

RD3 - Research, Discuss and Evaluate Online Repositories of Digital Resources

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Today's society is overrun with technology. Everywhere you look someone is on the phone, the computer, their iPad, or many other forms of technology. Education is no different. Teachers and students have access to many tools in the classroom; tools such as Promethean/Smart Boards, iPads, e-readers, computers, cameras, and the list could continue. With so many tools available it can be quite an undertaking to try to find resources to use with these tools. The following are just a few online repositories of digital audio, video, and web resources that many teachers and students will find useful for their classroom. As educators, we must provide students with instruction that motivates and inspires them to learn.

Digital Photo Resources

<http://pics.tech4learning.com/> is a safe, free image library for education. Elementary and middle school English, social studies, science, and math teachers and students can use the copyright-friendly photos and images. These photos could be used in classrooms for multimedia projects, web sites, videos, portfolios, or any other project in an educational setting.

<http://www.nasa.gov/> is a government website that offers spectacular images of current and past missions of the agency. Since NASA is a government agency the images are considered public domain which means that the images can be used however one wishes. Although the website offers a large digital image library, you cannot search. This means that teachers must look through each group of images to see which ones they can use for the specific topic that they are working on. Teachers and students have the ability to download the images for free in a variety of resolutions and sizes. Most images available are of missions that are currently taking place such as the Mars rover. Students can follow the mission's weekly discoveries and analyze images as they come in from the rover. The images and other multimedia resources in the website can encourage student's curiosity about space.

<http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/index.cfm/> is a resource that contains over 800,000 images from the New York Library collection. It includes manuscripts, historical maps, vintage posters, rare prints and photos, and much more. This resource would be great for science, social studies, and English teachers from fifth grade through high school. This resource would be helpful when introducing new materials to the students. Since teachers would be using this resource, there should not be any problems. They should just remember the copyright laws and cite the sources used.

<http://www.bestphotos.us/> is a digital image database. It is free of charge to its users. Each photo offered on the website clearly states the terms of use. This makes it easier for users to find images that can suit their needs. The images offered in the website can all be downloaded. Most of the categories in this website provide general purpose images that can be used K-12. When I tried using their search engine I was shown links outside of the website. If someone decided to use these links they would have to be careful and read the terms and conditions of each link they

choose. Many of the images on the actual website could be used by a graphics art teacher. Composition in photography could also be taught using the images as examples of various topics in photography. Biology and agriculture teachers can find good quality images of objects that they may have discussed in their classrooms throughout their course. These images can serve as a great visual for students to help them remember certain topics. Generally, I was very impressed with the quality and composition of the images offered by this website. However, many of the images have a high resolution which would require some photo editing before they can be used in a presentation.

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/statememory> is through the Library of Congress. It contains links for all fifty states. It helps document America's history, culture, and creativity. Each state has different archives and collections pertaining to that state. There are audio visuals, state publications, textual materials, as well as many other resources. This resource would be useful for social studies and english teachers and students for all grades. Teachers could use this when studying a certain area of the country. Students would be able to incorporate this resource into reports.

Audio and Video Resources

<http://www.hippocampus.org/> is a free website that offers a variety of video tutorials for math, science and social studies teachers at the high school level that would like to enhance their lessons. This is also an excellent source of extra help for struggling students. Many of the videos are linked to specific topics that include a mini lesson with some kind of assessment at the end of the video lesson. Teachers can create a free account and have the ability to create multimedia playlists. This site is intended to be used by teachers that would like additional multimedia sources to enrich their lesson. It's almost like having a co teacher if used appropriately. I use this website extensively in my classes as my students seem to like having an alternative way of presenting existing material. The only drawback about this website that I have experienced is that the videos capture only a small portion of the screen when maximized. This can make viewing somewhat difficult for students that sit in the back of the room.

<http://www.khanacademy.org/> is another free website that provides video tutorials for an array of subjects across the curriculum. These videos are an excellent source of differentiation for students that are struggling and a means for gifted students to find challenging problems that have interactive solutions. I use this website on many occasions with my support students when we go to the computer lab. Many of the math videos are content specific problems that have been worked out by an individual. Although this website is a great source of differentiation some of the work that is done in these videos is somewhat disorganized. This can have the potential to confuse some students who prefer to have their work neat and organized. On the other hand, the website is easy to navigate and specific topics can be reached with just a few clicks of the mouse.

<http://www.history.com/speeches/> offers a multitude of historical audio clips. The audio clips can't be downloaded and have to be played through the website. Users can find audio clips of many historical events. History teachers can benefit from using many of these audio clips. The database includes audio clips from presidents starting with William Howard Taft to Barack Obama. Students can really make a connection with the historical importance of the subjects they are learning about when listening to them talk rather than just reading about them. Although this site offers a great variety of audio clips, its searching mechanism is very poor. When I tried searching for specific speeches or individuals, many of the results presented were not relevant to my query. One would have to search the audio library before using it in the classroom to make sure that the content fits their needs.

<http://www.openculture.com/> is a resource which contains many audio books, movies, ebooks, and much more. This would be a great resource for teachers to use in planning lessons and interactive activities. This resource could be used for movie clips, audio book clips, language clips, and more. A problem that we see with this resource is that it is a huge selection of materials. Students should not be put on this site without very detailed directions on what they are looking for and how to find it. A solution would be for the educator to take the time to research what they will use and how to locate it quickly. This is not a site that you can let students roam free on and be productive.

<http://www.teachersdomain.org/> is a great resource where you will find thousands of media resources, support materials, and tools for classroom lessons, individualized learning programs, and teacher professional learning communities. This would be a great resource for teachers to use in planning lessons and interactive activities. This resource has many video clips, interactive lessons, and message boards for teachers to utilize. This resource would be mainly for teacher use to provide additional information and material to lessons created. We do not see an issue with using this site other than needing to sign up for the full library. Teachers would need to make sure they follow copyright issues and preview the material before using in the classroom.

www.teachertube.com/ is a resource that contains videos, photos, audios, and documents produced by teachers for teachers. This resource would be used by teachers and students in all grades and levels. This is the perfect resource for teachers to use to introduce new concepts using videos or to upload their own videos for students to access as review and extra practice. This resource is very teacher and student friendly. Copyright laws should be followed, but not other issues should arise.

Miscellaneous Web Tools

<http://web20guru.wikispaces.com/Web+2.0+Resources> is a compilation of different resources to use in the classroom. The award winning website has information needed to help develop the needed skills for students in the 21st Century classroom. This website has resources listed for use

in all subjects. There are links to websites that include Web 2.0, blogging, animation, blogging, assessment and evaluation, charts, communication, digital storytelling, games, and much more. This resource would be useful from k-12 teachers. The resource were categorized, so it is very easy to find what you may be looking for.

<http://cooltoolsforschools.wikispaces.com/> is the winner of the Merlot award for exemplary online resources. The resources have been categorized for easy use. Some of the resources include slideshow tools, converting tools, mapping tools, writing tools, and a number of other resources. This would be beneficial to students and teachers in all grades.

<http://www.google.com/edu/index.html> is an effort by Google to reach out and provided students and educators with their organizational products. Some of these products could be extremely helpful for students and teachers to organize and communicate data with each other outside the classroom. Also, students have the opportunity to join global fairs sponsored by Google. These fairs allow students from all around the world to compete and share ideas with other from the comfort of their computer labs.

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