



A Few New Things

By Joyce Kasman Valenza

Editor's Note: This article was derived from a blog post at <http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/blog/1340000334/post/760015876.html>.

In the beginning, there was a Web site called *43 Things* (<http://www.43things.com/>).

The site continues to ask folks about the things they want to do with their lives, mostly the things they want to learn. The goal: to make a list, to get inspired, to share your progress with others. As you achieve a goal, you click on an "I've done this" button and share a story about how you did it.

In a February 26, 2006 article for *Information Outlook*, Stephen Abram, Vice President of Innovation for Sirsi Corporation and past president of the Canadian Library Association, suggested a list of library-related things to add to the site. And in typical social networking style, Stephen's ideas for *things* launched a bunch of others. Helene Blowers' Learning 2.0 (<http://plcmcl2-about.blogspot.com/>), a.k.a 23 Things and California's School Library Learning 2.0 (<http://www.schoollibrarylearning2.blogspot.com/>), with its own version of 23 Things, do a brilliant job helping librarians and teacher-librarians train themselves for leadership in new information landscapes.

While those robust first-step activities introduce professionals to powerful, newly available tools, I thought we might consider a few next steps, further *things* to do with our new *things*. How can we apply 2.0 tools, in partnership with classroom teachers, to inspire learning and engage learners, especially as they relate to information fluency and reading motivation?

We have no textbook for this. We have no pedagogical guides. And we need to work a bit harder to share effective practice at this point. We are just beginning to develop models to point to when folks ask us what a school librarian looks like today, what a 2.0 school library program looks like today.

I'd like to suggest a few new things I consider important for 21st century practice.

1 Create a wiki pathfinder.

A while back, I wrote a rationale for why our pathfinders should be wikis (<http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/blog/1340000334/post/1620010962.html>) in my blog for *School Library Journal*. I believe wikis may be the killer app for pathfinders. I am currently in the process of migrating my html pathfinders (<http://www.sdst.org/shs/library/pathmenu.html>) to wiki format. Why? They are so much more easily edited. They require no knowledge of html code. And most important, they are collaborative. They can engage our partner teachers and our learners in building knowledge tools together.

I wrote in my blog,

"[Wikis] make a party of the pathfinder experience. Now, you no longer have to do your pathfinder thing alone. Wikis allow you to invite individual collaborators (teachers or students or mentors or experts) or, if you are brave, to allow the world to collaborate. You can easily track edits and changes. (It's all very 2.0.)"

My wiki for literary criticism (<http://litcritpathfinder.wikispaces.com/>), for instance, is just at the beginning stages. I invite your participation!

Free wiki space for educators is available at these sites:

- Wikispaces for Teachers <http://www.wikispaces.com/site/for/teachers>
- PB Wiki For Education <http://pbwiki.com/education.wiki>

You might also consider using the social bookmarking tool del.icio.us (<http://del.icio.us/>) to create and share pathfinders. In my mind, wikis have the pathfinder edge over del.icio.us because of their flexibility. Del.icio.us allows you to tag, organize, store, and share your links and annotations, but it doesn't do print. Wikis can

store your links, as well as related files—handouts, rubrics, and so on. Wikis allow for multiple pages and critical narrative, in the form of research advice.

2 Create a wiki booklist.

This past June, we converted our summer reading list to wiki format (<http://springfieldreading.wikispaces.com>). The advantages? Teachers are able to attach their files, for instance reading guides and questions. We are now able to link to reviews and video book trailers. Parents wrote to thank us, grateful for this much richer and far more accessible guide.

3 Create a template for blogging the research process.

On the secondary level, blogs are especially useful for reflecting on research, for helping learners manage the requisite chaos, for making the research process both transparent and interactive, and for easily involving teachers, librarians, peers, mentors, and parents. (See my SLJ blog post <http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/blog/134000334/post/560014056.html> for more details on this idea.)

Blog categories help researchers manage the tasks that need to be accomplished. For instance, we've found that suggesting such categories as *operational definitions* reminds students to do things they might not ordinarily consider, like defining unfamiliar terms for the reader. RSS feeds in a blog roll push news in an area of research directly to the researcher. Blog rolls ensure easy access to the links that matter. Student research blogs might be shared with other researchers, allowing students to contribute to a larger base of knowledge. We've found that many of our students who resist writing don't mind recording their progress in a blog that *they own*, a space that they decorate and populate. The fact that they have audience validates their efforts and engages them in deeper analysis and synthesis of their research.

Blogging research inspires interaction, social (constructivist) knowledge building, and the kind of intervention researcher Carol Kuhlthau saw as critical in the information search process. Teachers and librarians can use the blogging environment to participate in new "zones of intervention" in which they can accommodate, guide, and coach learners through their comments. Peers, mentors, teachers, and librarians can jump in at any point, make suggestions, offer support, cheer, or redirect, making the

knowledge building less chaotic and more social and supportive.

I worked with our teachers to create a template for student research blogging (<http://researchlogtemplate.edublogs.org/home>). Perhaps it will be useful in building a blogging template that would work for your own learners.

4 Move your literature circles to blogging form.

Blogging works for student-centered literary discussion. The blog format can help readers manage and archive their learning. Categories can represent chapters, aspects of literary analysis, or the contributions of individual group members. Learners can easily add categories as they make discoveries. Teachers (and learners themselves) can easily assess the energy and depth of a discussion. Blogs offer the potential for creating collaborative circles across classrooms, across borders, and to dramatically expand perspectives, perceptions, and understandings. Through our blogged circles, we've discovered student voices that were too quiet to hear in traditional classroom groups. We've set up individual blogs for each of the novels read in a class.

A number of free blogging tools are available:

- Edublogs.org <http://edublogs.org/>
- Learnerblogs.org <http://learnerblogs.org/>
- David Warlick's Blogmeister <http://classblogmeister.com/>
- 21 Classes <http://www.21classes.com/shop/features>
- Weebly <http://www.weebly.com/>
- Blogger <http://www.blogger.com/home>
- LiveJournal <http://www.livejournal.com/>
- Thingamablog <http://thingamablog.sourceforge.net/index.html>
- Wordpress <http://wordpress.com/>

5 Rethink PowerPoint and other presentation strategies.

Is everyone in your school forced to either listen to or deliver bullet-driven PowerPoints? Can you say that student presentations are truly creative and engaging? You can lead a presentation reform movement in your school or district by exploring alternative presentation options and by considering new strategies for improving work with

standard presentation tools. Share some background reading and some models with your faculty and learners:

- Presentation Zen <http://presentationzen.blogspot.com/> Garr Reynolds' blog on professional presentation design
- PowerPoint Extreme Makeover <http://ideasandthoughts.org/2006/11/28/powerpoint-extreme-makeover/> by Dean Shareski, the perfect presentation to share with teachers and older students. (It walks the walk.)
- Cliff Atkinson: Beyond Bullets <http://www.beyondbullets.com/> a professional's tips for improving all aspects of presentation.
- Tom Peters on Presentation Excellence http://presentationzen.blogspot.com/presentationzen/2005/07/in_may_tom_pete.html A selection from the 56 tips of the excellence guru.
- Gettysburg Address PowerPoint <http://norvig.com/Gettysburg/> Peter Norvig's take on what might have happened if Lincoln developed bad communication habits.
- Stop Your Presentation Before it Kills Again http://headrush.typepad.com/creating_passionate_users/2005/06/kill_your_prese.html Kathy Sierra's practical advice includes a useful slide test.
- Creative Commons Presentations (cool models) <http://mirrors.creativecommons.org/> Two examples of new style presentations
- TED.com <http://www.ted.com/index.php> Inspired talks by the world's greatest thinkers make terrific models. These folks truly know how to present!

6 Podcast your booktalks or book reviews.

Better yet, get your students to create the talks. Use Apple's Garage Band or the free editing and recording program, Audacity (<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>). See my blog post on Booktalking 2.0 (<http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/blog/134000334/post/1280013128.html>). You might consider using audio slideshow tools like VoiceThread (<http://voicethread.com/>) to very quickly create illustrated booktalks to share widely, perhaps for your state's best books lists.

Some wonderful models of this *thing* include:

- Bookwink <http://bookwink.com/>
- Just One More Book <http://justonemorebook.com/>

- Runkle School Book Review Podcasts <http://www.runkle.org/Podcasts/index.html>
- Nancy Keane's Book Talks Quick and Simple (podcasts) <http://nancykeane.com/rss.html>
- Readers Circle Booktalks (Pike School) <http://web.mac.com/pikeschool/iWeb/library/Readers%20Circle%20Booktalks/Readers%20Circle%20Booktalks.html>
- Hopkinton High/Middle Schools <http://www.hopkintonschools.org/hhs/library/podcast.html>
- Portland Public Schools <http://ppsmultimedialibrary.blogspot.com/2007/03/new-booktalks-podcasts.html>
- Reading Olympics (Sharon Nardelli, Upper Merion High School, PA) <http://voicethread.com/#q+booktalk.b9739.i67611>

7 Tell a digital story (or inspire student storytelling projects)

Amazing work is just beginning in this new media-rich genre for communication. Librarians should lead the storytelling renaissance, helping students learn to write effectively in this new genre—to creatively synthesize words, images, music, and video. Our options for student products are now staggering. And our students may now write and share their voices with global audiences. One of my favorite examples of personal narrative is Momnotmom (<http://www.storycenter.org/whatis.html>).

In his CogDogRoo blog, Alan Levine challenged himself to find 50 Ways to Tell a Story (<http://cogdogroo.wikispaces.com/50+Ways>). This post is a must-read for librarians. Test just a few of Levine's suggestions for video, slideshows, timelining, and mixing. Examine these sites to learn more about the philosophy and the state-of-the-art in the creation and sharing of powerful narrative.

- Educational Uses of Digital Storytelling <http://www.coe.uh.edu/digital-storytelling/>
- Center for Digital Storytelling <http://www.storycenter.org/index1.html>
- Elements of Digital Storytelling <http://www.inms.umn.edu/elements/>
- Marco Torres' iCan Film Festival <http://www.sfett.com/>
- BBC Telling Lives <http://www.bbc.co.uk/tellinglives/>

- Apple Video Journalism http://ali.apple.com/ali_sites/adccvj/index.shtml
- KQED's Digital Storytelling Initiative <http://dsi.kqed.org/index.php>

8 Begin your own Ning for social networking.

The social networking movement is way bigger than MySpace and Facebook. Create a social network for your state organization, your faculty, your PTA, your task force, or your high school reunion organizing committee. Nings offer participants a wide variety of options for interaction—forums, blogs, image and video sharing, and unlimited creation of subgroups. Explore use of a Ning to manage online conversations of class literature circles. They may be used for collaborative planning, professional development, and community building.

Use these examples as models for building your own social network:

- TeacherLibrarianNing <http://teacherlibrarian.ning.com>
- Classroom 2.0 Ning <http://classroom20.ning.com/>
- LibraryYouthServices 2.0 <http://libraryyouth.ning.com/>

And here's some good news: the folks at Ning recently announced ad-free sites for student networks. We can now lead students in creating networks for their clubs and teams and classes.

9 Do a survey.

In 2.0-style, truly communicate with your learning community. Embed a survey on your Web site, wiki, or blog, or direct participants to a survey link. Learn more about student reading habits or learning needs or the films your faculty would most like you to add to the collection. Begin a lesson with a survey to gather consensus or assess divergent viewpoints around a hot classroom topic. Your students can survey too. Help them learn about original research and good question design. Some cool resources include:

- SurveyMonkey <http://www.surveymonkey.com/>
- Viewlet Poll <http://www.viewletpoll.com/poll/>

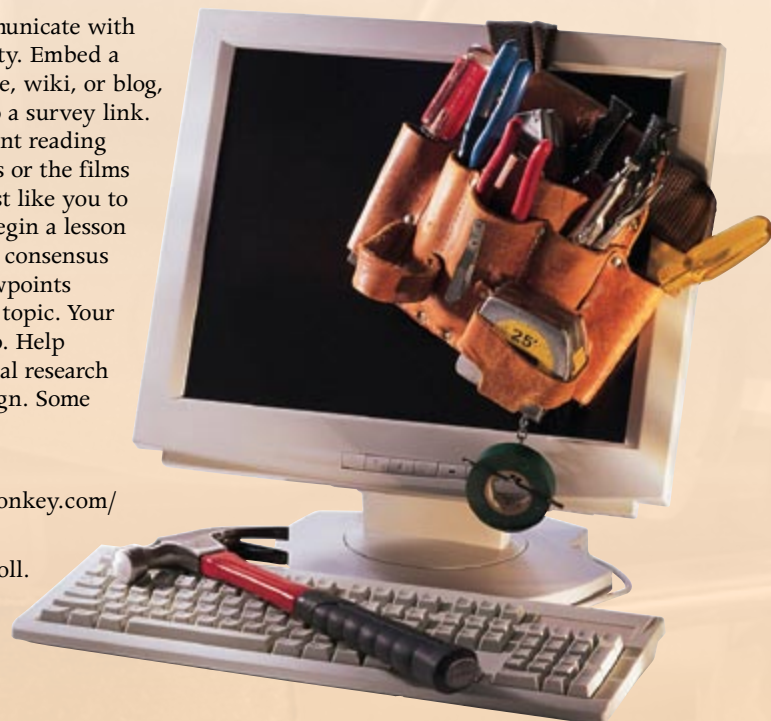
- Stellar Survey <http://www.stellarsurvey.com/>
- Zoomerang <http://info.zoomerang.com/>
- Zoho Polls <http://polls.zoho.com/>
- Response-o-matic <https://www.response-o-matic.com/>
- PollDaddy <http://polldaddy.com/>

10 Attend a workshop or a conference online.

Experience a webcast speech or workshop yourself, use one as part of an inservice, or to inspire a class discussion. You no longer need to spend lots of money on hotel and airfare to be inspired by professional wisdom. If you cannot afford to bring a national speaker to your school, sharing an archived speech may be an acceptable next best thing.

Consider learning and sharing speeches and workshops through the following sites:

- Apple Learning Interchange <http://edcommunity.apple.com/ali/>
- Apple Learning Interchange: NECC Conference 2007 includes 34 talks. <http://edcommunity.apple.com/ali/search.php?collectionID=1087>
- TED.com <http://www.ted.com/index.php>. Inspired talks by the world's greatest thinkers
- Hitchhikr <http://hitchhikr.com/> Hitch a ride to any current conference
- K12 Online Conference <http://k12onlineconference.org/docs/k12online2007schedule.html>



Great edtech speakers archived from this amazing October unconference!

- EdTechTalk <http://edtechtalk.com/>
New dialog all the time. Join the group of your choice or listen to archives
- Common Craft Show <http://www.commoncraft.com/show> Simply models for how we might design our own online instruction.

11 Set up a personal information space using iGoogle (<http://google.com/ig>) and show learners how to set up their own.

In our school this activity has been the stickiest Web 2.0 tool of the year. Students choose a theme, arrange the space, and make it their own. Students can search for useful gadgets that will help them organize their lives and automatically push information they most need their way. If they are taking Spanish this semester, students might create a tab for that class and store a dictionary, Spanish news, or a Spanish *word of the day* gadget. Another tab might be set up for current events news feeds. We suggest that students set up to-do lists, a calendar, a Google reader for RSS feeds, and a notebook page with a link to our Virtual Library. We are working on creating a gadget for our catalog and hope that vendors will help create gadgets for our databases.

12 Use an image portal like Flickr (<http://flickr.com>) to celebrate student art and archive student activities.

As school knowledge manager you can help create online galleries. Presenting student work in a 2.0 world allows young artists to share their work, as well as their artist statements. Peers, teachers, and other guests may leave comments as they *walk* these galleries (which may be either private or public). Visit our online art gallery (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/45367058@N00/>) or our gallery of student activities (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/springfieldtownship/>).

13 Use image generators to promote library materials or to enhance curriculum.

A favorite in our school is BigHugeLab's Flickr Toys (<http://bighugelabs.com/flickr/>). We've used it to create motivational posters featuring new students and teachers, as well as posters featuring our teams and clubs reading. We've made movie posters to represent

favorite books. We've created trading cards featuring mythological characters. Other favorite image tools include Image Chef <http://imagechef.com>, used especially for presenting strong concepts in presentations. We've used ToonDoo (<http://www.toondoo.com/Home.do>) to create comics representing scenes and character motivation in books and plays. And I hope we can create these toons in the languages other than English. A longer list of image generators is included on this pathfinder: <http://copyrightfriendly.wikispaces.com/Image+generators+and+clipart>.

14 Learn more about fair use and alternative licensing.

One of your roles is to be a leader in the areas of digital citizenship and ethical use of intellectual property. The landscape is continually shifting. New forms of licensing allow creators of content to set minimal conditions for use or remixing of their work. Artists, authors, musicians, and filmmakers are increasingly attaching Creative Commons badges (<http://creativecommons.org/>) to their work online. Most of them say, "Use my stuff. Just let folks know where you got it. Attribute." By creating a portal to lead students to copyright-friendly material, you are promoting digital citizenship while eliminating much of the frustration associated with the arduous process of being ethical.

Google's Advanced screen (http://www.google.com/advanced_search?hl=en), for instance, allows users to search by Usage Rights. Our Copyright Friendly Wiki (<http://copyrightfriendly.wikispaces.com/>) lists such huge portals as Flickr's Creative Commons Image Pool <http://www.flickr.com/creativecommons/>.

15 Learn about Open Source and Web-based applications and the equity they offer schools and individual learners.

Assuring equity is another shifting role for the teacher-librarian. Do you provide non-commercial alternatives to software like Microsoft's Office Suite, including PowerPoint? Many new Web-based options have the added advantage of *sharability*. Groups remotely separated can now collaborate, for instance, on a Google Doc, Spreadsheet, or Presentation <http://docs.google.com>. Zoho (<http://zoho.com/>) provides an even larger suite of useful, free, collaborative tools. Picnik (<http://www.picnik.com/>) is a free Web-based image editing application that might

substitute for PhotoShop Elements. If you cannot provide a commercial mind-mapping tool to your students, consider linking them to such Web-based apps and open source downloads as:

- Free Mind http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Main_Page
- Glify <http://www.glify.com/>
- Bubbl.us <http://bubbl.us/>
- MindMeister <http://www.mindmeister.com/>
- Mindomo <http://www.mindomo.com/>
- Read/Write/Think Webbing Tool http://interactives.mped.org/view_interactive.aspx?id=127&title=
- Best4C <http://www.best4c.com/>

Visit our Open Source Resources Pathfinder (<http://opensourceresources.wikispaces.com/>) for more examples of noncommercial alternatives and please feel free to add your own ideas and examples!

Nearly all of the applications mentioned here allow for various levels of privacy. Teachers and librarians can choose whether to make their work public, private, or by invitation only. We discover new *things* at an ever-increasing pace. Our tools are changing. Our skills must change. As our information and communication landscapes continue to shift, information professionals must know the new tools, or things, at hand. And after we play with them a bit, we must lead our school communities in applying these *things* in engaging ways to enhance learning. This is only the beginning. ■



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