



# **TIGed's**

## **DIGITAL MEDIA**

# **LITERACY PRIMER**

Developed by TakingITGlobal  
with support from The Longview Foundation

# DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY



## What is media literacy?

Media literacy is the ability to understand, question and interpret the information we receive from media sources. This used to be limited to: print media, like newspapers and magazines; visual media, like news broadcasts and documentaries; and academic texts like books, journal articles, and reports. Now that the media has expanded to include many new sources, the media literacy of the past needs to be expanded as well.

In the 21st century what use to be media literacy needs to include Information Literacy or digital literacy. People must still understand, question and interpret the information they receive, but they must also keep up with the requisite information needed to interpret new and changing sources. A blog, for example, can be a very useful source because it is specific and up-to-the-minute, but students must also note that blogs are composed by one or few authors and so are not peer-reviewed like books or journals. These blogs also provide a platform for anyone, anywhere to publish their own content. Blogs are a research tool, but they are also a writing tool where students can share their work with people around the world.

Many sources that were traditionally in print are also digitizing. Books and newspapers are uploaded to the Internet, and many scholars are hypothesizing that in the next few decades they will cease to be printed in paper form. Students must learn to differentiate even more because credible newspapers will be printed alongside questionable news. The digitization of print text allows more people to access the content, and less paper used to produce it. As this trend continues the digital and media literacy skills that people learn now will become even more necessary.

## What is New Media?

New Media is the communication of Web 2.0. It embraces the advent of new technological tools and uses them to engage users and spread knowledge. Young people are the most avid consumers and producers of New Media and use it to play, create, and network.

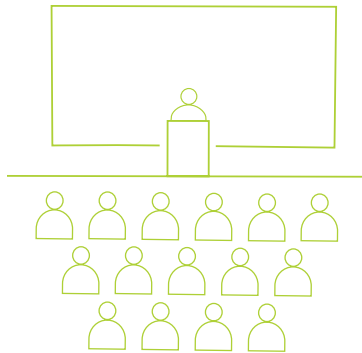
New media is primarily spread through the Internet. It consists of sources that, in the past, would be considered suspect, biased, or un-academic. It includes sources like blogs, chats, videos, websites, online articles, games and software, wikis, podcasts, mashups, and uploaded photography.



## What New Media teaches students

Students can learn many things from New Media:

- Methods of communication with the outside world through chats, social networking and message boards
- How to differentiate between legitimate sources and questionable sources when studying, researching and reading
- Collaborative work skills (wikis, mashups, and open-source software)
- Power to communicate with people around the world
- That the content produced is considered legitimate by youth and adults alike (blogs, news articles, photography, videos and podcasts)
- How to make creative content like movies, games, and websites
- Gives them an opportunity to correct information on wikis and beta websites
- How to engage in discussion about controversial issues and form opinions in online forums



## Why you should use it in your classroom?

These sources are becoming just as valuable and integrative in the classroom as old media sources. They are mediums that students are comfortable with and even excited by. They are also proving to be just as accurate, or even more so than print sources like Encyclopedia Britannica. New media offers so many opportunities for creation and collaboration. Users can upload their own videos or podcasts, and they can write their own blog – all of which could be seen by thousands of people. New Media is growing and changing every day. Media literacy must expand as quickly as media sources do. If people are not equipped to educate themselves in an ever-changing world then they cannot continue to learn. By embracing these tools rather than fighting them, teachers can prepare students for a new world in which these tools will be expected.

Ask students what they enjoy and plan lessons around those ideas. By showing them

that they can use their favorite tools in an academic setting teachers will capture the attention of students who otherwise would feel that education was “out of touch” with their lives. Youth must still learn how to be critical of all media, but also how to engage with current content formats. Digital media is not going away and is beginning to carve out its own niche in the academic world. It is no longer created solely as entertainment. It analyzes world news, comments on social issues, exists as a gallery for new forms of art, but most of all it empowers every participant by sharing their work with a global audience. Students teach themselves how to use the Internet, but it the educator’s job to help them get the most out of it.

## Media literacy for every age

Media literacy should be taught to students at every grade level:

### Primary

- Teach students basic digital skills so they feel comfortable on the Internet.
- Use basic tools like email, chat and blogs to connect them to eachother.
- Allow them to seek out information on news sites and search engines.

### Middle

- Encourage the use of self-publishing tools like blogs, podcasts and videos.
- Use digital information/tools in all subject areas in order to show students the connections between technology and learning.
- Compare online media to traditional sources and help students find reliable information that they can use to research projects.

### Secondary

- Make daily reading of Internet news sources part of the curriculum.
- Use more complicated tools like social networking, social bookmarking and social media to expand the boundaries of media education.
- Allow students to incorporate the tools they use at home (games, videos, popular websites) into their lessons and to do in-depth analysis of their effects on education.

# DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY

## What online tools can help students build digital literacy skills?

These tools can be used in any subject area. They will enhance the students' learning experience and provide them with the knowledge to help them seek out digital information and involve themselves in the creation of New Media. Video tutorials for these tools and more can be found on:

[www.commoncraft.com](http://www.commoncraft.com)



## BLOGS

What is a Blog?

Short for web log, it is a website maintained by one person or a group of people who post regular commentary.

Blogging Activities:

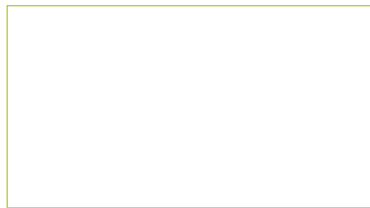
ON TIG:

1. Find a blog you like by searching your interests on TIGblogs
2. Comment on an article in the blog
3. Start or add to your own TIGblog
4. Keep Updating your blog and commenting on your favorite blogs

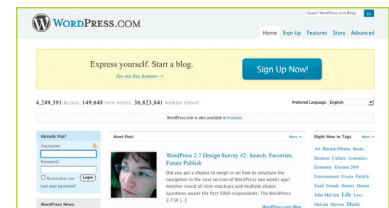
Some interesting Blog sites:



<http://www.blogger.com/>



<http://blog.com/>



<http://wordpress.com>



## PODCASTS

What is a Podcast?

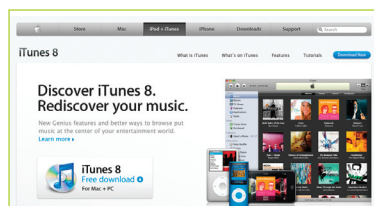
It is an audio recording (like a radio broadcast) that is created and uploaded to the Internet so that others can listen to/download it.

Podcast Activities

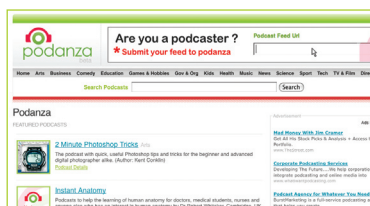
ON TIG:

1. Go to your TIGblog
2. Click on "Add an Entry"
3. Click "Audio Post"
4. Upload an audio file from your computer
5. Give it some tags and a description
6. Click Post

Some interesting podcast sites:



<http://www.apple.com/itunes/overview/>



<http://www.podanza.com>



<http://www.podbean.com>

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## WIKIS

What is a Wiki?

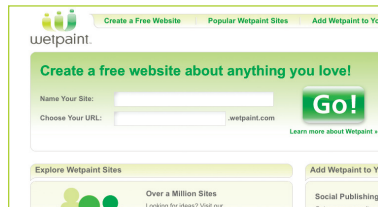
A Wiki is a collaborative text that anyone can add to and edit. They are used to learn, write articles, and correct sites.

Wiki Activities:

On TIG:

1. Have students choose a sub-issue in the “Understanding the issues” section.
2. Click on the “Contribute New Content Wiki Version”
3. Do some research and add a definition or some additional sources to the section.
4. Click “this is a minor edit”.
5. See how you’ve contributed to the content on TIG.
6. Learn more about the topics by surfing TIG

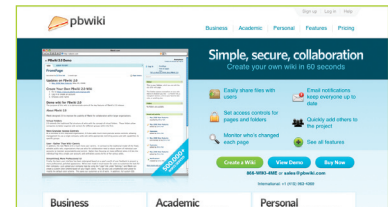
Some interesting Wiki sites:



<http://www.wetpaint.com/>



<http://www.wikibios.com/>



<http://pbwiki.com/>



## EDUCATIONAL GAMING

What is Educational Gaming?

Educational Gaming is the use of Internet games that work to teach students about serious subject matter. By incorporating fun and creative material into the classroom, teachers can engage their students in a new way. It allows them to gain knowledge through the appropriation of characters and the simulation of activities. They can also create their own games, focusing the learning on specialized topics and utilizing tools that they like.

Educational Gaming Activities:

ON TIG:

1. Go to “Understand the Issues”
2. Click “Educational Games:
3. Explore and play games like: “Ayiti” and Orange Revolution

Some interesting gaming sites:



<http://www.what2learn.com/>



<http://www.peacemakergame.com/>



<http://www.3rdworldfarmer.com/>

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## PHOTO SHARING

What is Photo sharing?

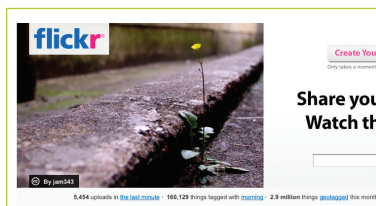
Photo sharing happens on a site where users can upload pictures or art that they have created to share with other users.

Photo sharing Activities:

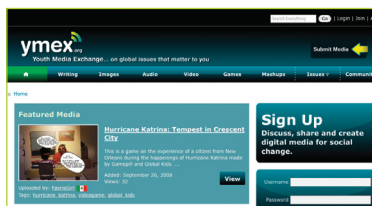
On TIG:

1. Go to “Express Yourself”
2. Click on the “Global Gallery”
3. View some of the artists or some of the TIG collections.
4. Upload your own work.

Some interesting photo sharing sites:



<http://www.flickr.com/>



<http://www.ymex.org>



<http://www.bubbleshare.com/>



## MESSAGE BOARDS

What is a Message board?

A web forum where people make posts and discuss or dialogue on a specific subjects in sections called “threads”.

Message Board Activities

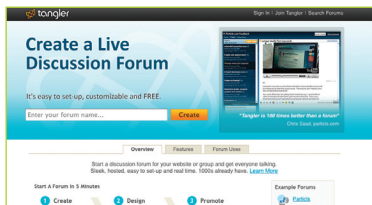
ON TIG:

1. Go to “Make Connections”
2. Click “Discussion Boards”
3. Choose your language
4. Pick a forum that you like
5. Choose a topic and read the conversation
6. Make a post

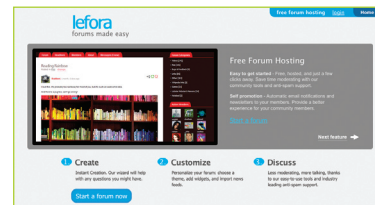
Some interesting Message Board sites:



<http://www.activeboard.com>



<http://www.tangler.com>



<http://www.lefora.com/>