eTools: Using YouCanBook.me in the Classroom

Mary Frances Casper, Boise State University

Introduction

Meeting with students outside of class, whether for advising or course assistance, around already busy schedules can be difficult. Paper calendars and open-door office hours can be frustrating to instructors and students alike. YouCanBook.me lets students schedule appointments with you online.

What is YouCanBook.me?

YouCanBook.me is booking software that integrates with Google or iCloud calendars. It allows you to control your availability by creating appointment slots that students can access through the YouCanBook.me website. Once an appointment has been booked, it appears on your calendar, and confirmation e-mail messages are generated for you and your students. Your calendar is updated in real time, which protects you from double booking.

Creating appointments on YouCanBook.me is simple. After you create an account, you select the dates and the times you will be available. Before determining these dates and times, however, you need to consider whether to "pad" your bookings by adding additional time after each appointment, how many weeks to display appointments at a time, and when you want to start accepting bookings. You can also set a minimum time notice for scheduling to keep you from missing last-minute

bookings.

When students book an appointment, they complete a booking form. You determine the type of information you want to have available to you in advance of the appointment when you create the form, which will be included in the notification e-mail message you receive once the appointment has been booked. Typical information might contain the student's name, university or identification number, e-mail address, the reason for the appointment, and how much time should be allotted for the appointment. You can also include notifications in the confirmation e-mail message to students, such as, "Please read the internship guidelines available on the department website before your appointment."

How can I get YouCanBook.me for the classroom?

Go to YouCanBook.me and open an account. Once your account is opened, an individual URL is created using your name, which then is used to access your booking page (e.g., casper.youcanbook.me). Although there is no cost associated with a basic account, premium services can be purchased if desired.

How can I use YouCanBook.me in the classroom?

Using YouCanBook.me gives instructors the opportunity to prepare for all advising meetings, which can reduce the amount of time spent in each appointment completing off-topic tasks, such as pulling transcripts or reviewing previous assignments. Specifically, YouCanBook.me can be used to:

1. *schedule appointments*. Set class conferences, advising sessions, and other student meetings to fit your schedule, without having to use doodle or other software.

2. *communicate with students*. Use your booking form information to prepare students for their appointment. For example, if students indicate they want to discuss a course concept, you can respond and ask them to bring their textbook to the meeting, or perhaps read a related article before the appointment.

3. *simplify your life*. Let the software do the work so you can focus on other things.

Conclusion

YouCanBook.me is an online booking tool that helps you both organize your time and connect with students. It gives you a way to put students in control of when they meet with you without sacrificing your own schedule. Using YouCanBook.me can make student meetings more productive and eliminates the need to meet for small issues that can be resolved more easily through an e-mail exchange. It also acts as a simple way to facilitate and increase instructor-student engagement.