Quick Guide to Web 2.0 Tools

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Wondering what Web 2.0 tools are worth a look? This handout details the services that Teaching the iGeneration (http://bit.ly/tighandouts) author Bill Ferriter is using in his personal and professional work. It is designed as a companion to his 2-Day Teaching the iGeneration course wiki, which can be found online here: http://plugusin.pbworks.com

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Information Management	**Google Related Search Feature** http://bit.ly/googlerelatedsearch Found under **More Options** in the sidebar that Google returns after every web search, the Google Related Search feature automatically breaks large concepts into smaller subtopics. Perfect for helping students to focus their work while researching.
	Google Reading Level Feature http://bit.ly/googlereadinglevel Also found under **More Options** in the sidebar that Google returns after every web search, the Google Reading Level feature sorts search results into categories by reading level. Perfect for helping students to find web sources that are more approachable.
	Google Reader http://www.google.com/reader The Google Reader is an RSS Feed Reader that will automatically check websites with frequently updated content for users. Perfect for professionals who want to easily follow a collection of sites connected to their position or their content areas.
	Netvibes http://www.netvibes.com Netvibes is also a feed reader – which means that it will automatically check websites with frequently updated content. Its layout, however, is far more visually appealing – making Netvibes a better choice for teachers who want to create a collection of feeds for their students to follow. Here's a sample of a collection of feeds that Bill has created for his students: http://www.netvibes.com/wferriter
	Twitter Search http://search.twitter.com There are literally thousands of educators using Twitter to share content together – and that content is organized around hashtags, which are short identifiers added to the end messages. Twitter Search makes it possible for anyone to find resources connected to their content area as long as they know which hashtag to search for. The Cybrary Man maintains one of the most comprehensive lists of education related hashtags: http://www.cybraryman.com/edhashtags.html
	Diigo http://www.diigo.com Diigo is a free social bookmarking and shared annotation service. That means it allows users to work together to develop shared online collections of websites – something that has real value for any teacher that engages their students in regular research projects. What's more, Diigo allows users to annotate online articles together – adding highlights and questions directly in online texts. Most importantly, however, Diigo allows teachers to create free educator accounts that include individual user accounts for each of the students on their academic team. Here are the details: http://www.diigo.com/education

A Google A Day
http://www.agoogleaday.com

Google has just recently started a new project that is designed to help users refine their searching skills. Each day, they post a question that users are supposed to find the answer to using Google. Along the way, the Google a Day website provides hints about the best search strategies to use to find the correct answer. Combined with a timer that allows users to compete against one another, A Google a Day is bound to be a motivating "search practice opportunity" for most students.

Collaborative Dialogue

VoiceThread
http://voicethread.com

VoiceThread is a tool that allows users to engage in asynchronous conversations with one another around a wide range of content. Teachers using VoiceThread can embed quotes, pictures or videos to use as prompts to start conversations between their students. What makes VoiceThread unique is that participants can add text, audio and/or video comments to growing conversations. This makes VoiceThread far more engaging than traditional text-based asynchronous conversations.

While educators can make do with the free version of VoiceThread if they are willing to be creative, Bill Ferriter recommends Ed VoiceThread (http://ed.voicethread.com) to teachers and schools. While Ed VoiceThread isn't free – subscriptions generally range between $1 and $2 per student depending on the size of your school – it offers a range of advantages that schools generally find valuable. They include:

1. Individual user accounts for each student, allowing every comment added to every conversation to be tied to a specific child and allowing every child to develop a portfolio of their contributions to classroom conversations over the course of several years.
2. A protected community – Ed VoiceThread users cannot comment on conversations created by non-education users of VoiceThread.
3. The opportunity for teachers to create an almost unlimited number of conversations for their classes.

Here is a sample VoiceThread conversation that Bill Ferriter's students engaged in: http://bit.ly/voicethreadsample1

Skype
http://www.skype.com

One of the most exciting developments for teachers and students in today's world is that connecting in real time with others who share similar interests is just plain easy to do. Most popular social media services -- including Facebook and Google Plus -- have made streaming video chats a central part of their platforms. For educators, however, Skype's Education Community should stand at the center of any efforts to connect students -- to one another OR to adult experts.

The technology that Skype uses to connect individuals to one another is nearly identical to the technology offered by other videoconferencing services. After creating a free account, one-to-one video calls are easy to pull off from any computer with a web cam. The picture and audio quality of calls are satisfactory -- and users can even share their desktops AND their files with one another. What makes the Skype Education Community unique, however, is that it is designed to bring together teachers and students who are looking for partners for specific projects**.**

Verbal Persuasion

Posterous
http://www.posterous.com

Posterous is the blogging application that Bill Ferriter has chosen to use in his work with teachers and students. The primary advantage of Posterous – outside of blogs that are really visually appealing – is that posting to Posterous blogs through email is really, really easy. Even better, when users add attachments – documents, photos, videos – to the email messages that they send to Posterous blogs, those attachments are automatically embedded in new blog posts. Finally, followers of Posterous blogs can sign up to receive email messages each time new content is posted OR they can subscribe using an RSS Feed Reader.

Here is a sample Posterous blog being created by Bill's students: http://birdsofsalem.posterous.com

Blogger
http://www.blogger.com

Another popular blogging tool is Blogger – a Google product. The primary advantage of creating a blog in Blogger is that it is a service that is unlikely to ever go away simply because it is owned by Google. The primary disadvantage of creating a blog in Blogger is that the templates for blogs are not very visually attractive or interesting.

Wordpress
http://www.wordpress.com

Wordpress is a blogging platform that many educators have embraced. It offers most of the same features of Blogger and Posterous – and offers a wide range of visually interesting templates. Finally, because Wordpress is used by a ton of educators, you're likely to find help when you need it without any trouble!

Here is a sample Wordpress blog being created by Bill's students: http://wferriter.wordpress.com

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Visual Persuasion

Flickr Creative Commons
http://www.flickr.com/creativecommons

When teaching students to use digital content responsibly, it is essential to explain the difference between photos, videos and music that is licensed under copyright rules and photos, videos and music that is licensed under the Creative Commons. The Flickr Creative Commons warehouse is probably the most comprehensive collection of high-quality digital photos licensed for use under the Creative Commons available online.

Morguefile
http://www.morguefile.com/

While it is not nearly as comprehensive as Flickr Creative Commons – and while the quality of the photos available are not nearly as good as Flickr Creative Commons – Morguefile is another online warehouse of digital pictures that are licensed for reuse. The primary advantage of Morguefile is that it is unlikely to be blocked by school webservers.

Creative Commons Search
http://search.creativecommons.org/

The Creative Commons website has created this search landing page that allows users to quickly find digital content on popular online warehouses that is licensed for reuse. The primary advantage of the Creative Commons search tool is that it points users to music and video clips that are licensed under the Creative Commons as well.

Animoto
http://animoto.com/

One of the primary mistakes that teachers interested in digital storytelling projects often make is asking students to create final products built from video clips. While these projects can be productive, they also require a level of technical skill – with cameras, with lighting, with editing software – that teachers and students rarely have. That's why the digital storytelling projects that Bill Ferriter incorporates into his classroom are built around still shots and statistics – which are far easier to assemble.

The tool that Bill uses to produce his final products is Animoto, which (1). Automatically creates visually interesting transitions for users and (2). Provides access to a collection of Creative Commons music that can be added as background tracks. Both of these features make digital storytelling projects far more approachable – for teachers and students!

Animoto has special educator accounts that teachers can apply for. Here are the details: http://animoto.com/education

Here is a sample Animoto video made by Bill's students: http://bit.ly/smskivavideo

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<div style="writing-mode: vertical">*Collaborative Problem Solving*</div>

PBWorks
http://www.pbworks.com

Wikis are nothing more than easy to edit websites. That makes them the perfect tool for teachers who want to engage students in collaborative problem solving projects built around shared final products. PBWorks is the wiki service that Bill Ferriter has embraced. While the features that it offers are pretty much standard for all wiki services, PBWorks has a much cleaner set of templates for teachers to choose from. That makes the final products that students create more visually engaging and clean.

Teachers can sign up for free educator accounts in PBWorks – which come complete with the ability to create individual accounts for every student in their class. Here are the details: http://pbworks.com/pbworks-basic-edition

And here is a sample of a PBWorks wiki created by Bill's students: http://carbonfighters.pbworks.com

Wikispaces
http://www.wikispaces.com

Wikispaces is probably the most popular wiki service for educators simply because it has been around for a long, long time. Early on in the Web 2.0 movement, it was the ONLY wiki service that catered to educators. As a result, Wikispaces has been embraced by hundreds of teachers. Just as importantly, Wikispaces has learned to customize its service to meet the unique needs of educators.