

Selecting Digital Tools

by Sophia Tutorial

WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will review the process for choosing the best digital tool for the job at hand. You will reflect on the key factors you need to consider and understand how strong technology skills can help you with this. You will also better understand how selecting the right tool can help you achieve your desired result in the most productive way, strengthening your results driven skill.

Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Key Considerations
 - a. Your Goal
 - b. Your Device
2. Decision Factors
 - a. Cost
 - b. Ease of Use
 - c. Features

1. Key Considerations

Imagine you're a firefighter, battling a burning building. Fighting the fire efficiently and effectively requires more than just the knowledge and skills you've learned. It also requires the right tools.

The same is true of any task you undertake that involves technology in your personal or professional life. You become more productive when you know how to identify and use the right tools for the goal you want to achieve.

1a. Your Goal

If you recall, before you jump into the first step of the Digital Proficiency Process (Navigate), you need to identify your goal. You cannot begin to investigate and consider the tools you could use without knowing what you are trying to accomplish. Consider the scenarios below. What is the goal in each case?

- You need to share a spreadsheet with your team so they can provide feedback
- You need to create a PTO newsletter
- You want to store your family photos in one location
- You need to contact your child's principal
- You need to let your colleagues at work know you will be out of the office next week



Results Driven: Skill Tip

Strong results driven skills will help you identify your goal. Just like driving a car, you need to know where you want to go. If you don't know this important detail, you don't know which roads to take or which tools will work.

1b. Your Device

Another critical element of selecting the best tool for the job is understanding what device(s) you have available to you. You may find a great application or program, but it is not worth considering if you cannot use it on your device. For example, you won't be able to use an Android app if you have an iPhone. If you are unsure about what you can and cannot use, you will need to take some time to review the website or information in the app store for the program you want to use.



TRY IT

Think about the devices you have at home and at work and consider the goals listed below. Take some time to research online and/or visit the app store to see what options are available. What key items will you need to look for to make sure any selection will work with your device(s)?

- Use a list-making app to generate a checklist to organize your tasks
- Use a calendar app to block off time to work
- Use an app to communicate quickly with family anywhere in the world

2. Decision Factors

Once you have determined what tools could work for you, there are some important items you need to consider. Keep in mind, how you think about these factors will depend on the situation you face.

Cost

Ease
of use

Features

2a. Cost

Some apps and programs are free to use. Many will have a free version along with a paid version. Before you make the decision to pay for anything, you want to make sure you use your **technology**

skill to research and learn all you can about the no-pay option. You may find that this version has everything you need to achieve your desired results. You may also choose to “test out” the

2b. Ease of Use

No one wants to take hours and hours to understand how to use a digital tool. As you explore your options, you will want to focus on how easy it is to learn and use them. You can often accomplish this two ways:

1. Start with the free version and “play around”
2. Read user reviews on the product page or from another reputable source

Both of these options will help you better understand if the interface is intuitive and user-friendly. If it is not, you may want to consider another option. You want a program or app that is easy to use so you can focus your energy on reaching your goal.

2c. Features

This may seem obvious. The tool you select needs to have the features you need to achieve your results in a **productive**

way. That said, you don't want to assume features exist that do not. For example, all calendar tools let you add events, but they do not all let you share that calendar with another person. If



Technology: Skill in Action

Claire is a busy mom. She works full-time and her daughter is on the varsity basketball team. She was tired of not knowing when her daughter had practice or which games were away and which were home. She used her technology skill to research calendar apps and found three she liked. Only one of them allowed for sharing the calendar with someone else. She selected this one so her daughter could add her basketball information and they could both see it.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you looked at **key considerations** when it comes to selecting digital tools. You need to understand **your goal** and **your device** and then look at factors of an application or program like **cost, ease of use, and features** available. Your strong technology skills can help you research these items. You can then select the best tool for the job. This choice should allow you to reach your goals in the most productive way.

Enjoy the next lesson!