

Learner Annotation Privacy & Sync Checklist

Ship notes, bookmarks, and shared annotation learners trust and you can defend. The companion article explains every line.

A. Model the record - keep notes portable, not locked in

- Store the position with W3C Media Fragments syntax: #t=252.5 (point) or #t=252,280 (span)
- Wrap the note with the Web Annotation Data Model: separate body (text) from target (the slice)
- Use a FragmentSelector with conformsTo set to the Media Fragments spec
- Decide point vs span up front - a points-only model cannot highlight a whole worked example

B. Sync - a note that does not follow the learner is broken

- Keep a local copy so learners can write offline; sync to a server keyed to their account
- Private notes: 'last write wins' on edit time is usually enough
- Shared annotation: use the Web Annotation Protocol so notes interoperate and survive migration
- For live cohorts, add a push channel (WebSocket) so new comments appear within a second or two

C. Track the signal, not the words

- Emit xAPI on the ACT of noting: ADL 'commented' verb; bookmark = Video Profile 'interacted'
- Note-taking frequency is a real active-learning signal worth measuring
- Do NOT harvest private note text into the LRS - that is surveillance, not analytics
- Store the words only where the learner expects them: their notes, or a consented shared space

D. Privacy - learner notes are personal data (not legal advice)

- GDPR: purpose & storage limitation (Art. 5); access, export, erase on request (Arts. 15-17)
- FERPA: institution-held notes can be 'education records' - support access and amendment
- Default PRIVATE; make sharing explicit, revocable, and clearly attributed before posting
- Set a retention policy, encrypt at rest and in transit, and keep shared annotation moderatable