

Web 2.0: YoLink

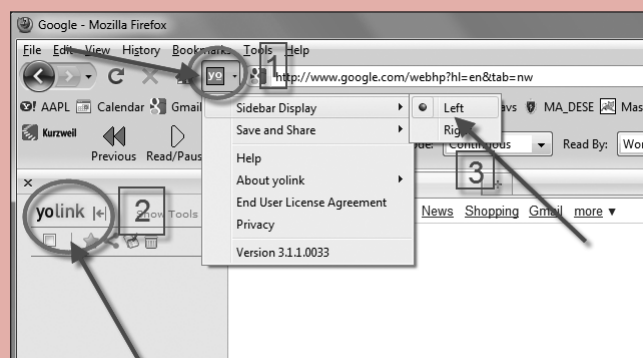
Building Information Literacy

Many students access electronic information daily from portable digital devices such as cell phones, iPods, and netbooks to iPads, Kindles, laptops, and USB flash drives. Being tool-savvy, however, doesn't mean that students are web-savvy or that they know how to locate, evaluate, and use relevant information. To be information-literate in the 21st century, students must think critically while using digital technologies to research, organize, evaluate, and share information (Partnership for 21st Century Skills).

Information literacy doesn't come naturally. It's a skill that must be learned, like reading, writing, and math. Students must be taught to determine the usefulness of a resource, ascertain bias, and assess currency. Additionally, they must use resources accurately, weaving together information from multiple sources. Effective online research using popular search engines like Google, Alta Vista, or Bing can be frustrating because it's unclear from the links those search engines retrieve whether or not a resource is relevant. Often, you must click the link to explore in greater detail.

YoLink (www.yolink.com), a free browser plugin and search engine helper, improves search efficiency by retrieving only relevant web-based resources. It installs in its own toolbar as a Firefox or Internet Explorer add-on. Users access it after installation by clicking the YoLink button. A YoLink sidebar opens at the left or right side of the browser window where you can continue the search.

To locate information, you enter your keyword search terms, click the YoLink search button, and direct the tool to search the Internet for



Keep Current with a Blog Aggregator

The Internet has given rise to thousands of news sources and millions of blogs written by individuals. Many people have favorite blogs that they check regularly for updates, hoping for more wit or insight from the blog's owner. Some blogs are updated regularly—daily or the same few days each week; other blogs are updated only occasionally—perhaps two days in a row one week, then a week with no new postings. You may have developed a routine, as many have, of checking the same few websites every morning, looking for new postings.

Blog aggregators (also called blog readers)

can provide one site to check instead of half a dozen. Most news sites and blogs nowadays have an associated RSS feed, which broadcasts new postings. RSS is an acronym that (commonly) stands for Really Simple Syndication. Websites, including blogs, can broadcast data in a standardized XML format for RSS readers; most blog hosting services provide the RSS feed.

Blog aggregators are applications that store a list of RSS feeds to listen to, and they show any new updates on these sites. Aggregators are often web-based, but they can also be located on your desktop or even used on mobile devices, like cell phones or an iPad.

A blog aggregator, set up with your preferred websites, can show you all new postings on these sites and provide links to new articles, so that you don't have to visit a site just to see if any new posts are available.

Try setting up a blog aggregator like Google Reader (www.google.com/reader) to keep track of education news websites and blogs. It can save you time in navigating around websites by showing only new postings, and it can help you keep up to date with a number of sources. A gadget is also available on iGoogle—if you've decided to set up a home page—to show your blog reader as well.

By Carol S. Holzberg, Ph.D.
NETS-T IIID; IVA

keyword matches. YoLink displays the search matches with brief descriptions of what you'll find if you click the link to the site. Often those descriptions are all that you need to determine if a site is relevant.

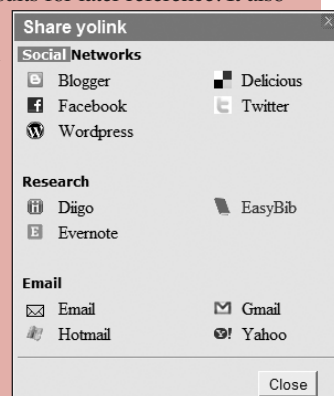
I prefer using a conventional search engine like Google to search for websites containing my keywords. Once Google displays a list of possible matches, I then use YoLink to manage the links retrieved. Search results display with highlighted keywords in the YoLink sidebar. If you click any one of those matches in the YoLink sidebar, YoLink displays the result in the original webpage with the search text automatically highlighted. To explore a search result without going to the page, simply hover your mouse over the YoLink search results, and you'll see the keyword text in context.

YoLink does more than just search and find information. It offers special tools that bookmark search results for later reference. It also has click-on buttons that enable you to send information via email, or post results to social networking sites such as Blogger, Delicious, Facebook, Twitter, and Diigo. You can create citations for results found by clicking the EasyBib icon or export the results to a GoogleDocs document if you have an account.

Getting comfortable with YoLink's many features will take time. But for projects and assignments where the intended outcome is both information literacy and completing the work, YoLink can help teach students to understand the difference between popular and scholarly materials. It can also strengthen the skills they need to determine resource appropriateness, bias, currency, and authority.

Source
Partnership for 21st Century Skills. (n.d.) Information literacy. Retrieved from http://p21.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=264&Itemid=120

Online Resource
Podagog – exploring the role of mobile devices in education – www.podagog.org



By John D. Homer, Ph.D.

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For more information, visit www.technologyintegrationforteachers.com

Google Applications in the Classroom

By Amy Trujillo

NETS-T IB,C; IIA,B,C; IIID

Schools are moving away from purchasing new pieces of technology and toward effectively using what is already in the classroom. This shift is due to budget cuts, the focus on the National Educational Technology Standards (NETS), and No Child Left Behind. According to Christensen and Horn (2008), "The key to transforming the classroom with technology is in how it is implemented."

Google applications can be implemented seamlessly into the curriculum since they meet the needs of a diverse audience, tie in directly with the NETS, and fit well within a budget. Not only does Google have an outstanding and customizable search engine, but it also has an enormous collection of free web-based applications that are extremely useful to educators.

Google applications align with the NETS by giving students and educators opportunities to discover, create, and use new technology that supports what is already happening in the classroom. These applications promote digital citizenship, effective communication, and creativity.

Google can provide digital-age experiences with many applications, including:

- Chat
- Blogger
- SketchUp
- Picasa
- Google Earth
- Google Docs
- iGoogle
- Google Sites

Google even redefines how users search for information with advanced tools such as Wonder Wheel, filters that search social networks, and features that put items in a timeline or pull websites with fewer pictures or ads.

A list of Google applications and links to Google for Educators and the Google Teacher Academy

can be found on our website. The Google Teacher Academy is a free professional development experience for any teacher who wants to learn more about Google applications, as well as options to become a leader and trainer for other educators.

Every educator works out of his or her own needs and interests when integrating technology into the curriculum. The best way to find out which Google

"Teachers are always scouting for inexpensive and free tools that will help them in the classroom."
-The Teachers' Lounge

applications work for a specific classroom or group of students is to experiment with what is available, research how others are using the applications, and continue to assess the effectiveness of the technology.

Many examples of Google implementation can be found on the Google YouTube channel and at the Google Classroom website. After you preview examples of how Google works in the classroom, you may want to pick out one or two Google applications to integrate into an upcoming lesson or unit.

Google applications can promote a creative environment in which students gain a deeper understanding of the standards. Even if just the advanced search tools are used, Google will still make a difference in how technology is integrated. The point is that educators test the waters of the available technology so they can have a well-thought-out approach to using it effectively in their classroom.

Sources:
Christensen, C. M., & Horn, M. B. (August 2008). Disrupting class: Student-centric education is the future. *Edutopia*. Retrieved from www.edutopia.org/student-centric-education-technology

Jordan, B. (July 6, 2010). Using Google Docs in the classroom. *The Teachers' Lounge*. Retrieved from blog.reallygoodstuff.com/?p=3441

Resource:
National Educational Technology Standards (NETS). For students – released 2007. For teachers – released 2008. International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE). Find online at www.iste.org/standards.aspx

Bloggers



Free Technology for Teachers

By Lee Nelson
NETS-T VA,C

<http://freetech4teachers.com>

The headline says it all on this blog—free resources, ideas, and lesson plans for teaching with technology. The blog is *Free Technology for Teachers* and that's exactly what it gives you.

The simple-to-follow blog offers free downloads, a job board, Google tools tutorials, video creation resources, and—of course—free technology. You can also sign up for free webinars. Professional development PDFs are available that help educators further their own education. Some of the topics include:

- Beyond Google
- Google Earth Across the Curriculum
- Twelve Essentials for Technology Integration

Some of the blog entries also give insight to enhancing one's lessons. One particular day, the blog's author posted an article featuring a helpful list of links titled *100 Ways to Use Social Media in the Classroom* by Online Universities.

The blog is well organized, with the ability to browse blog archives and pick a favorite subject. It has thousands of fans on its Facebook page and is followed every day by more than 21,000 subscribers.

Free Technology for Teachers is written by Richard Byrne, a Google Certified Teacher. The blog won the Edublog Award for Best Resource Sharing Blog two years in a row.

Using iGoogle as the Classroom Home Page

By Amy Trujillo

iGoogle (www.google.com/ig) is a tool that allows Google users to create a free personalized home page for their classroom. Each piece of content added to iGoogle is known as a *gadget*. Gadgets can be picked from the myriad choices already available, or they can be created by students or school personnel.

Consider using iGoogle as a one-stop resource for school-related gadgets—like averages, idioms, and translations—or as a teachable moment before venturing off to another website. One iGoogle site can hold numerous pages when you use tabs; each tab can have its own theme and gadgets for the different topics in class.

For example:

- A **classroom information** tab can hold the class blog, Twitter account, calendar, and student-created gadgets for projects.
- A **language arts** tab can have dictionaries, idioms, audio word of the day, and grammar and reading gadgets.
- A **science** tab can have science news stories, NASA pictures, and measurements.

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- A **social studies** tab can have weather and time from countries the class is studying, geography, and words in other languages.
- There are also many gadgets for **math** on all levels that can be added to a tab.

Ten Recommended iGoogle Themes

1. Colorful India
2. Under the Sea by National Geographic
3. 3D Views in Google Earth
4. AF en Iguazu
5. Hubble Space Telescope
6. Rainforest Action Network
7. Discover Italy
8. Discover Great Britain
9. 3D Cities in Google Earth
10. Solar System

Ten Recommended iGoogle Gadgets

1. Google Translate
2. Idiom of the Day
3. Blogger
4. Dictionary
5. Weather
6. Date and Time
7. Multiplication Flash Cards
8. Math in a Minute
9. Mean, Median, and Mode
10. Dictionary.com Word of the Day

The iGoogle home page is a universal tool since it can be customized to such a degree. Even the theme of the page can be changed to represent current events, students' cultural backgrounds, or a preview of upcoming topics. One theme could reflect the upcoming unit on Egypt, another could celebrate Chinese New Year, and another could go along with the space project.

Go to the iGoogle website. Click *Sign in* if you already have a Google account or to set one up. Click *Add stuff* on the top right of the page to search for appropriate gadgets. To add a gadget, click *Add it now*, and place it on the page where you want it. To delete or edit a gadget, click the down arrow on the top right of the gadget. To change the theme, click *Change theme* on the top right. Some themes are static, while others have a rotation of pictures or animated graphics. Tabs can be added and accessed by clicking the arrow

next to Home. Click *Edit this tab* to change the layout and other features of the page.

Schools and districts can use Google Apps, which allows teachers and students to have even more customization of iGoogle, along with the other Google products and services. The iGoogle gadgets may work differently on different platforms. Test the iGoogle page at work and at home to make sure all of the gadgets work properly. Be aware that many gadgets and themes are appropriate for students, but some are not. It is a good idea to set up iGoogle when class is not in session.

Google YouTube Channel

By Amy Trujillo

www.youtube.com/user/Google

The Google channels on YouTube are a categorized collection of videos in chronological order made by Google. There are twenty-nine Google channels at this time, which are all searchable.

The Google YouTube channel is a time-saving tool that allows teachers to preview Google products and examples of how they can be integrated into the curriculum and standards. Teachers can share the videos in the classroom to encourage students to choose how they demonstrate knowledge of the content. Then students can use the Google tools to provide pieces of authentic assessment.

Google's main YouTube channel is www.youtube.com/user/Google. This page has the most recent video prominently displayed; favorites, playlists, and subscriptions; and a link to subscribe to the channel. Once you have subscribed, the most recent Google videos will be displayed on your main YouTube page, along with your other subscriptions.

The channel has two views: player and grid view. The player view has the latest or selected video in the video player and the other uploaded videos and favorites in the side column. The grid view has three equally sized columns: Uploads, Favorites, and Playlists. The Google channel can be added to the user's personal playlist by clicking Playlists and choosing an existing or new playlist. It can also be added to an RSS reader by copying and pasting the URL and adding it to the reader.

Ten Google Videos That Provide Inspiration for Educators

1. Google Oceans
2. Inside Google Translate
3. Google Docs
4. Earth View in Google Maps
5. Locking SafeSearch
6. Why create 3D models for Google Earth?
7. Teachers and Principals Talk about Google Docs
8. How to Use Realtime Search
9. Watershed School sixth graders talk about using Google Apps
10. Watershed School speaks about Google Apps

Google Wonder Wheel

By Amy Trujillo

Google Wonder Wheel is a search tool that gives you a visual representation of search terms related to the original search. The topic and subcategories are displayed as a central hub and spokes, with the accompanying websites listed to the right. As you click on subcategories, the previous hub is moved lower on the screen, and the new search term forms another wheel. It is easy to go back to previous hubs if needed.

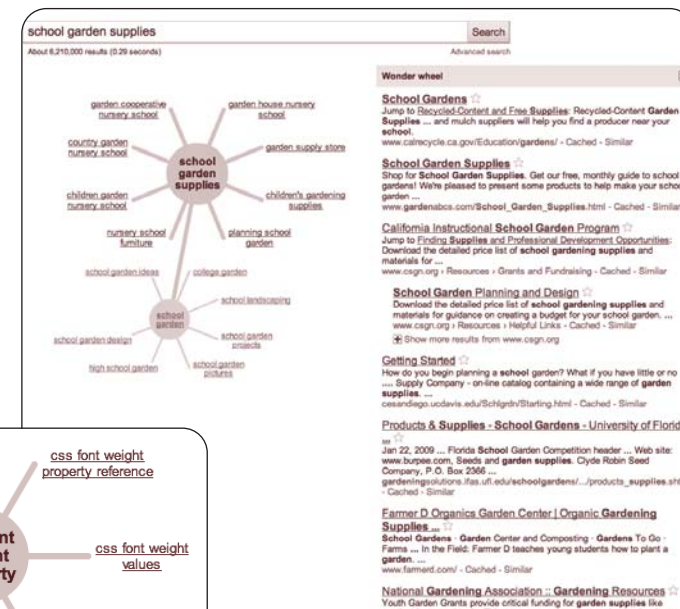
Wonder Wheel automatically breaks your topic down into subcategories, which can save you time and energy. It can also help you identify a search term that more nearly reflects what you wanted to find. Both students and employees can use it for narrowing search topics. It works well when searching for such topics as blends and diagraphs, xhtml, or the Windows blue screen.

Steps for Implementation

- Type the search item into the Google search box (www.google.com) and press *Search*.
- Click on *Show search tools* on the left side of the window.
- Click on *Wonder wheel*. The topic will become the hub with subcategories as the spokes.
- Click on the spokes for more information that is linked to the topic.
- Click on related websites on the right for the narrowed search topic.
- Customize your search even further by clicking other Google tools on the left, like *Timeline*, *Nearby*, *Fewer shopping sites*, or *Sites with images*.

Google Instant Search minimizes the time spent looking for a website, but it disables

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the Wonder Wheel feature. To use Wonder Wheel, you must turn off Instant Search. Turn it off by using the drop-down menu to the right of the search box. Once Instant Search is turned off, you will find Wonder Wheel in the left column under *More search tools*.

Note to reader: Google Wonder Wheel may function differently on different web browsers. The author had difficulty using the feature on IE8 at her school. The editor didn't have to disable Instant Search to use the Wonder Wheel function on the Chrome browser. It may take some experimentation to find the best platform for running this feature.

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