

the best of NewsFeed 2009

Welcome 2010

change is gonna come

Throughout the year just gone the two Scottish RSCs have scoured the virtual highways and byways to bring you the best and most interesting new technologies to add sparkle and value to teaching and learning.

Before we press on with that task for the year to come we thought we'd prepare this small but action-packed e-FirstFoot, culled from some of the best and most interesting items which appeared in NewsFeed in 2009.

Come with us now and stroll virtually down the boulevards of Paris , create an online jigsaw, build sound sequences from the comfort of your desk and keep the beat with an online metronome, explore the untracked depths of space or experience life in the Flanders trenches, get the inside track on Wordle, Ning and a slew of image editors.

Nothing stands still of course and changes will come with the New Year but with the RSC e-First Foot you'll be ready for anything (and judging by 2009 you just might have to be!)

So, shortie and black bun it ain't and it may not have the warm glow of whisky or coal, but 'Ye may gang far and fare waur'.

Happy New Year to all our Readers!

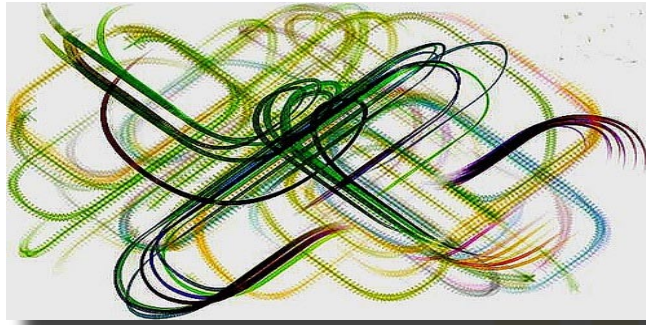
www.scottish-rscs.org.uk/newsfeed



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<http://bit.ly/6u2P8H>

january

Bomomo: Create Abstract Art Online



One for the art staff here. bomomo is an online site where you can create fluid, flowing abstract art then store it, share it, exhibit it.

bomomo might take a bit of getting used to but once you've mastered the basics the results can be strange and beautiful as in the example above (*Abstract Art*) by Binini .

<http://bit.ly/7Gr6zc>

High-end Image Editing Online



An excellent review from website Read Write Web which covers a range of free online image editors containing many features only previously found in sophisticated editing products with a matching high price. A series of tools is compared and reviewed.

Painting without having to clean the brushes.

<http://bit.ly/8li5lg>

february

LooGix Creating Animated Images Online



This image tool allows you to take a pair of images and create an animation linking the two together. Easy, fast and fun!

<http://bit.ly/79bTfd>

Get Creative with VirtualStudio



VirtualStudio is a free image editor which offers a range of features such as image enhancement, exposure correction, special effects (filters) and much more.

It will also work with images created and saved in popular image-editing programs such as Photoshop CS3, Photoshop Elements and PaintShop Pro. The interface has a 'professional' look and feel to it and is compatible with Windows XP and Vista.

<http://bit.ly/7dowNB>

march

Create Photo Mosaics with your own Digital Images



Andreamosaic allows you to create photographic mosaics using your own digital images. Digital photographs are made up of thousands of individual pixels. It often follows that the more pixels available the better quality the photograph.

However, the free software Andreamosaic takes this a stage further by using individual photographs as thumbnails to create a digital mosaic - a similar effect is often used in adverts and large posters.

<http://bit.ly/6ZvfOJ>

Paris in the Spring - Virtually



If present exchange rate trends continue then perhaps the only way to visit Paris soon will be via the computer screen. But at least it is now possible to study the enigmatic smile of the Mona Lisa by taking a virtual tour of the Louvre (pause for accordian music). There are eleven different tours available and the coffee is a lot cheaper.

<http://bit.ly/6XriUJ>

april

Potted Video History of the Internet



Computer science staff and other interested parties might want to take a moment to view this short but impressive History of the Internet (a short animated documentary from Milah Bilgil). The film explains many of the key concepts of modern computing and does it through the use of a new set of info-graphic symbols known as PICOL icons. (PICOL = Pictorial Communication Language)

<http://bit.ly/5NjjCA>

Create your own Online Jigsaw

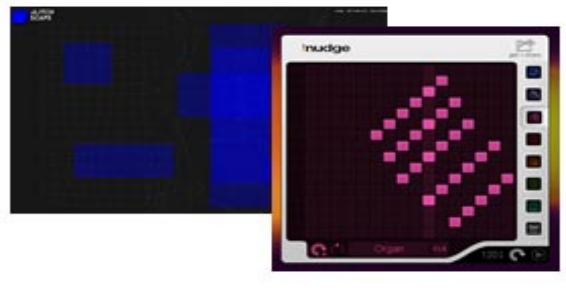


A great little free online tool for creating online jigsaws from your own digital images. Ideal for using with interactive whiteboards or tablet PCs.

<http://bit.ly/8MvKLG>

may

Music - At Your Fingertips, On Your Desktop

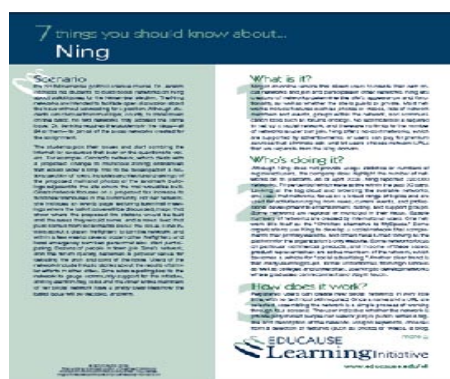


One for the music department. News of two fantastic online music making sites where you enter co-ordinates online to create patterns of sound which can then be downloaded back to your own desktop. With GlitchScape you can draw patterns of squares or rectangles on a grid, each one of which represents a sound. As you add shapes so a multi-layered sound landscape builds up. Strange but well worth a look (and a listen).

Possibly even more impressive is inudge which looks at first glance like an online version of the Tenori-On hand-held synthesiser recently popularised by the singer Little Boots. Once again you enter in patterns to a grid - or rather a series of grids - each of which represents a family of sounds like organ or percussion. You can alter the tempo and shift the bias of sound between the left and right channels and when the masterpiece is finished you can download the finished file to your desktop. Both excellent resources for music, computing, recording and electronics. Both a lot of fun!

<http://bit.ly/8XM7Fs>

7 Things You Should Know About Ning



This excellent series of briefing papers from Educause which we've regularly featured here in NewsFeed covers the online social network building tool Ning in its latest offering. If you haven't encountered Ning up until now, it's a set of no-cost online tools and storage which allow you to build a community online and share information, images audio, video. You set up your Ning and control the access and how the riches of it are shared around.

<http://bit.ly/6zXPYI>

june

Dulce et Decorum Est (Virtually)



The First World War Poetry Digital Archive and the Learning Technologies Group at Oxford University have collaborated on an exciting new project in the 3D virtual world Second Life to simulate areas of the Western Front 1914-18. The team believes this is the first time anything of its type has been done on Second Life.

This project, which is funded by JISC, has assembled a range of digitised archival materials like poetry manuscripts, letters and diaries from the major poets of the First World War including Wilfred Owen, Isaac Rosenberg and Vera Brittain, along with contextual primary source materials.

<http://bit.ly/6XFhJs>

PlanetQuest Space Exploration Timeline from NASA



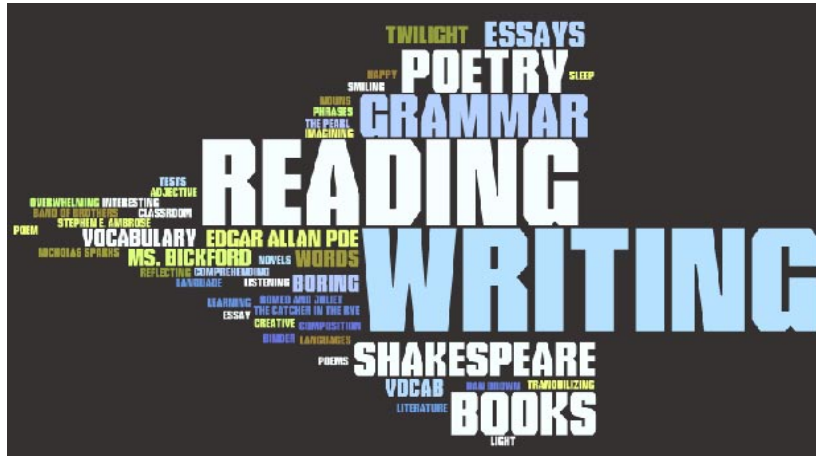
From ancient times when the early Greek philosophers looked into the heavens and pondered the existence of other worlds beyond earth, through the discovery of the telescope which brought those very heavens into focus to the 'first small step' by a man with a name from the Scottish borders on the surface of the moon, inhabitants of this world have speculated that there might be others.

The twentieth century turned some of that speculation into hard reality and still the journey continues. You can plot the milestones on that journey using PlanetQuest a new historical timeline of planetary exploration assembled by NASA. Highly informative, beautiful to look at and a fine use of the timeline tool to display history graphically.

<http://bit.ly/4pKHDw>

july

Why use Wordle?



What is Wordle and how can it be used? If you would like to know how you could put this free online service to good use. Well, here are 38 ideas that you might want to consider:

<http://bit.ly/4s0hy4>

Creating Accessible Online Surveys



How can you be sure that the online survey tool you are using is accessible? In a recent 'Survey of Surveys' the Web Accessibility Centre (WAC) carried out accessibility testing on a range of online survey tools to assess their features such as the accessibility of text fields, radio buttons, rating scales etc.

Although none of the online tools tested received a Grade A, Survey Gizmo and Snap Survey Professional Editions were the highest with a B+ while Zoomerang received a poor D- grade.

<http://bit.ly/6Q6wzX>

august

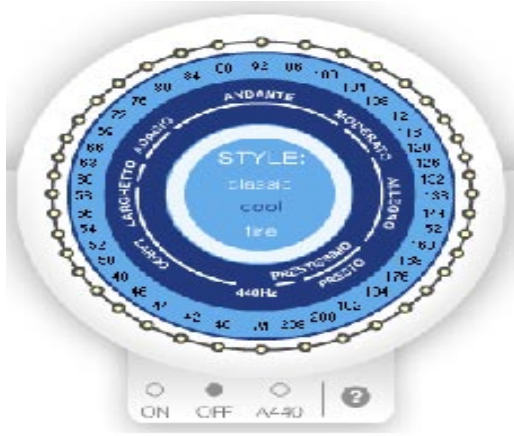
More for Music Teachers



An excellent short clip from the World Science Festival 2009 in which Bobby McFerrin, 'the human beat box', demonstrates the art of teaching without words.

<http://bit.ly/7ZGo8x>

Click for an Online Metronome



A valuable online resource this for music teachers and musicians at all stages. An online metronome ideal for quick and easy use while practicing music, this tool helps with rhythm as well as tempo selections.

On the site you'll also find a range of articles on using the metronome, setting tempi and even how to access the device through a mobile phone (handy for buskers!).

<http://bit.ly/7LcBS6>

september

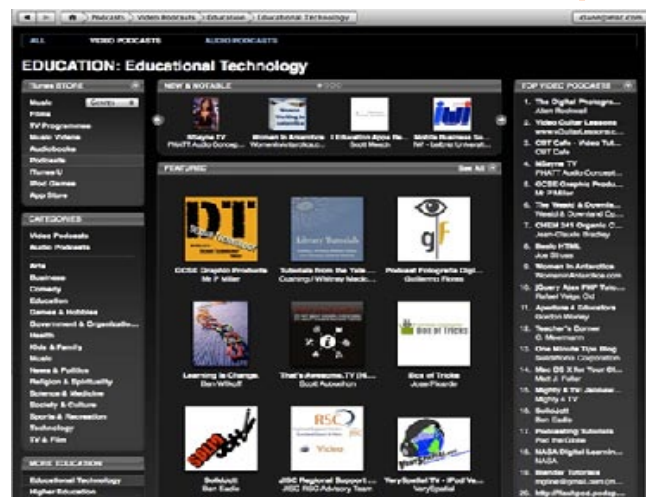
Sound Clips, Sound Bites and Sound Effects



SoundBible.com offers thousands of free sound effects, sound clips, and straight up sounds. These sounds can be used in a variety of sound projects including Video Sound Scores, Movie Scoring, Game Design, Powerpoint Presentations, Sound Boards. The list goes on.

<http://bit.ly/8EJ3TK>

RSC Scotland South & West - Top of the iPops



The RSC Scotland S&W have been publishing podcasts on Apple's iTunes Store since October 2008. The video podcasts are currently featured on the iTunes Store under Education. There is a selection of 17 audio and video podcasts from RSC Scotland S&W, freely available to subscribe to and enjoy.

<http://bit.ly/7npAgU>

October

Virtual Construction Site



Visit the virtual construction training centre - the ACT-UK Simulation Centre. With the backing of the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB), leading construction companies and Coventry University the centre will help both construction students and industry professionals develop their people management skills and fulfil their potential through a pioneering combination of virtual reality computer techniques and the use of professional actors.

<http://bit.ly/6rqB77>

Microsoft AutoCollage 2008: Free for Educators



Microsoft AutoCollage 2008 lets you create collages from a folder of images. It analyses the images and looks for the most interesting blends using face detection and other clever algorithms. The final output can be saved as a desktop image, emailed or optimised for printing out.

There's normally a charge for AutoCollage but educators can get it for free by joining the Innovative Teachers Network and downloading it from there. It's free to sign up.

<http://bit.ly/821vBV>

november

Online Resource for Hospitality Students



Tired of telling your students the correct way of setting a table, spacing chairs or folding napkins? Bright Settings™, a table linen wholesaler, has some nice interactive guides which might be useful to students (this is an American site so you might want to check these resources first).

<http://bit.ly/6c1nyd>

Music Theory Online



Musictheory.net was launched on the first day of the 21st century and uses a range of new online technologies to teach music theory and application.

Here you'll find everything from the treble clef to time signatures as well as scale and ear trainers, chord calculators, even a utility to print out staff paper to write your own music.

Finally you can use the site entirely online or download the whole concerto back to your own computer.

<http://bit.ly/4yMbPz>

december

WallWisher - Free Online Noticeboard



WallWisher is a free online noticeboard service designed to allow easy communication via virtual sticky notes. It's easy for users to create boards (no registration required) which then can be shared for others to add and edit.

As well as 'traditional' text notes, users can embed images and even web pages and videos. Noticeboards can easily be shared via a long list of social network sites like Facebook, MySpace etc, embedded in webpages or even by a dedicated RSS feed.

<http://bit.ly/4VtshT>

On the Street Where you Live: Google Street View Comes to the UK



Google has launched the UK version of its Street View service which has coverage of 25 cities from Aberdeen to Southampton. The new facility is the end result of a monumental effort which has involved Google's customised camera cars creating video images of 22,369 miles through the highways and byways of the UK.

<http://bit.ly/6S1frl>