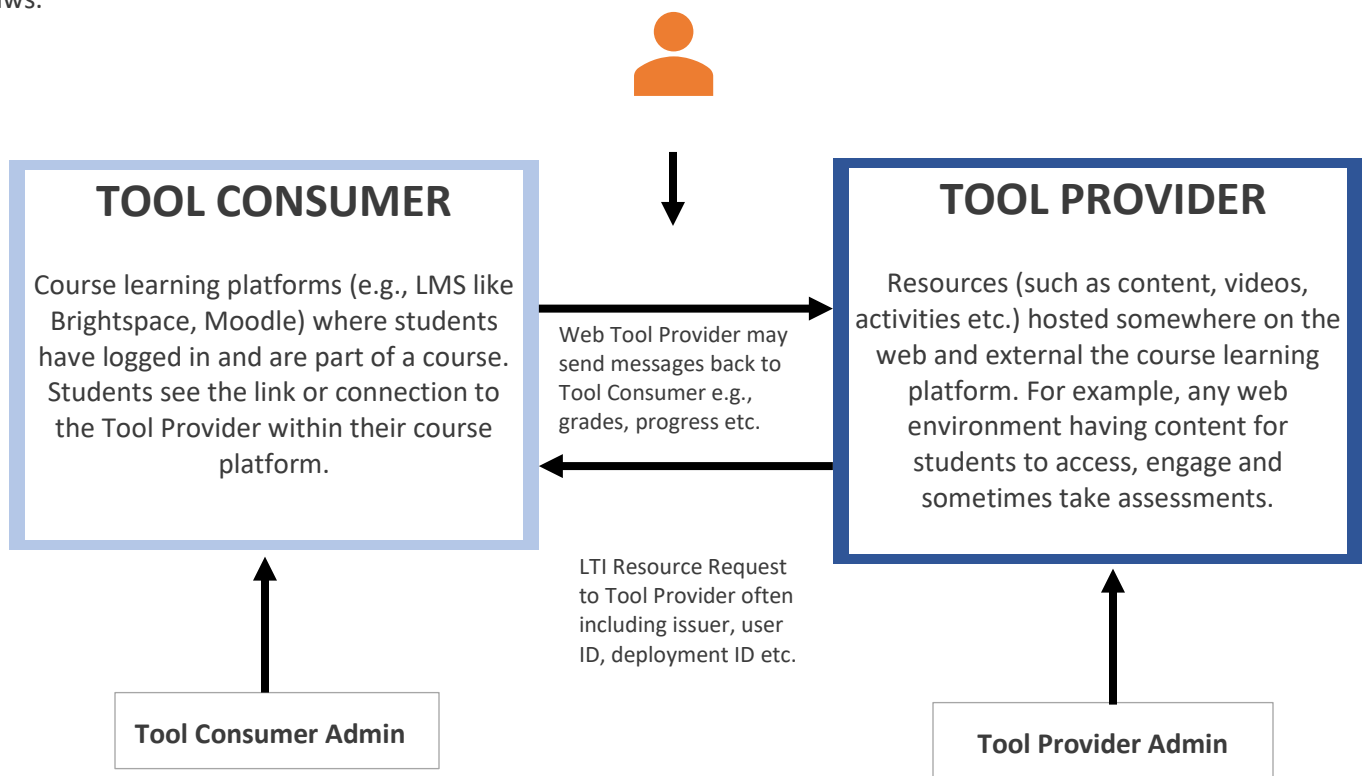# Approval Process for Technology Integrations for Digital Learning Environments

This document outlines the components and decision-making process involved in approving a third-party technology integration (e.g., a textbook publisher, web tool, social media platform) for connection into NIC's digital learning environments.

What is a Technology Integration?

Integrations, extensions, plugins, cartridges, and online textbook integrations are common terms used by third-party applications or web tool providers (such as publishers, web tools and platforms, social media companies) to promote integration of their product with the tool consumer such as the institution's course learning platform or learning management platform (LMS). This is often achieved through the Learning Tools Interoperability (LTI) specification which allow these third-party tool providers to be accessed from within the LMS.

LTI integrations allow a user, once logged into the LMS, to access content, tools, or services without entering another username or password. Often the third-party tool provider will request information from the tool consumer/LMS to facilitate the integration. This information may include the student number, course, first and last name, and email address. These are used to validate the students' access to the tool but may be also collected and stored according to the third party's own privacy policy. Sometimes a 'token' is passed just verifying the student is logged in through the institution's LMS but often there is more information passed to the third-party provider's servers. Often third-party tool providers store this student data on servers that are not in Canada and therefore subject to Canadian privacy laws.

TOOL CONSUMER

Course learning platforms (e.g., LMS like Brightspace, Moodle) where students have logged in and are part of a course. Students see the link or connection to the Tool Provider within their course platform.

Web Tool Provider may send messages back to Tool Consumer e.g., grades, progress etc.

LTI Resource Request to Tool Provider often including issuer, user ID, deployment ID etc.

TOOL PROVIDER

Resources (such as content, videos, activities etc.) hosted somewhere on the web and external the course learning platform. For example, any web environment having content for students to access, engage and sometimes take assessments.

Tool Consumer Admin

Tool Provider Admin

Evaluating an Integration

Before adopting a new LTI integration into NIC's course learning platform, Brightspace there are several factors to consider as outlined by the five areas below.

A. Content Quality
B. Privacy
C. Accessibility
D. Utility
E. Costs

A. Content Quality

D2L lists a collection of third-party content vendors who have ensured their integration works with Brightspace. Just because the content providers are approved for integration does not mean they are compliant with Canadian privacy laws. Not all content is useful or aligned with student learning. Ensure you fully explore.

Questions to ask:
- Does this third-party vendor have quality content for your students' learning?
- Is the content available in other locations, formats or from Canadian companies to use in your course?
- Is there an open educational resource (OER) available for students to get similar content for this course?
- **What open education collections did you search for resources?**
- Could some of the content be co-created by students as open education assignments or projects?

B. Privacy

Many third-party companies are not Canadian and do not store their data on Canadian servers. Care must be taken to ensure integration with a company's tool does not violate NIC's commitment to the BC Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act (FIPPA). Each integration is unique and requires scrutiny to determine what student information is being requested as well as where and how this information gets used.

Questions to ask:
- Does this technology require students to provide any personally identifying information?
- Is this personally identifying information collected by a third-party organization?
- If so, is this data processed and stored within or outside of Canada?
- Can students opt out of sharing this personally identifiable information with a third party?
- Can you provide an equivalent alternative for any student who does not consent to giving this personally identifiable information to a third-party?

C. Accessibility

When evaluating a tool for teaching and learning, it is important to consider students who may have differing accessibility or learning needs and how the tool or service will accommodate those needs. Accessibility could refer to how long the tool provider is going to make the content accessible. Accessibility could also refer to how compatible the tool is with various modern browsers, screen readers and other adaptability tools. BC is also rolling out accessibility legislation and post-secondary institutions will have more due diligence to comply in all the services, platforms and experiences we provide.

Questions to ask:
- Does the tool provider have documentation to confirm accessibility and usability of their product?
- Does the tool provider provide details on how long the content will be accessible/available to users?
- Is this tool and associated technology compatible with screen-readers, various modern browsers etc.?
- Do multimedia resources include closed captions, alternative text, or transcripts?
- If there are interactive elements (such as quizzes), can they be navigated by keyboard alone (without requiring a mouse)?

D. Utility

New learning technologies are typically requested and adopted to meet specific needs that are not met by existing tools at the institution. Before purchasing or adopting a new tool it is important to consider how widespread the use and benefit of this tool will be and to look at tools that are already available and consider if these can meet that same need.

Questions to ask:
- What value does the LTI integration provide to enhance student learning?
- How many students and instructors will use the integration?
- For how long will the integration be required?
- Are there existing tools, technologies, or platforms at NIC that could accomplish the teaching and learning need without requiring an LTI integration?
- Is this LTI integration the only or best resource to meet this need?

E. Costs

New teaching and learning tools, including LTI integrations, require ongoing technical, administrative, and financial support to be successful. While LTI's may be 'free', they always have costs associated with them whether it be time, staffing resources or technology updates. Mostly this is the many days and weeks of IT work to install, make work and then manage the integration.

Questions to ask:
- Do you have support from your Dean or Chair to adopt this technology?
- What supports will the vendor provide?
- What supports are you expecting from NIC?
- What is the cost of this product? (consider any costs to NIC and any costs to students)
- Where will funding for this technology come from?

Careful consideration of these factors is necessary to make the decision whether to adopt the product and will facilitate the smooth implementation of the new technology or tool if the decision is made to move forward with a new LTI integration.

Roles

When considering a technology integration into Brightspace there are four key roles.

LTI Sponsor: An LTI sponsor is a faculty or staff member who has oversight responsibilities for licensing third-party applications. The LTI sponsor may be responsible for supporting the LTI application once installed.

Instructor: The course instructor(s) is a current faculty or staff member who is assigned to teach a Brightspace course which will use the integration. The LTI sponsor may also act as a course instructor.

Course Participant: A course participant is a currently enrolled NIC student or NIC faculty, staff, teaching assistant, or affiliate who is enrolled in a Brightspace course. Only users with valid, current NIC credentials can be Brightspace course participants. Course participants can access LTI applications from within a Brightspace course, if enabled by the course instructor.

IT Technician: The technician will support the integration with Brightspace (called NIC IT Educational Technology Analyst)

Requesting an LTI Integration

Please fill out the New Learning Technology Integration Request form as best as you can to request the consideration of an LTI integration. LTI sponsors must address as many of the questions on the form when making the request. This may require some time to explore the 'fine print' or send an email to the customer representative for the tool provider to gain more information.

LTI integrations require the third-party tool provider to work with the Brightspace Technician to integrate LTI tools. The license holder will be required to:

- Work with the IT Technician to ensure that the LTI conforms to NIC policies.
- Assume all support responsibilities for the configured LTI tool.
- Work with the Technician for Brightspace to test the LTI in a test environment.

Typically, the review, approval, testing, and activation on the production system, will take **4-6 months** to complete, assuming no issues are found. If after review and testing, the LTI is not suitable for use by NIC faculty and students you will be notified, and you'll have to find an alternative to your request.

For answers to any additional questions, you may have regarding the integration of LTI tools into your Brightspace courses, please send an email message to the NIC Service Desk under Teaching, Learning and Classroom Support → Brightspace and Kaltura.

When you have copied and completed the answers the questions on the next two pages please submit as a NIC Service Desk item under Teaching, Learning and Classroom Support →Brightspace and Kaltura - LINK

NORTH ISLAND COLLEGE

New Learning Technology Integration Request Form

Your Name: Type here

Faculty/Department: Type her

Name of the requested technology wishing to be integrated: Type here

Please provide a brief explanation of the technology and how it will benefit teaching and learning. Please also outline what research you have done. Who have you contacted at the company/tool provider? What information did you find out and what information weren't you able to find out?

Type here

A. Content Quality

- Does the content found in this integration align with your course learning outcomes? **YES | NO | Unknown/NA**
- Is there an open educational resource that contains similar content as this resource? **YES | NO | Unknown/NA**
  - What open education collections did you search for resources?
- Is there a paid resource hosted in Canada that contains similar content as this resource? **YES | NO | Unknown/NA**
- Additional Information?

B. Privacy

- Does this technology require students to provide any personally identifying information? **YES | NO | Unknown/NA**
- Is this personal identifying information collected by a third-party organization? **YES | NO | Unknown/NA**
- Is this personal identifying information processed or stored outside of Canada? **YES | NO | Unknown/NA**
- Can students opt out of sharing this personally identifiable information? **YES | NO | Unknown/NA**
- Can you provide an equivalent alternative for students who do not consent? **YES | NO | Unknown/NA**
- Additional Information?

C. Accessibility

- Does the tool provider have documentation to confirm accessibility and usability of their product? **YES | NO | Unknown/NA**
- Does the tool provider provide details on how long the content will be accessible/available to users? **YES | NO | Unknown/NA**
- Is this technology compatible with screen-readers, various modern browsers? **YES | NO | Unknown/NA**
- Do multimedia resources include closed captions, alternative text, or transcripts? **YES | NO | Unknown/NA**
- If there are interactive elements (such as quizzes), can they be navigated by keyboard alone (without requiring a mouse)? **YES | NO | Unknown/NA**
- Additional Information?

D. Utility

- Will this tool provide benefit over multiple courses or semesters? **YES | NO | Unknown/NA**
- Are there existing tools, technologies, or platforms at NIC that could accomplish the teaching and learning need without requiring an LTI integration? **YES | NO | Unknown/NA**
- Is this LTI integration the only or best resource to meet this need? **YES | NO | Unknown/NA**
- Approximately how many instructors will use the integration? **#**
- Approximately how many students will use the integration? **#**

E. Costs and Support

- Do you have support from your Dean/Chair to adopt this technology? **YES | NO | Unknown/NA**
- Have you confirmed the cost for NIC? **YES | NO | Unknown/NA**
- Do you have funding secured to cover costs associated with this technology or tool? **YES | NO | Unknown/NA**
- What supports will the vendor provide to help with setting up this integration? **YES | NO | Unknown/NA**
- What supports are you expecting from IT? **YES | NO | Unknown/NA**

To move forward with investigating the requested tool or technology, North Island College will need to contact the vendor directly to gain further details from the customer rep and/or a technician. **Please provide the name, contact information, and role of the sales or support person(s) you have been in contact with**.

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