

A few of our favorite things (onLine - onPhilanthropy)

Oprah shares her favorite things with her audience. While I'm nowhere near Oprah-status, I thought I'd take the opportunity to do the same. The best part about my favorite things is that they are all FREE and could help increase your productivity, enable you and your coworkers to work together more dynamically, or even reduce costs at your organization.

Basecamp (www.basecamphq.com)

Basecamp is a full-fledged project management tool and one of the few on this list that comes in different price plans. The free version lets you have unlimited users posting notes about one project. If you need one place to discuss a project and track who's saying what, Basecamp is a great tool. The other plans starting at \$24/month also include To Do lists, milestones, and file storage. A shoutout to Matt for bringing us Basecamp.

FreeConferenceCall.com

Really, it is free. No commercials or advertisements. You sign up and receive a free conference call number that is yours to use whenever you want, no reservations or schedules. If you're looking for the downside, the only one is that the phone number provided is not an 800#. But really, with nationwide calling plans, this is almost no issue at all. After each call you receive a report of what numbers dialed in and for how long.

Compete.com

So you know your web site gets 10,000 unique visitors each month. The bigger question is, how does that compare to your competitors. Compete.com will tell you. The free plan gives reports on URLs you request for Visitors, Engagement, and more.

Tinyurl.com

There are times when you don't want to scare off a potential donor or constituent by posting a long and unmemorable web address. Tinyurl is a good choice if you're current CMS system doesn't offer something similar. Enter your long URL and Tinyurl gives you a much shorter version. You can customize it as well.

Firebug extension for Firefox (<http://getfirebug.com>)

Firebug is an amazingly useful tool for diagnosing HTML and CSS coding on a web page. After downloading and installing the extension to Firefox, you can view and edit the HTML or CSS for the page. If you're not sure which CSS is pushing that column too far left or why the spacing is way off between your navigation and your content, you simply start Firebug and roll over elements on the page. It will display the related code. Overall, this has probably saved hours of production time over the last year.

Bubbl.us (www.bubbl.us)

Use it for mind-mapping, org charts, or simply brainstorming. This handy website lets you create bubbles of your ideas. And the best part, you can allow others to also edit the same diagram. In less than 15 minutes I did an outline of online marketing concepts and then invited my coworkers to edit the outline. This is a great tool for outlining your organization's 2009 campaign plans, marketing plans, org structure, or any other concept that you need to quickly outline and review with others. You'll easily be able to export your diagram to a jpg or png file for use in other documents or insert the HTML into your page. You can see a list of my favorite things below.

Posted by Jenn Thompson on December 10, 2008