

Digital Tools for Teaching and Learning American History

Rwany Sibaja, Center for History and New Media (George Mason University)—Educational Projects. Email: rsibaja@masonlive.gmu.edu

What is it? (description)



Digital History



Examples



Characteristics

--	--	--

I. Digital Tools for Teaching & Learning History: **Benefits & Suggestions**

- Look for what is...free (there's quite a bit)
- Start with small steps (and have a non-digital backup plan); students may be tech savvy, but that does not make them tech literate when thinking historically. Teachers can provide them with needed guidance.
- It's OK to take risks. Digital tools provide unique, or unexpected, benefits for teachers & students

II. Digital Tools for...**BRAINSTORMING**

- Wallwisher**: an online bulletin board—good for HW assignments or a “ticket out the door” approach
- Google Docs**: use place marks, polygon shapes, paths, and imported images over satellite images for graphic/map representations—ideal for military history, the Underground railroad, the Great Migration)
- Cacoo**: construct graphic organizers for lessons and units either individually or collaboratively; modifications appear instantly—great for displaying on a class blog or Wiki.
- Scribbler**: online “whiteboard” designed for collaboration among multiple users (chat room, audio conference, instant modifications)—perfect for group work outside of class hours.

Notes: _____

III. Digital Tools for...**COMMUNICATION**

- Facebook/NING**—Facebook uses existing data; NING allows users to create network from scratch. Imagine what social networking would look like among Bostonians in 1776, or suffragettes in the early 20th century might talk about.
 - [Other free options: Spruz and GoogleGroups/ SocialGo and NING only offer a free trial]
- Twitter**- what would Abe Lincoln's Twitter feed look like? What about soldiers on the Pacific front in WWII? John Quincy Adams is already on Twitter! (<http://teachinghistory.org/nhec-blog/22627>)
- Skype**- does your city have a sister school overseas? Want to chat with a class in your state for an elective course only you teach at your school? What about an activity with a classroom down the hall?
- BLOGS**- If you are not tied to BlackBoard or a standard classroom management program...try different providers. In Wordpress, the “.com” account is limited in what it can do versus the “.org” account (which requires users to find their own server for web hosting).
 - BuddyPress=social networking plugin for WordPress

Notes: _____

I. Digital Tools for...***PRESENTATION***

- a. **Google Maps/ Google Earth:** examining memorials, battlefields, and other historical events; use placemarks, polygon shapes, paths, and images on satellite images to teach through graphic/map representations; ideal for: military history, the Underground railroad, the Great Migration, etc.) Creations can be saved (**note:** Google Earth needs to be installed on computer)
- b. **ManyEyes-** *What can data tell us...in multiple ways?*—upload data and choose visualization preference
- c. **Wordle-**An off-shoot of IBM's Many Eyes project; popular for seeing trends in texts and speeches.
- d. **Glogster-**A multimedia platform for crafting “digital posterboards”—images, video, audio.
- e. **Prezi-** a structural and non-structural approach to presentations where you can embed videos, links, and highlight importance—relative to other elements—based on images, font-size, and groupings

Notes: _____

II. Digital Tools for...***PRODUCTION***

- a. **Wiki**—create your own wiki page for class projects (upload maps, images)
- b. **YouTube/Vimeo-** hosting video productions
- c. **Picasa/FlickR-** host photo collections (privately or publically); help students find sources, annotate information, teach copyright laws, and connect to learning objectives in history
 - i. Creative Commons (searches Flickr, Wikipedia, and other sites for free access images)
 - ii. Library of Congress
 - iii. National Archives
 - iv. NY Public Library Digital Collection; Smithsonian is in Beta mode right now
- d. **iMovie/MovieMaker:** images, music, voice-overs: simple elements of a digital storytelling project
- e. **Little Bird Tales/ ZooBurst:** useful for K-12, but its simplicity is good for elementary students. Students can use these tools for digital storytelling (images, audio, text).
- f. **Animoto:** simple use of image uploads with music and text; educator accounts are free for student

Notes: _____

III. Digital Tools for...***MISCELLANEOUS***

- a. **Zotero:** Also use as a bookmark function (although it is only a Firefox plug-in for now)... add webpages to your list and quickly label why they are there. Added benefits are that Zotero can produce/generate a bibliographical list and helps students see the importance of research-focused metadata
- b. **Mindmeister/FreeMind/OmniGraffle:** create graphic organizers for study, for lesson/unit plans, and many of them can be placed online for collaborative work.
- c. **Gaming:** an untapped potential, especially good for boys in middle school; many games are really being structured to have cross-gender appeal (especially in late elementary school age); some include:
 - i. MissionUS!; Do I Have a Right? (icivics.org); BBC History Games; Playinghistory.org (good collection of games)
- d. **Dropbox:** online data storage with synchronization. *Also see:* **Box** (app in Google Chrome store)
- e. **Diigo:** a way to annotate the web (highlight, post-it notes). It can be added to your toolbar and as long as you are logged in, notes will always appear as you re-visit the page. *Also see:* **Markup** (similar to Diigo)

Notes: _____

Summary Many digital tools are free; start small; assess how technology can authentically engage students; and ground technology assignments in learning objectives (how do scholars work? How can we “do” history online?)



(in order—left to right, top to bottom)

→**Title:** Eskimo children bathing in Bering Sea; c1905. **Call Number:** LOT 12779 <item> [P&P] [P&P]; H8352 **Notes:** H83521 U.S. Copyright Office; Copyright by Frank H. Nowell, Nome.; No. 4161.

→**Title:** Gastonia, N.C. Boy from Loray Mill. "Been at it right smart two years." Location: Gastonia, North Carolina. **Creator(s):** Hine, Lewis Wickes; 1908 October. **Call Number:** LOT 7479, v. 1, no. 0248 [P&P] LC-H5- 248/ Library of Congress

→**Title:** An Exciting Moment. Newsboys' Picnic, Cincinnati. Location: Cincinnati, Ohio. **Creator(s):** Hine, Lewis Wickes; 1908 August. **Call Number:** LOT 7480, v. 1, no. 0025 [P&P]/ Library of Congress

→ **Title:** Seneca Glass Works, Morgantown, W. Va. Girls wrapping and packing; Oct., 1908. Location: Morgantown, West Virginia. **Creator(s):** Hine, Lewis Wickes. **Call Number:** LOT 7478, no. 0171 [P&P]/ Library of Congress

→**Title:** Greel's Shoe-shining Parlor, Indianapolis, Ind. **Creator(s):** Hine, Lewis Wickes; 1908, August. **Call Number:** LOT 7480, v. 1, no. 0050 [P&P]/Library of Congress