



Making the most of your digital content for schools:

A toolkit for arts and cultural organisations



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INTRODUCTION

Over the course of their careers, teachers spend hundreds of hours creating content, reviewing resources and planning lessons. It's no wonder that this has been flagged as an issue by the independent Workload Review Group in its 2016 report, [Eliminating unnecessary workload around planning and teaching resources](#):

“High quality resources support good teaching but too much time is spent trawling for resources.”

The Department for Education's recently announced [curriculum fund programme](#) aims to address this issue by funding the creation and piloting of curriculum programmes in science, history and geography.

However, for many teachers creating content for a sequence of lessons is one of the best bits of the job. Finding that gem of a resource and combining it with carefully constructed materials tailored to the needs of the class is part of a teacher's craft. But with such a crowded market – there are more than 900,000 resources on the Tes platform alone – it's not surprising that resource discovery can take up far too much of a teacher's time.

So if you want to get your content onto the plasma screens and smartboards of teachers, keep it simple, create content that teachers need and make it as easy as possible to find and access.

THE TOOLKIT

This toolkit will help in this task. Intended to be used by learning and education officers in arts and cultural organisations, it provides insight into the potential of digital technology to connect, communicate with and disseminate to formal education settings while also outlining some of the structural and other issues affecting technology use in school. Various examples have been used from a variety of organisations and individuals including both those working within a small locality and those with a national remit. The intention is to demonstrate good practice while always being mindful that, for most of those working in this area, resource creation will be done with limited resources. At the end of each section there are links to enable further research.

Research and toolkit commissioned by Festival Bridge and published in March 2019.

IN BRIEF

CONTENT & FORMAT (p.4)

- Consider audience, purpose and function at the outset
- Involve teachers in the design, make and test phases of development
- Ensure content is relevant, accurate and error-free
- Create case studies and showcase your resource 'in action'
- Organise content by subject, phase and theme
- Regularly review and refresh the content

DISCOVERABILITY (p.7)

- Upload wherever teachers are gathered online
- Use Twitter: find influencers and make use of #EduChats
- Use advocates

COPYRIGHT & CREATIVE COMMONS (p.11)

- Choose a suitable licence for your content
- Ensure all the elements in your resource can be covered under that licence
- Consider how to track use and reuse under an open licence

GETTING TECHNICAL (p.13)

- Produce a tech spec for more complex projects to pre-empt classroom issues

ONLINE SAFETY (p.15)

- Include online safety in your safeguarding policy
- Consider having a named individual with responsibility for online safety
- Assess your policies and procedures as your digital provision grows
- Be GDPR compliant
- Keep up to date and make use of free resources and materials

MEASURING IMPACT (p.17)

- Agree metrics, measure engagement and review content accordingly

CONTENT & FORMAT

In brief

- Consider audience, purpose and function at the outset
- Involve teachers in the design, make and test phases of development
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- Organise content by subject, phase and theme
- Regularly review and refresh the content

Context

Teachers use content for a variety of reasons and in myriad ways. Some want to deepen their knowledge in a particular subject or topic; some might want a very specialist piece of expertise that only your organisation can offer; others want to incorporate that expertise into their own presentations or planning and a few may occasionally just want to lift a whole plan and use it for a specific lesson. Many teachers will want material to support an actual visit to your venue but others may only ever make a virtual visit and will access your expertise to help them in the areas of the curriculum in which they feel less confident.

One aspect that emerged clearly from both the [UCM Digital Schools Consultation 2016](#) and the Arts Council England research into [How teachers find and use online resources 2014](#) is that teachers like content that has been co-designed with teachers. The fact that the Tes resource platform, which allows teachers to share and sell plans and resources, reached its billionth download over a year ago is clear evidence of this.

What, why and how

The most significant part of digital resource creation requires no technology whatsoever. Your first phase activities should focus on gathering intelligence and doing the thinking.

Considerations

- Why are you creating the resource?
- How does it fit with your departmental strategy?
- What content/area will you focus on? Why?
- Is the content stand alone or is it linked to a visit?
- Who is it for? Teacher, pupil or both?
- What's the need? How will it be used in the classroom? How do you know?

You have to be absolutely sure that what you are creating not only serves your organisational priorities but also fulfils a sector need. Having a bunch of great stuff about the Vikings on your website and hunch that it might be useful for KS2 teachers isn't enough. Be rigorous at the outset to ensure that your resource isn't left on a dusty digital shelf.

Think usability

As all teachers are time short and workload is the issue of the day, for your content to be of use to the profession it must be:

- Well organised
- Relevant
- Adaptable
- Easy to navigate
- Up to date
- Error free

As many teachers will be integrating resources into existing planning, presenting content in a variety of formats is most useful. Some of the commercial platforms produce the same content as a PDF, a PowerPoint and an editable Word document plus alternative accessible formats such as large print for those with visual impairment.

If you have a lot of content on your site you must ensure it is well organised and searchable by subject, topic and phase. Make it as easy to navigate as possible (check out the [British Library resource pages](#) for a good example of this). Finally, you should schedule in some regular review sessions to check that your content remains current and relevant. If your site still includes that end of project resource you made pre the new curriculum then it's time for a digital spring clean. Give teachers confidence that you understand their sector. Keep up to date with trends and drivers in education and make sure your content aligns to teachers' needs.

“Sometimes the providers get too tied up with trying to link their content with the curriculum. Teachers know what they’re doing. We don’t need spoon feeding. Sometimes the guidance gets in the way of usability. Keep it simple.” Primary teacher, Festival Bridge schools’ survey 2018

Involve teachers

Once you are clear about what you are creating and why, find a number of keen teachers from your partner schools to help in the development phase. Take time to visit their classrooms to see how digital content is being used and talk to teachers to better understand their needs. Some organisations recompense a teacher’s time with payment (free workshops, a payment to the school or a gift voucher direct to the teacher).

Use your teachers as critical friends to test your materials in class. Gather feedback and refine and reshape accordingly. Make use of free technologies offering simple video conferencing and screen sharing with no guest registration or login. Both appear.in or [Zoom](https://zoom.us) offer free and premium plans, you can host and record webinar discussions to share ideas and feedback with teachers in the most time efficient way.

Showcase

As part of the ‘payment’ to your advisory teachers offer to support the delivery of a workshop in school to showcase the resource in action. Document it in whatever GDPR compliant way is appropriate alongside some teacher feedback and upload it as a case study next to your materials. Telling the story of how the resource has been used offers reassurance about its effectiveness and provides some quick inspiration for a time-poor teacher.

Want to know more?

Read [Digital Engagement in Culture, Heritage and the Arts, 2013](#)

Read [UCM Digital Schools Consultation, 2016](#)

Check out [How teachers find and use digital resources, Presentation from ACE, 2015](#)

DISCOVERABILITY

In brief

- Upload wherever teachers are gathered online
- Use Twitter: find influencers and make use of #EduChats
- Use advocates

Context

Having invested time and money into creating your perfectly crafted digital resource you now need to ensure that it is being used. Discoverability is dependent upon more than just being high up in a Google search.

Content platforms

One of the key challenges is that there's no one repository for educational resources in the UK. There are hundreds of content platforms designed specifically for the education market using free, premium and subscription models. Discovery, Trustnet, Tes resources, Twinkl, Espresso all provide targeted content and most teachers will combine resources from these branded providers with more specialist content sourced through Google searches or via trusted organisations. Most teachers are skilful at curating their classroom content from many different sources. However, this takes time, and there is an emerging trend for some schools and trusts to create their own banks of resources housed on the school learning platform. This may limit a teacher's autonomy to pick and choose but it also provides an opportunity as any resource chosen by a school or multi academy trust is likely to be well used.

“I'll start by thinking about what I need to achieve and why; it's about how to do what I have to do. That's when I start to think about the best resources to use. Having found stuff, I'll then synthesise it, my role is curator, contextualising the things I find. ” Secondary teacher, Festival Bridge schools' survey 2018

Twitter

For many teachers, Twitter is their go-to for ideas and content. In 2014 it was estimated that of the 4.2 million tweets posted each day half a million were posted by teachers ([Twitter Account Executive Brett Baker 2014](#)).

Some educators have tens of thousands of followers and are [key influencers](#) in the sector. In addition hashtag chats, where users use a hashtag for a pre-arranged conversation on a specific topic are used extensively for phase, subject and issue related discussions. One of the biggest is UKEdchat with over 70k followers on its main account and 100s of teachers joining their Thursday evening discussions. The Sunday evening discussion for senior leaders, SLTChat, has over 30k followers on its main account.

“I’ll look for resources from all the usual places like Google, Twinkl, TES and BBC Learning, plus the school has just started using Twitter and that’s proving really useful.”

Secondary teacher, Festival Bridge schools’ survey 2018

Considerations

To make sure that your resource has visibility in a crowded market, upload it to as many places as possible and shout loudly about it on every appropriate platform. Firstly, put it on your own learning pages and work with your marketing colleagues to ensure that your resources are best optimised for searches from the sector.

Make use of social media

Use social media to hook into the many education communities. By finding the appropriate influencers in the sector you can raise the profile of your content significantly. If you use the URL to your resources within your tweets, you can shortcut a teacher’s route straight to the relevant pages. This is especially useful if your education and learning pages aren’t prominent on your site.

Consider the following:

- When asking for school contact details, request their Twitter handle
- Make [‘lists’](#) and check out what they are tweeting about - it might be you
- If appropriate, have a separate Twitter account for schools or learning
- Follow your schools - share your content with them
- Follow key influencers - share your content with them
- Build up your community - ask questions, respond, retweet, like etc
- Keep an eye on the analytics

In addition, get involved in some of the education chats on Twitter. You can tap into these by contributing to the online discussions and promoting your content where appropriate or by using relevant hashtags within your tweets to open them up to a much wider audience.

Upload everywhere

Find the platforms that already have high teacher engagement and consider whether your content might be a good fit.

Check out:

[Tes Platform](#) is the largest online community of teachers in the world with just under eight million registered users. The platform contains the global marketplace where more than 700,000 resources are hosted, most of which have been created by teachers. The site has the facility for authors to charge for their resources although the majority of content is free. Many arts and cultural organisations already place their content on this platform. Visit [here](#) for more details.

[MyLearning](#), funded by the Arts Council and managed by Leeds Museums and Galleries, is a platform designed to showcase free resources from arts, cultural and heritage organisations. All content is evaluated by the MyLearning teacher panel and there is a small fee for each resource hosted on the site. MyLearning can also support organisations in creating their digital resources. For more details on services and costs visit [here](#).

[TrustNet](#) provides broadband and other services, including a content platform, to schools around England with a particular focus on London, the South East and the North of England. It has a growing number of relationships with arts and cultural organisations and hosts content from the Royal Collections Trust, Richard Alston Dance Company and Culture Street. For more details visit [here](#).

Use advocates

Finally, create content champions. Find the key people in your local area eg within the local multi academy trust, [Teaching School Alliance](#), [Research School](#), [Artsmark](#) network etc and make them aware of your resources. There's no better way to promote your resource than having a trusted third party do the job for you.

Want to know more?

Follow on Twitter

- [@UKEdchat](#) the biggest teacher chat in the UK
- [@SLTchat](#) the DfE endorsed senior leader chat

Read

- [Tes article](#), Tes to transform the use of cultural resources in education 2015
- [Teachers and Twitter](#), Guardian Teacher Network 2017
- [How to use Twitter analytics](#), Twitter 2019
- This [blog](#), Helping cultural organisations reach teachers, Pedroza Comms 2017

Check out

- [EduChats on Twitter](#), where and when
- [20 UK teachers to follow on twitter 2017](#)
- [Useful education platforms](#), UCL 2019



COPYRIGHT & CREATIVE COMMONS

In brief

- Choose a suitable licence for your content
- Ensure all the elements in your resource can be covered under that licence
- Consider how to track use and reuse under an open licence

Context

‘Make it easy’ for teachers is the byword throughout this toolkit and nowhere is this more applicable than in the area of copyright.

Teachers are, or should be, aware of the importance of copyright and appropriate usage. It is also covered in the school curriculum from early years onwards – ‘copyright and ownership’ is covered within the digital literacy aims of the national curriculum ([‘being responsible... users of ICT’](#)) and one of the eight strands in the [Education for a Connected World Framework](#). However, this doesn’t mean that teachers are keen to spend time poring over complex copyright and fair use licenses working out if it is safe to use a resource in class. With an arts or cultural heritage digital resource they will rely on the organisation having done the legwork to ensure that the content - whether text, photos, video or sound - has been cleared for them to use freely.

Most resources used in state-funded primary and secondary schools in England are covered by copyright licences bought by the Department for Education. The Copyright Licensing Agency Schools Licence, for example, covers copying from books, magazines, journals and websites. The licences mean teachers can copy, reuse and share content from a wide range of sources for non-commercial, educational purposes.

Creative Commons

The simplest way to make your content easy to discover, access, use and share is through open licences. The most commonly used form of open licence is Creative Commons (CC). The vast majority of the content on the MyLearning platform, for example, is hosted under one of the Creative Commons non-commercial licences. This means that teachers can use the resources in their lessons, but not for commercial use.

Creative Commons licences offer a simple, standardised way to grant copyright permissions. When you add a CC licence to your resources, you keep your copyright and share your work with the public, for free, under the terms and conditions you choose.

When the most liberal licence is attached to a resource it may reasonably be called a open educational resource, or OER, as the resource can be freely retained (keep a copy), reused (use as is), revised (adapt, adjust, modify), remixed (mash up different content to create something new), and redistributed (share copies with others) without breaking copyright law.

“Teachers look for quality and reliability in a digital resource. Information must be accurate and there must be no issues with copyright.” UCM Digital Resources Consultation 2016

Considerations

Every CC licence will enable you to retain copyright while allowing others to copy, distribute, and make some uses of the work - at least non-commercially. That's the baseline. From there you can add additional permissions depending how you want - or are permitted - to allow the resource to be used. You can choose to allow commercial use or not and to allow derivative works or not. If you do allow derivative works then you can also decide whether or not to permit anyone who uses the work to make that new work available under the same license terms, called ShareAlike. The Creative Commons website has a simple [step-by-step tool](#) that sets out the choices and suggests the most appropriate license.

Some services (such as Wikipedia and Europeana) may require a specific licence before you can use them to promote your digital content. You'll need to consider this carefully before applying licences to your content. And, of course, you need to make sure that all the elements included in your resource can be covered under the licence you choose.

A completely open licence is designed to encourage the appropriate reuse of resources. However, it can also make it harder to keep track of such use and reuse, which can be tricky if you are keen to track usage, perhaps to justify the content creation to funders. Alternative ways to gather user details could include creating a newsletter or offering an incentive for users to provide their details, such as to be alerted to, or gain access to, a specific piece of new material. To track usage more generally, consider researching and logging a list of places in which reuse is taking place and using statistics from search engines that target reuse - for example, Google's image search and the [TinEye](#) reverse image search allow you to identify copies of an image uploaded to the internet.

Want to know more?

- [Creative Commons](#)
- [Copyright Cortex](#)
- [Copyright User](#)
- [Tes Connect CC Guidance](#)

GETTING TECHNICAL

In brief

- Produce a tech spec document for more complex projects to pre-empt classroom issues

School IT

Technology in school is a complicated business. Along with their day jobs, senior leaders need to be digital strategists with a sound understanding of, for example, the complexities of managed wifi systems or cloud-based services or the latest in network cabling. The SLT has a responsibility to ensure that broadband connectivity is fast, secure and reliable and that a robust filtering system is in place to allow for inappropriate content to be blocked from school machines. In addition, school leaders should also have some sort of long-term purchasing strategy to ensure that those KS2 iPads can be replaced at the end of their digital life. And once they've done this, they need to ring-fence some budget to train up their staff to make the best use of their IT investment.

Filtering

Most schools have some kind of technical support in place to manage their IT systems and troubleshoot in the classroom. Budget depending, technicians may visit for face-to-face or remote support on a regular basis (weekly, bi-monthly or termly etc). Some schools have strict filtering restrictions in place, with YouTube and Vimeo often blacklisted as a default within the system. In most schools, sites can be whitelisted and this is sometimes managed by the technician or another nominated member of staff. However, for some schools, it requires logging a request to an external provider, for example, a local authority representative, an academy IT lead or a third party filtering company. This can all take some time.

Considerations

If your resource requires anything more sophisticated than downloading a file from a site, consider creating a technical requirements document. This can be given to the technician or the subject specialist in school to ensure that websites can be checked and pop-ups sorted etc before a resource is used in class.

Include

- A list of the weblinks (including any sites hosting your content eg YouTube, Vimeo)
- A list of any IT kit that might be required
- Recommended minimum broadband speeds if a project requires a specific capability

The Royal Opera House has included a useful document for technicians as part of the resource for its [National Nutcracker project](#), a blended project to support primary teachers in the delivery of dance at KS2.

Want to know more?

Follow on Twitter

- [@Jisc](#) provides digital technology and resources to the UK's higher education, further education and skills sectors. Although not schools focused, its Twitter account provides a good insight into the education technology sector
- [@ISC_Digital](#) The Independent Schools Digital Strategy Group
- [@the_nen](#) The NEN is a UK based community of non-profit regional organisations who develop freely available resources and provide safe, high quality broadband to school

Check out

- [Technical FAQs](#) for the National Theatre's On Demand in Schools platform



ONLINE SAFETY

In brief

- Include online safety in your safeguarding policy
- Consider having a named individual with responsibility for online safety
- Assess your policies and procedures as your digital provision grows
- Be GDPR compliant
- Keep up to date and make use of free resources and materials

Context

Online safety is a growing part of a school's safeguarding responsibility. All schools will have robust policies and procedures in place to support and protect the whole school community. If digital is to be a significant part of your organisation's learning programmes, it is advisable to understand and model this robust approach in your practice. Showing schools that you've got this area covered will give them confidence in your organisation and its products and programmes.

Considerations

Online safety should appear as a section within your organisation's safeguarding policy. If your use of digital is a significant part of your learning programmes and you intend to work with both pupils and teachers, or you want to develop your online engagement with teachers, then you should consider having a separate online safety policy. You may want to consider uploading this policy alongside your digital materials. Make it visible on your website to reassure schools that you have strategy in place. It may also be useful to have a named individual on your team – an online safety champion – who will take overall responsibility for online safety by providing updates and input for colleagues and acting as the key contact for incidents or issues.

Data gathering should be in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (2018).

Help is at hand

There are many specialist organisations producing free resources and materials to support you in keeping up to date and developing your provision...

[South West Grid for Learning](#) is top of the list. Their self-review tool, [Online Compass](#), helps organisations working with young people outside of formal settings improve their online safety practice. The tool references a set of template policies and some of these are quite daunting. Don't be overwhelmed – just pick and choose the bits that apply to you and your context. If you want to take it further, you can apply for the Online Compass award (cost attached to this). SWGfL also produces a wealth of free resources and products and manages the Ofsted-recognised Online Safety Mark for schools. Take a look.

[NSPCC](#) has also produced a set of template policies and documents. In addition, its website includes all sorts of materials and resources. If you intend to work directly with young people/pupils then you may want to consider a representative from your organisation taking its online introductory course (4 hours/£30).

[Digital Parenting](#) produces a great online magazine. It's targeted at parents but if you want a quick way to get the latest intelligence, this should be top of your reading list.

[Internet Matters](#) has advice, research, policy updates, resources and materials for teachers and parents.

Want to know more?

Follow on Twitter

- [@SWGfL_Official](#) South West Grid for Learning
- [@IM_org](#) Internet Matters
- [@UK_SIC](#) UK Safety Internet Centre

Read

- [DfE's guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (page 93)
- [ROH Online Safety Police](#)

Check out

- [2017 cyber survey of pupils in Suffolk](#)
- [Free resources and links from Cambridgeshire County Council](#)
- [Blog and resources from the regional broadband consortium E2BN](#)

MEASURING IMPACT

In brief

- Agree metrics, measure engagement and review content accordingly

And Finally

Once your content is out there on the world wide web, keep an eye on how well it's being used. If you have marketing colleagues work with them to agree some metrics against which you can check engagement. Consider the following:

- Unique page views
- Number of downloads or plays
- Bounce rate (how long they stay around)
- Average time on page

Set up a spreadsheet and check the numbers monthly. If any of the content is not hitting the mark, review it and if necessary remove it. Use the data to inform the next iteration of your resource development.

APPENDIX

The education technology sector is constantly evolving. If you're interested in developing your use of digital in your schools and learning programmes, it is advisable to keep up to speed.

Listen to

[The EdTech Podcast](#) is a weekly podcast targeted at education leaders plus tech companies and investors. It aims to bridge the gap between the education and technology sectors. (Length c50mins)

[London CLC Podcast](#) is produced by the Bett award-winning education team once or twice a term and focuses on the use and impact of technology in schools. (Length c30mins)

[Today in Digital Education](#) is created by two educators and explores technology and education-related issues (plus one or two other unrelated things...). (Length c90mins).

Check out

[Pop Jam bulletins](#) – monthly insight into children's use of social media from the moderated, curated, content-sharing app for children.

[Ofcom media use report](#) – annual report providing detailed evidence on media use, attitudes and understanding among children and young people aged 5-15, as well as about the media access and use of young children aged 3-4.

[Hopes and Streams 2018](#) – biennial survey into children's online activities from London Grid for Learning.

[Museum Computer Network](#) – regular blog sharing ideas, opportunities and learning across the sector.

[Culture is digital 2018](#) – report bringing together the [Culture White Paper](#), the Digital Culture Project and the results of the #CultureisDigital online consultation and setting out a framework for future collaboration between the sectors.

Sign up to

[Chris Unitt Arts, Cultural, Digital newsletter](#) – a weekly roundup of digital/tech developments in the world of the arts, museums, culture, heritage, and creativity.

[London CLC](#) weekly newsletter – tips, advice, and insight into how schools are using technology in schools.



FESTIVAL BRIDGE

Festival Bridge's mission is to radically improve the cultural education offer by creating, advising and facilitating partnerships and networks in the places in which we work.

We provide support, advice and guidance to inspire educators and practitioners, helping them to ensure children and young people's creative and cultural experiences are the most valuable they can be.

Festival Bridge is Norfolk & Norwich Festival's Bridge Organisation, working with investment from Arts Council England and the Department for Education.

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