic's discussion vs. piling up discussions as students come in and try to meet the goal for the week -- most often in the hour right before deadline in the last hour before the deadline. Those milestone deadlines are defined by the instructor around what they want to see happen and when.

The single participation window for students to accomplish their points for a week doesn't lend itself to this type of pacing.

Academic integrity

To ensure academic integrity, Harmonize integrates with the major plagiarism detection services (ex: Turnitin, Unicheck) to ensure that the students' work is authentic.