DIGITAL STORYTELLING – USING PODCASTING AND VODCASTING

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ABSTRACT

This session explored the use of Podcasting and Vodcasting as vehicle for digital storytelling and ways that still images, audio and video can be combined to communicate strong narratives and messages in the classroom.

Digital Storytelling evolved in the in the 1990s as a way of using emerging digital technologies to produce compelling narratives and pioneered by Dana Atchley (1941–2000) at the Centre for Digital Storytelling in California (www.storycenter.org). With the development of digital media technologies in recent years the potential of digital storytelling in the classroom is exciting and accessible.

listen deeply   tell stories

Traditionally digital storytelling uses a combination of images and audio to express a personal story. These stories usually have an emphasis on first-person narrative, a workshop processes to create the story and specific production methods. We are going to explore the wider ability digital media to communicate narratives in creative and meaningful ways and as a precursor to using video or animation to the same ends.

Podcasting and Vodcasting (video podcasting) technologies give educational institutions the ability to distribute and share their projects easily with worldwide audiences on multiple devices. The podcasting aspect will be covered later on in this piece.
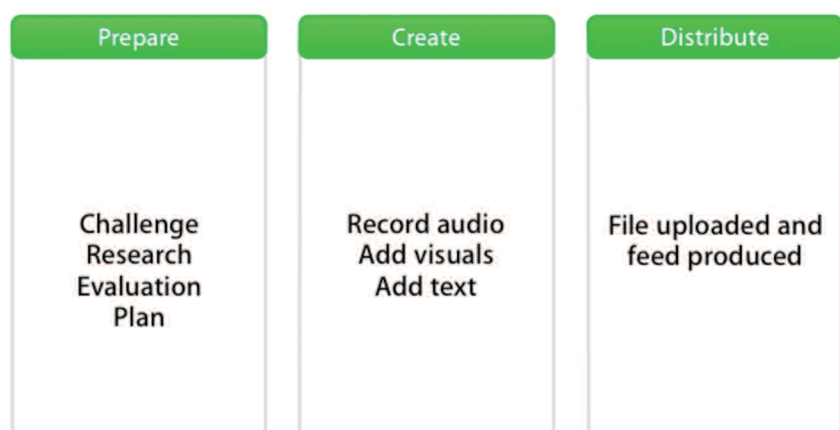
Digital storytelling projects in the classroom have a positive impact on student outcomes in a wide range subjects due to its flexibility. The curriculum is generally delivered by teachers organising activities for students that fall into four different types: expression, investigation, explanation and observation.
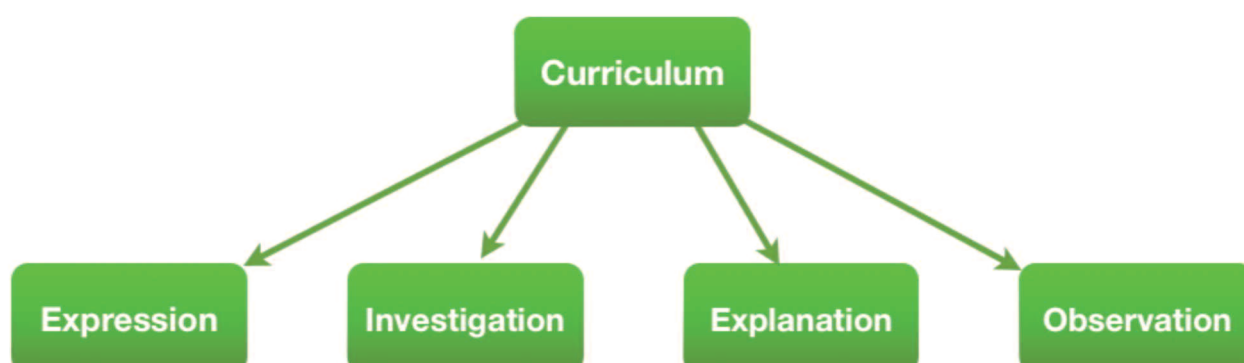
All of these activities are ideally suited to using digital storytelling techniques in a way that students find motivating and engaging. The outcomes are quite often surprising to both teachers and students. For the purposes of this piece we will refer to the activity as a 'story' but this could easily be a: documentary, report, review, set of instructions, poem or a drama.

	Literacy	Maths	Science	History	Geog	Art	Music	PE	PSHE
Expression	✔					✔	✔		✔
Investigate		✔	✔	✔	✔			✔	
Explanation	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Observation	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

The process for working creatively with digital storytelling through to the finished published podcast falls into three distinct stages to produce a workflow of: Prepare > Create > Distribute

Prepare	Create	Distribute
Challenge Research Evaluation Plan	Record audio Add visuals Add text	File uploaded and feed produced

PREPARE

In a classroom context the hardest part to implement successfully is the preparation phase as many students hate planning. To get round this obstacle digital comics have been successfully used to create an engaging activity to implement the preparation phase of the workflow.
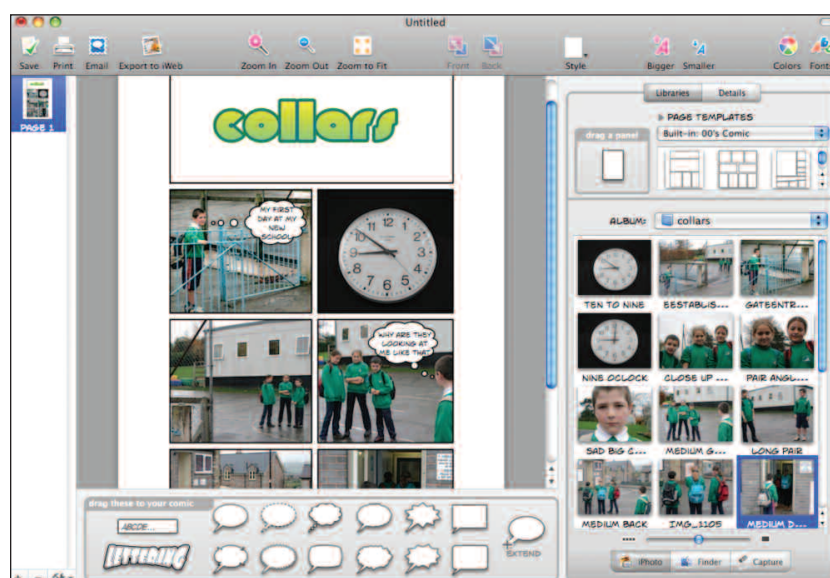

The activity usually sets the students a challenge that they then have to respond to by coming up with an idea, collecting images to support the idea and then using comic creation software (Comic Life www.plasq.com) to create a pictorial visualisation of the story they want to tell.

CREATE

This planning then becomes the basis for the digital media project that the students create. This project could be delivered in a number of different ways: an audio recording, an enhanced podcast file (audio and images), a digital video project or an animation project.

An audio recording can be produced in software such as Audacity (Mac and Windows) or GarageBand (Mac only) and Podium (Windows only).
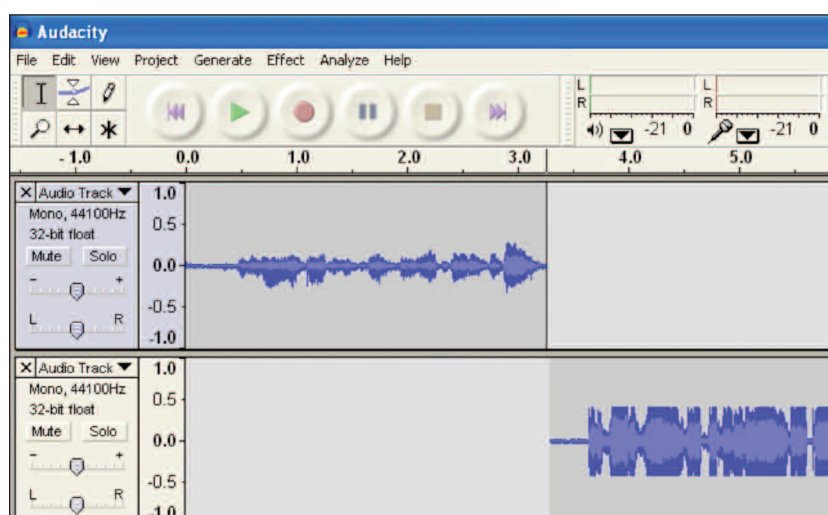
An enhanced podcast file could be produced in GarageBand (Mac only).

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A digital video project could be produced using any video editing software such as iMovie (Mac only) or Movie Maker (Windows only).d to hours of unfulfilling editing in an effort to make meaning where the filmmaker has not managed it.


DISTRIBUTE

> *A podcast is a series of digital-media files which are distributed over the internet using syndication feeds for playback on portable media players and computers.*

(definition from Wikipedia)

Podcasting which is in effect audio or video blogging is a technology that allows organisations and individuals to deliver multimedia content to an audience on a regular basis with little or no effort on the part of a user. The user simply subscribes to a Podcast feed and the content is downloaded to the user's computer when a new Podcast episode/programme is available. This Podcast can then be played in a computer media player of the user's choice, such as iTunes, or synchronised with the user's portable music player, such as an iPod. This means that the user does not have to go and look for information and is not tied into accessing media at specified times.

The term Podcasting arose from the amalgamation two words iPod and Broadcasting because it was believed by the early pioneers of this technology that the ubiquitous iPod was an ideal device to listen to Podcasts on. It should be pointed out that it is not necessary to listen to a standard Podcast on an iPod as other MP3 players can do this too.
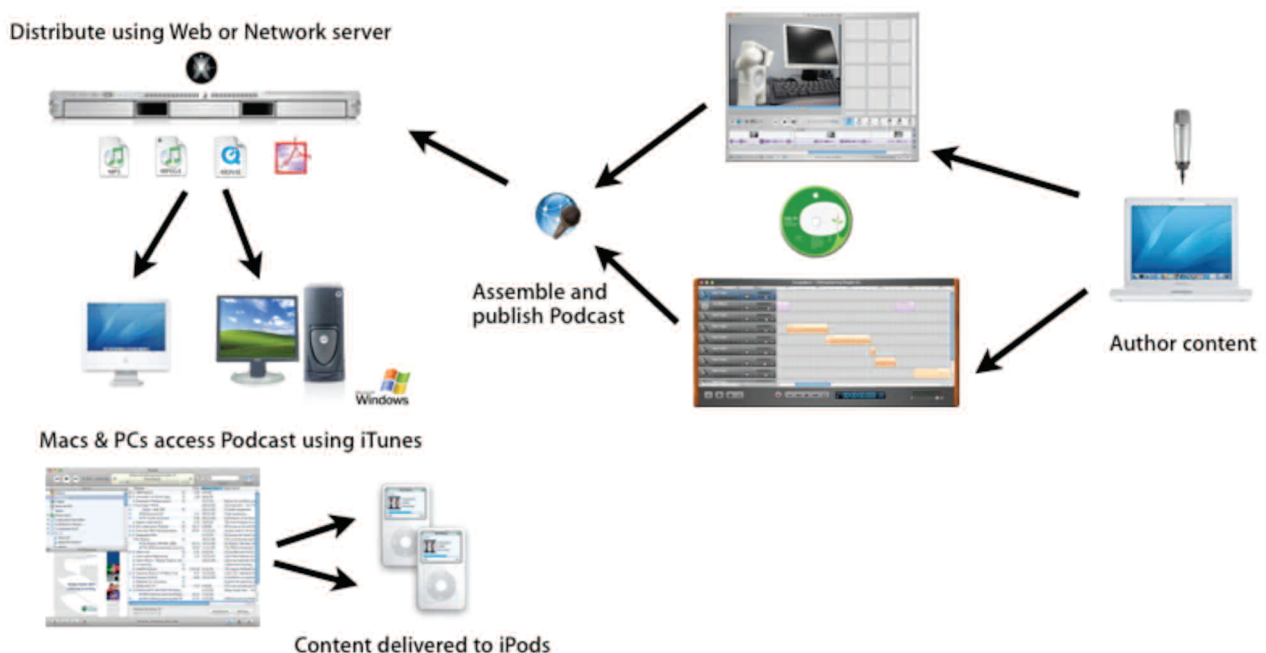
A simple analogy for the difference between Podcasting and traditional web-based media delivery would be the way different people purchase magazines that interest them. Say I am interested in gardening I could go to my local newsagent or bookshop and look through the shelves and then find a magazine I like the look of. When I have found the gardening magazine I want I can purchase it and take it home to read. Of course I could subscribe to the gardening magazine and get it sent to my home each month for me to read whenever I want. Sometimes I receive my subscription copy of the magazine before it hits the shelves in the shops. This way there is no effort on my behalf and the magazine company is happy because they are making a regular sale.

The easiest way of delivering a Podcast is via a web-based tool that creates the feed for you.

Many free tools exist such as:

Podbean - www.podbean.com
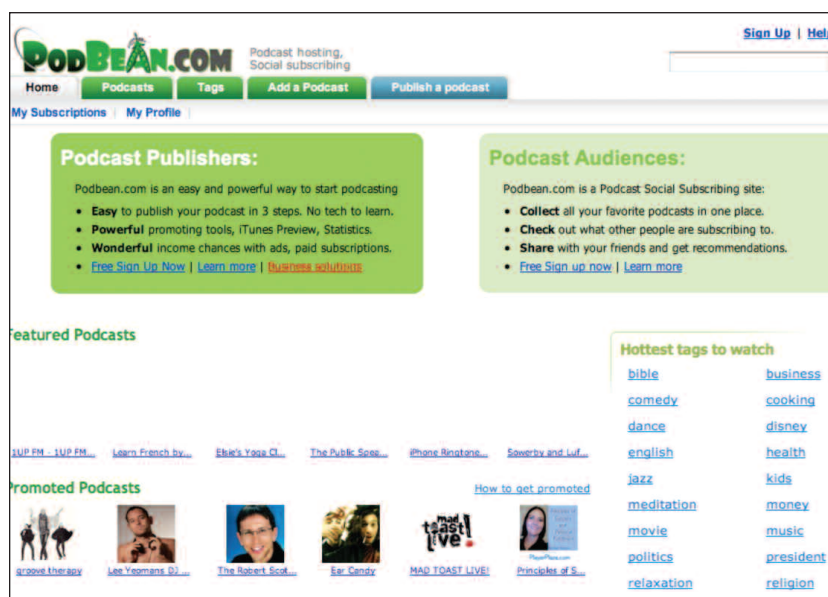
Gabcast – www.gabcast.com

These services come with the caveat that they are limited in space and functionality and also by the fact that they are publicly accessible therefore creating some security issues for schools. Some networks block these sites too for schools.

Another option is to use a service designed for schools like Cre8orcast

(www.learning-central.org/Cre8orCast.html) that is fully functional and secure.

LINKS

How to guides available on www.davidbaugh.co.uk and www.dvined.org.uk

Centre for digital storytelling – www.storycenter.org

Comic Life – www.plasq.com

Audacity – www.audacity.sourceforge.net

GarageBand and iMovie www.apple.com/ilife/

MovieMaker www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/moviemaker

David Baugh is a primary trained teacher with classroom experience of teaching students aged 5-18 latterly LA Advisor with responsibility for ICT in 65 schools. He is now an independent trainer, author and adviser for ICT working for a wide range of organisations. He has been an Apple Distinguished Educator for 9 years and is an Apple Certified Trainer. He was the winner of the Teaching Awards Creative use of ICT in 2000 and Becta's ICT in Practice awards in 2001. Most recently he has authored and developed the Digital Cre8or Award which is a Level 1 and 2 qualification equivalent to the ECDL that allows students and teachers to get accreditation for the creative use of digital media (www.bcs.org/cre8or).