

Multimedia and Internet @ Schools

Pipeline Column

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Tips 2.0: What's Hot? How Do I Learn That?

by Stephen Abram

If there's a refrain I hear too often, it's that many of us feel it's impossible to keep up and learn all this new stuff in technology and learning. First, it's not necessary to know everything. It just isn't. Then again, it's very useful and professional to at least have an understanding of the tools that are emerging. It's also great to know a few in-depth and be able to use them in our practice. So, I thought I'd devote this month's column to a few sites that I find useful to quickly orient myself to some of the 2.0 technologies. It is so easy to spend a few minutes orienting myself to new tools and ideas during simple moments in the day – 15 minutes here and there. Even when I have already played or experienced some of these tools, I always learn something new from these sites below. Also these cover a range of styles – visual, auditory, text, experiential – which is neat too.

Learning Web 2.0 Tools for Teachers and Teacher-Librarians

7 Things You Should Know About . . .

<http://www.educause.edu/7ThingsYouShouldKnowAboutSeries/7495>

I thought everyone knew about these cool free reports from Educause, but just in case, I thought I'd include a list here to see if there's anything you might find interesting or useful. The EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative's produces a regular series of reports under the theme "7 Things You Should Know About..." These are short, simple and concise pieces about learning technologies that are becoming important, or show great potential. Each PDF focuses on a single technology and covers what it is; how it works; where it is going and why it matters to teaching and learning. Here are some of the *7 Things* report titles:

- Ning, April 2008
- Google Apps, March 2008
- Flickr, February 2008
- Lulu, January 2008
- Skype, December 2007
- Citizen Journalism, November 2007
- Data Visualization, October 2007
- Haptics, September 2007
- Cyberinfrastructure, August 2007
- Twitter, July 2007
- Wikipedia, June 2007
- Facebook II, May 2007

- RSS, April 2007
- Creative Commons, March 2007
- Open Journaling, February 2007
- Digital Storytelling, January 2007
- E-Books, November 2006
- Google Earth, October 2006
- YouTube, September 2006
- Facebook, August 2006
- Mapping Mashups, July 2006
- Virtual Worlds, June 2006
- Google Jockeying, May 2006
- Remote Instrumentation, April 2006
- Screencasting, March 2006
- Virtual Meetings, February 2006
- Grid Computing, January 2006
- Collaborative Editing, December 2005
- Instant Messaging, November 2005
- Augmented Reality, September 2005
- Blogs, August 2005
- Video Blogging, August 2005
- Wikis, July 2005
- Podcasting, June 2005
- Clickers, May 2005
- Social Bookmarking, May 2005

Commoncraft: Explanations in Plain English <http://www.commoncraft.com/>

The Commoncraft videos are just the best. Each video is short, to the point and easy to adapt. With simple visuals and sounds they are exactly as advertised – plain English explanations of important technology tools and concepts. I find they support my personal learning style very well. And you can use them internally in your board or classroom under license through their website store. Definitely worth subscribing to their blog and seeing whenever a new one comes out. Here's a list of what's there right now:

- Podcasting in Plain English
- RSS in Plain English
- Wikis in Plain English
- Blogs in Plain English
- Social Networking in Plain English
- Social Bookmarking in Plain English
- CFL Lightbulbs in Plain English
- Photo Sharing in Plain English
- Twitter in Plain English
- Zombies in Plain English

- Social Media Six Pack (top 6 videos)

Atomic Learning <http://movies.atomiclearning.com/k12/home>

Looking for quick answers to how-do-I-do-that? questions? Well, you can always subscribe to Atomic Learning for your board. Atomic Learning specializes in the K-12 and higher education market. Per their website, "Atomic Learning provides web-based software training for more than 110 applications students and educators use everyday. Our short, easy-to-view-and-understand tutorials are an integral part of a professional development program, a valuable curriculum supplement, and an anytime/anywhere training resource."

"Atomic Learning provides thousands of short, easy-to-understand tutorial movies and a library of curriculum resources that can be used as an integral part of a professional development program, a valuable curriculum supplement, and an anytime/anywhere software training resource."

- "Web-based software training available 24/7
- More than 35,000 tutorial movies on more than 110 of the most common software applications
- Over 500 new tutorials added every 45 days
- Closed captions available on thousands of tutorials
- Over 200 technology-based classroom activities and curriculum resources
- Home access so you, and your students and their parents, can use Atomic Learning where and when you need it
- Weekly Tech Tips and e-Newsletters that keep you up-to-date on frequently asked questions, news, and the latest tutorial releases"

This is a real added-value site. We have implemented it at the international level for the Special Libraries Association as a member benefit. Learning, easily and quickly, is great.

WebTools4U2Use <http://webtools4u2use.wikispaces.com/>

"This wiki was created for school library media specialists by Dr. Donna Baumbach and Dr. Judy Lee, University of Central Florida. The purpose is to provide information about some of the new web-based tools (Web 2.0) and how they can be used and are being used by school library media specialists and their students and teachers. Much of the information--including identifying a need for this kind of information--is the result of a survey conducted in 2008 of over 600 school library media specialists about their knowledge and use of web-based tools in library media programs." *WebTools4U2Use* is built as a wiki so anyone (including you) can add information to any page. The headings include:

- Audio & Podcasting
- Blogs
- Calendars, Task Management, & ToDo Lists
- Drawing, Charting and Mapping Tools
- Photo & Photo Sharing
- Portal & WebPage starting tools
- Presentation Tools
- Quiz & Polling tools
- RSS, Newsfeeds & Aggregators
- Social Bookmarking
- Social Networks
- Video Tools and Video Sharing
- Wikis
- etc.

This is another useful and collaborative tool for encouraging Web 2.0 stuff in the classroom and for learning. It even includes a few downloadable flyers to promote the wiki to your teaching colleagues.

SirsiDynix Institute [<http://www.sirsidynixinstitute.com/archive.php>]

Since early 2003, SirsiDynix has been offering free webcasts online delivered by library experts. Recently these have also been added to iTunes for free audio download to any MP3 player. They are intended as one hour explorations of a current topic of interest in libraryland. Some examples of the dozens of webcasts on the site are:

- Maximizing the Power of the Web: Pew Internet & American Life Project's 2007 Findings
- Mastering the Business Case Document
- The 21st Century Classroom: Copyright and Electronic Content
- Twenty Five Technologies to Watch and How
- Guide to Roving: An Essential Service for Library 2.0
- A Little More Help from your Friends: Social Bookmarking
- Creating a 2.0 Library
- Free your content! RSS for Libraries
- Writing for the Library Profession
- Bigger Brains for Libraries: Increasing Our Capacity to Learn and Adapt
- What's New in Podcasting?
- Teen Second Life: Library Services in a 3D world
- Gaming in the Library
- Your Firefox can do that?
- Engaging Youth on their Own Terms: Instant Messaging and Gaming in Libraries
- And many more.

You can use these tools yourself. You can share them with your team, other teachers, or administration. They can be shared board wide or statewide. You could even share these with students. Either way, they represent a pretty painless way to stay informed, know more than your colleagues – even know more than your learners! Try them out.

Stephen Abram, MLS is Vice President, Innovation, for SirsiDynix, Chief Strategist of the SirsiDynix Institute and the President 2008 of SLA. He is an SLA Fellow and the past president of the Ontario Library Association the Canadian Library Association. Stephen is the author of Out Front with Stephen Abram from ALA Editions and blogs at Stephen's Lighthouse. Stephen would love to hear from you at stephen.abram@sirsidynix.com.