

# Tech Times

Monthly Newsletter of Technology Integration  
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## Sharing Experiences through Digital Means

One of the ways of expanding an assignment, regardless of content area, is to use a digital story format. Digital storytelling adds several components to the project: music, transitions, pictures or video, etc. This makes a simple assignment a work of art. It makes it authentic and creative. There are several ways to make a digital story. Photostory and Windows Movie Maker are on every district computer and quick to learn. There are other options too, like Voice Thread.com that was featured in the last newsletter. Posting student work for commentary is an extension that can be provided by posting the work on blogs or using an online source like Voice Thread making the assignment that much more authentic due to a valid audience. There are many online resources to learn about Digital Storytelling including rubrics for evaluation, etc. One thorough website is <http://www.inms.umn.edu/elements/>. It gives a step by step breakdown of the components of Digital Storytelling.

### What is the difference between using a Word Document and a Google Doc?

Most people are familiar with Word Documents as a text document. A Google Doc is also a text document except...it has an added feature. Google Docs (spreadsheets & presentations also) all allow collaboration between different users. One example would be an RTI document where all the teachers of a student have something to contribute. You make it in a Google Doc instead of Word, so each teacher can open it and work on it as they want to. More than one person can be working on it at one time and you will see each other's changes in real time. It is phenomenal for group work!

this issue

Digital Storytelling P.1

Using Sound & Video P.2

## Hub for Teachers

Hub for Teachers is a website put on by Discovery Education that is essentially Digital Storytelling 101. It is geared for the K-5 scene but there is a lot of value there for the teacher who hasn't had exposure to this form of assessment before. There are sample rubrics and story boards, as well as, a step by step breakdown of how to make a digital story. There are complete lesson plans with the supporting documents available. The *Taking It Digital* section gives many resources for building digital stories through programs and websites. When you login to Discovery Ed and you do a search for "AFI," you will find an entire curriculum for teachers to learn about digital storytelling and is complete with classroom applications.

## Websites to check out...

Piclits.com

Goanimate.com

Tagxedo.com

Zamzar.com

# Using Audio & Video in the Classroom

## How do you incorporate these into lessons?

There are many ways that teachers can incorporate audio and video into the classroom. Using them regularly can keep the student engagement level higher for a longer period of time. When you are using Smart Notebook or Powerpoint, you can incorporate sound effects into presentations without much effort. There are a multitude of websites to get sound effects from as well. A couple of good ones are [www.soundfxnow.com](http://www.soundfxnow.com) and [www.stonewashed.net](http://www.stonewashed.net). The downloads are free but you need to pay attention to type of file that you are downloading. Smart Notebook needs mp3 and Powerpoint can take .wav, mp3, or midi files. You can use sound as reinforcement, in games, for emphasis, or as a signal to students. Video options vary widely. If you are using Smart, you need flash (.flv) files to embed them. If you are using Powerpoint, you can use .asf, .avi, .mpg, or .wmv files. Video can be used for assessment or as a teaching tool for reinforcement or emphasis.

Maybe this all sounds a little complicated and difficult, but really if you find something that you like converting it to the format that you need is a simple process. [Zamzar.com](http://Zamzar.com) is free and you only have 4 steps until you get what you need. You upload your file, choose what you want to convert it to, give your email, and when they send you the link, you download it. The whole process takes about 5 minutes tops.

Students are used to receiving information in a multimedia way, so doing this in the classroom will seem natural to them. It will provide space for creativity and humor as well. Probably, we will learn more from our students about the options as we begin to incorporate them into lessons. Almost without fail, student work is above and beyond expectations when they have the option and resources to incorporate audio and video into their work. Digital stories are only one option. There are cartoon animations, Avatars, and so much more!!!

## Have you tried batch processing photos?

We teachers use photos we take of our students for many purposes. Sometimes we want to use them for blogs, or websites, or displays. When we need many pictures to be altered, there is an easy way to do this using Microsoft Office Picture Manager. It is a program that is on every computer in the district, so we all have access to it. Select all the pictures that you want to modify and open them with Microsoft Office Picture Manager. Select all and click Edit Photos. Then decide what you want to do with them. For example, you may need to compress them for website or blog use. You will need to click compress and choose websites. This will compress all the photos at one time. It takes a couple minutes but is a lot faster than modifying the pictures individually.

## Interested in topics mentioned here...

Would you like more information or do you have suggestions for the next newsletter?  
Please contact [aadams@kpbsd.k12.ak.us](mailto:aadams@kpbsd.k12.ak.us)



### Tips for the Blog:

Tip #1: Use a rubric for clear expectations.

Tip #2: Comment on other blogs regularly.

Tip #3: Have a system for commenting for equity & accountability.

Tip #4: Remember there is an 8MB limit for an upload per post.

Tip #5: Share the Link for an outside audience.

### ePortfolios—

#### Keeping Student Work?

We all keep student work throughout the year in some format or another or have at least considered it. We are all limited on space and time and so we make concessions. ePortfolios are one concept that many teachers are adopting simply for the fact that they do not take up physical space. Essentially, an ePortfolio is keeping student work electronically. This can be done in a variety of ways: taking pictures of student work, taking video of student presentations, keeping electronic versions of assignments instead of paper, using blogs, or websites. All of these can be made into student ePortfolios. They are easily transportable and often provide significant insight when dealing with learning issues or RTI options. When a student transfers, they can easily take the ePortfolio with them. Finally, when they prepare for college or the outside world, they have work and writing samples ready and available.