# Bits and Bytes

# Message from the President-Elect

*Ryan Layton*

One of my favourite things to do is find innovative, technology-driven ways to do regular everyday tasks. For example, for many years I handled my schedule very inefficiently on paper. I was inconsistent, often forgot appointments and after not showing up somewhere received phone calls to see if I was coming. My life changed with my first PalmPilot: a digital calendar and to-do list. It was amazing, small, digital and fun!

This type of upgrade and desire for efficient change has happened continually for me since then in my personal life and professional practice. At the Makerspace event held in September 2014, I was blown away by the inventive teaching and learning happening throughout the province. I observed so many great ideas and pedagogical improvements that I wanted to implement in my own school.

But how do educators stay new and innovative? It can be overwhelming to look at the variety of options available and how frequently technology changes. Here are a few thoughts on how to keep up to date on what is available:

1. Take time every week to sift through your digital resources, whether it is a website or your social media presence. Delve deeper into some of these avenues as opposed to just skimming posts as they appear.
2. Go to professional learning opportunities and talk to others. Other educators are often the best sources of new and exciting ideas.
3. Give a professional learning session to other educators. In preparing for sessions that I have delivered, I have come across many great resources. During your presentation, you will also learn more through discussions with session participants.

I know that each of you are innovators in a variety of ways and are always seeking to improve yourselves. Continue to work on your own professional practice based on sound pedagogy, and take time to enjoy your own interests and passions. I wish you all the best as we enter the last few months of school!

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of the Alberta Teachers' Association

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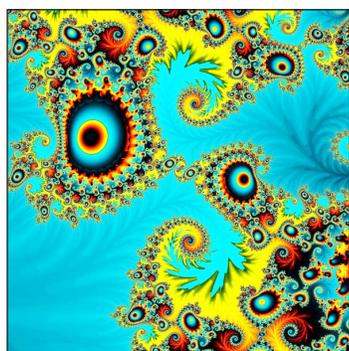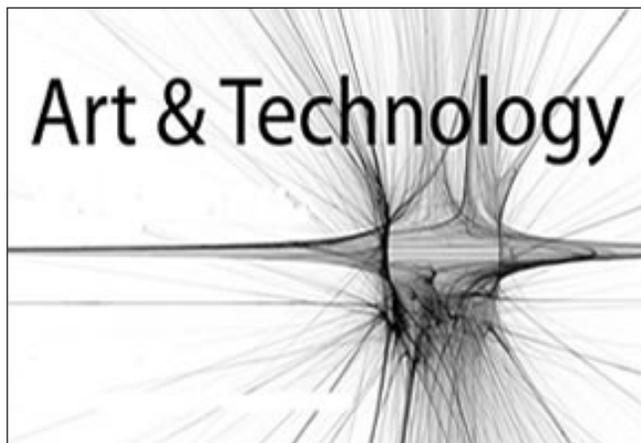Bus 780-403-381-0953
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# Technology and the Fine Arts—Are They a Good Fit?

*P J Krumins,*
*Art Consultant, ECSD*

**M**any artists today are excited about the possibilities for creating digital imagery whether it is using algorithms to create fractal patterns or tablets for animated films. Like any new development, practitioners in the field are skeptical of losing the craft by allowing tools to take over more of the process.

It is easy for us to disdain the use of technology as cheating or taking shortcuts. However, artists have developed new tools and media for the past ten thousand
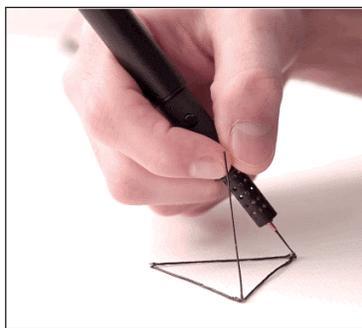


years. From the time they scraped ochre images of animals on cave walls, artists have been seeking and inventing technologies to improve their ability to communicate visually. Every tool and medium used for art making has been designed or refined through creative invention. Art, even using the most basic tools, is evidence of the human ability to use technology. We have gone from charcoal sticks and stone chisels to computer styli and 3-D pens.

Many artists and educators have concerns about focusing too heavily on digital art making. We want students to develop motor skills by manipulating a wide variety of tools and media that go far beyond using a mouse and a keyboard. It is valuable for students to explore making and manipulating images digitally. After all, art is communication, and our world is saturated with digital imagery. Understanding the process of creating digital images allows a viewer to better appreciate them.



Digital technology does have some undeniable benefits in an art program. Students have instant access to the world of contemporary art and art history. Gone are the old slide carousels with a few expensive examples to show students a unit

of study. Images of artworks can be shared instantaneously online to enjoy and learn from someone else's work and for students to get feedback on their own. A teacher can see a student working and instantly call up an image of another artist who works in that media or style to help inform the student's learning. Students can keep track of their work and submit digital portfolios to apply for schools or even to simplify the marking process for teachers. In studying the relative values of colours, a digital camera can display an instant grey scale image for comparison. In Reggio-style art lessons students are happy to explore constructing with temporary materials because they are able to photograph their work before disassembling it. Photography classes are enjoying a renaissance due to the ability to take volumes of photographs without the expense and time delay of film developing. In addition students can easily see an array of their images to reflect and compare.

The downside of computers in the art room relates to the limited sensory feedback for the artist and the question of artistic ownership. The learning value and potential for individual expression in using a computer drawing or painting program is questionable. These programs put an expensive electronic device between students and their canvases. Instead of using a stylus on a pad while watching a disconnected line appear in colour on a screen, students should pick up a real crayon and enjoy the sensory experience of the friction on the paper surface and the stickiness of the crayon and, yes, even

the smell of the wax or oil. While making their own distinct marks, they may discover the difference in the line when they alter the speed or pressure as they draw. There is instant visual and tactile feedback for a student using art materials and tools. Digital drawing programs remove most of the rich sensory details that help students learn about the physical world. Another downside of digital art is that it so often involves sampling and altering the work of other artists. Where is the development of personally meaningful imagery in a process of manipulating another artist's work? Warhol did it and made an effective statement, but it is important for students to find their own voice first.

New technology is here and always has been. Artists and art teachers must explore the potential and the pitfalls of technology and determine how it might fit for their own practice. ℵ

# Call for Articles

ETC would love to publish articles by its members. If you attend a wonderful technology conference, have a great review of an application (software, Web 2.0, tablet and so on) or would like to recommend an article, contact either John Korassa (john.korassa@ecsd.net) or Gail Reid (greid@esl-almadina.com). ℵ

# The iMovie Producer—It's Not What It's Cracked Up to Be

*Susan Grant-Suttie*

Oh! I was ecstatic when I first saw it! An iMovie sampler came across my Facebook page, and I was thrilled at the possibility of using the new app in my classroom. But first I needed to check on the price, then try it out to determine its ease of use.

For Christmas 2013 I took photos and movie clips, and downloaded "Santa Baby," by Michael Buble, from iTunes for the background. It was totally engaging, delightful as a new puppy and addictive as a new video game. Then I posted it a week later on Facebook and got a nasty legal note from the Buble people. I was on Santa's naughty list for using the iTune song I had bought as the background music. It was removed from my Facebook page with the most polite finger-wagging message. Lesson learned—do not use popular music for an iMovie, then expect to post it.

Next level of the iMovie adventure was to videotape my class. Every year I do anything to avoid that age-old boring essay about Louis Riel being either a savior or a saint for the Métis people. If truth be told, I spent more time finding plagiarized assignments taken from the Internet than actually marking the essays. I dumped that project after just one try. Instead I was determined to videotape the entire trial as re-enacted by each of my four classes. And as an added juicy ending, they also voted on Riel's guilt or innocence.

Parts of the videotaping were exciting as the student lawyers caught witnesses on duplicitous comments! Other parts were when the students/actors obviously had not done their research, because their witness statements dragged out with um and ah unable to answer the simple six questions per witness regardless of a script in hand. Then there were the whisperers, the stutterers and the incomplete sentence speakers. Some students had fantastic costumes but no knowledge of their character. What could I do with that bit of video? My other students in the jury box held up signs (to avoid being videotaped) from the back row silently exclaiming, "Speak up!" With four separate homerooms to videotape, it took four days of filming per class for each time I taught social. By the end of the videotaping, I was exhausted. Students were marked on their representation of the characters they portrayed and the research they shared, plus the notes they took as they represented the jury when not on the stand. I had it all on video for marking reference.

But that is not all, as the TV commercial says. I had to edit it together and present it as an iMovie to each class. Each class was to present their own video in whole with only the exciting and relevant bits glued together in a cohesive trailer. Every five minutes of filming took two hours of editing. Mind you, my level of expectation as an adult was higher than what I would have expected from a student. I leaned into that small iPad to listen to the students to try to remember which class they were in, clip the video and edit out the paper shuffling, coughs and door knocking, and add suspense music or significant photos from the time period to kick it up a notch.

"What the heck are you doing in there?" My husband caught me on the floor in my walk-in closet as he had thought I left to go shopping hours ago. No. It was the only place that would muffle outside sound, so I could hear my whispering students on video. Also, if I wanted to add any over comments, I could not have background sounds from the dog, the cows (I live in the country) or my giggling, chatty 12-year-old as she walked around the house FaceTiming her
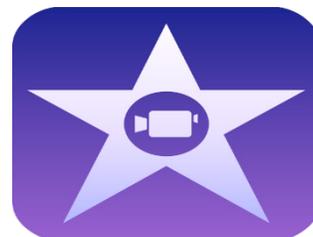
friends with exaggerated excitement. I needed peace and quiet, and privacy! My darling husband left me alone in the closet promising not to tell anyone where I was. He closed the door softly with rolling eyeballs.

I presented the video to my class and plan to use it as an example for my future classes as to how to conduct a re-enacted trial, but never again will I video it for an iMovie. I lost my life, let alone sleep, for a month!

Now my youngest is in Grade 7, and her new French social studies teacher assigned the class a group work project. They were to use the iMovie and show a meeting between the First Nations and a group of Europeans. There were no lessons on how to use the iMovie, the teacher had not used it herself and the students were dropped into the app with the expectation that it was as easy as a video game. From what I saw of that project, it is worse than a dog's breakfast with little to no content. It was no wonder most of her entire class received horrible marks, so she tells me. It appeared that the editing features were so fun to play with compared to acquiring actors and costumes and, of course, research was of little consequence. The film editor seemed to have the prize job in the project but with little to work with. The time it took up was phenomenal. They had to film and re-film as someone's hair wasn't right, the actor couldn't be heard or a loud car went by. Then my youngest came to me and understood why I was in the closet for hours and why I wouldn't allow my students to fall into the abyss of videotaping for social. From what my daughter shared, it was worse for the teacher, and it took up so much time that my daughter's class is now behind in curriculum outcomes.

Now I am teaching an option class on how to make an iMovie. Heaven help me, but it is an entire class in itself. I have many rules. Students are expected to do the entire paper script, and have it ready before they are allowed to learn how to edit. They are only expected to explain a modern-day popular idiom, which is expected to take one minute. I have learned a lot from iMovie, and most of it is not from editing, but from organizing myself ahead of time, as the front end is much heavier than the back end regarding responsibilities. When one wants to be an iMovie producer, be prepared to lose your life for a month. ◫

# Let's Have a Kahoot!

*Dane Sadownyk*



As an educational technology consultant, I have heard teachers often express the importance of finding technological tools that are relatively easy to use, engaging for students and free. Kahoot certainly fits that profile. But what is Kahoot, exactly? Kahoot is considered to be a games-based learning tool that can get your students involved and excited in their learning by using any device that can connect to Wi-Fi. Students can be engaged in either a quiz, a discussion or a survey. However, the quiz is arguably the highlight and greatest strength of this tool. After creating an account, teachers can either make their own quiz game, or search for previously created Kahoots in the public forum and edit the quiz to meet their needs. Once a game is created or edited, the teacher will be able to access their Kahoots every time they log in. It is equally important to note that Kahoot has also gained much popularity for educators in second language and immersion programs. This has provided those educators with the ability to find or create games in the language being studied. Considering these features Kahoot has to offer, what is the most common feedback teachers have shared? Simply, teachers cannot keep up with the student demand to engage in more Kahoot quizzes. So what are you waiting for? Visit www.getkahoot .com/ for yourself and have a Kahoot! ◫

# Building a City in a Grade 3 Classroom

*Carla Metz*

Watching students apply what they learn in meaningful ways is gratifying. Watching them do this using technology as their medium (while being truly engaged in their learning) is even more so!

With the guidance and support of my school's educational technologist, Gail Reid, I learned how to use iPads and Doctopus for assessment in the classroom. Our latest project was watching English language learning (ELL) Grade 3 students integrate their oral and written English language skills with science (Building with a Variety of Materials), math (Space and Shape: Geometry) and technology to build geometric cities in small groups.

Students worked in groups of four, cycling through various group roles and tasks to create a city's blueprint using geometric nets, then build their city using a choice of materials. The students captured the process of planning, drawing, building and reflecting orally and in written language using Google Drive on laptops, and videos and photographs on iPads.

All of the tasks and required criteria that needed to be present in their geo-city were accessed by students in their Google Drive shared folders, in which the recorder for the group could log in, open the task to be worked on and later respond in a reflective way how this task went for the group. The students enjoyed seeing their teacher respond in real time to their ideas. If they needed to expand on their thinking, they were happy to do so because of the ease in which they could go back to take out a sentence and make it better with the efficiency of a keyboard. No erasers needed. Students enjoyed their group roles of leader, materials manager, recorder and videographer; however, students beamed when their turn to use the iPad or laptop came around again.

Within their tasks, the students clicked on hyperlinks if they needed clarification to understand a key vocabulary term or watch a short video tutorial. Many students took initiative and chose to work from home by adding more detail and refining their written work.

For the final hurrah of this project students took all of their written reflections from Google Drive and photos and video reflections from the iPad and merged them into a collaborative e-book using an app called Book Creator. Each member of the group was responsible for certain pages of the e-book, and they worked on this e-book in real time: one Google document, four students independently using their own laptops and iPads. The e-book showed the entire process of planning and building a city from a blueprint to a 3-D manipulative, and students responded to what they would do differently next time. Finally, they proudly shared their digital e-book on the Smart Board with their peers, and parents could see their work from their computer or tablet at home.

In my mind, documenting their work online made rubrics and assessment more efficient, especially when I learned how to use Doctopus on Google Drive. In addition, the students did not argue over who got to keep the geometric city at the end of the project! Instead each child has access to an e-book where they can see their geometric city anytime. The students saw independent subjects and units come together in an exciting way, and they gleaned stronger ICT skills as a result. ℵ

# Art and Technology: Fusion Fun

### *Kingston Wong*

Having students create an e-portfolio through Google sites can be an excellent way to gather the students' best work and celebrate with others. For my Grade 6 fine arts class, the students have been working on various projects using different sketching methods. Using the e-portfolios, the students create webpages using Google sites to inform me which pieces are their best work.

First the educational technologist and I created an e-portfolio template so the students would have an idea of how to set up a basic webpage of their work. Then the websites were created using the Google add-on site Maestro so that each student would start with the same generic website that I have access to in case students require assistance.

The students took pictures of these pieces and put them on the webpages. Students were also asked to reflect on what made these projects their best using Edmund Feldman's critical assessment of art. They wrote what they did in their piece, what message they were trying to convey, what moods their project invoked and whether their piece was ultimately successful as an art piece.

In terms of teaching, this has affected my practice because it has allowed me to easily filter out all of those art pieces that students don't want me to assess. Sometimes it takes numerous attempts at making a sketch before students create what they feel proud of. Using the websites, only the best pieces are marked. It's also very useful to read their remarks when the students self-assess their projects. I include this portion in their mark so that student and teacher come to a consensus on the final assessment.

For the students, the websites allow them to delve deep into critical thinking about art. Students feel pride in their work as they do it and when they see the Google website as the end piece to the fruit of their labour. I've seen students focused and use up all of their class time to try to get their webpages done. When students learn how to build a portfolio, presentation skills are generated through the website itself and in showcasing their work to others. ◪

# ETCATA and ISTE

*Shelley Friesen*

In January 2015, the Educational Technology Council (ETC) became an associate affiliate member of the International Society of Technology in Education (ISTE). ISTE is a global organization responsible for setting standards for the use of technology in education and connecting learners and educators across the globe. Find out more about this organization by visiting their website: iste.org.

Becoming an affiliate connects ETC members to the network of professional nonprofit organizations that wish to empower learners in a connected world. The affiliate network of ISTE is more than 100,000 educators worldwide (iste.org).

Beyond being connected, associate membership brings other benefits, as outlined below.

## Impact in the Field

- Connection with ISTE that enhances our organization's credibility and impact, and offers access to resources, trends and opportunities related to the advancement of ed tech
- Advocacy leadership and resources, such as toolkits, templates and state profiles as well as action opportunities and news on legislative happenings
- Promotion of your events to ISTE members and the ISTE community
- E-mail sent to all new and renewing ISTE members introducing affiliates and encouraging membership in affiliate organizations
- Rights to republish up to six featured articles per year from ISTE periodicals at no cost, including entrsekt, EdTekHub, ISTE Connects blog and ISTE journals
- Making IT Happen award package, including branded jacket, certificate, one-year ISTE individual membership, presentation materials and promotion of our affiliate and winner
- Opportunities to collaborate with ISTE on standards and professional learning initiatives

## Organizational Development

- One free admission (additional admissions are $150) to a full day of professional learning at the ISTE Conference and Expo for leaders from our affiliate; includes networking, training, organizational best practices, affiliate showcases, announcements of new ISTE opportunities and interactions with ISTE leadership
- Selected ISTE books or publications at no cost for affiliate leaders attending the annual meeting
- Revenue generator: Purchase ISTE books at a discount to sell at affiliate events
- Keynote speaker smack down event at affiliate annual meeting (face-to-face introduction of top name keynoters) and archives of previous presentations

## ISTE Products, Perks and Marketing

- One complimentary ISTE membership for the affiliate rep; includes all member benefits and entrsekt, the ISTE member magazine
- Member pricing on books, online courses, ISTE branded merchandise, periodicals, publications and so on
- Discounts on ISTE membership for affiliate members: $10 off standard and $30 off premium
- Co-branded banner to be displayed at affiliate events
- Media kit to showcase your affiliate status with ISTE

## ISTE Conference and Expo

- Opportunity to host a reception at a conference headquarters hotel
- Publicity to conference attendees of affiliate organizations including their year-round and ISTE Conference and Expo activities
- E-mail sent to all ISTE Conference and Expo registrations introducing them to affiliates

Ask your president for more information! ℵ

# Technology Roundup

Have you used an incredible app, software or tool this year in your classroom? Then please share!

Fill in the following form and share your practice with others. We will publish it in the next issue. ❧

http://goo.gl/forms/iEsb8BGyEo

## ETCATA - Technology Round Up

Have you used an incredible App, Software, Tool etc. this year in your classroom? Then please share!

\* Required

**What is the technology?** \*

- ○ App
- ○ Computer Software
- ○ Website
- ○ Hardware
- ○ Other: [            ]

**What/which grade(s) was this used in?** \*
Check all that apply

- ☐ ECS
- ☐ Grade 1
- ☐ Grade 2
- ☐ Grade 3
- ☐ Grade 4
- ☐ Grade 5
- ☐ Grade 6
- ☐ Grade 7
- ☐ Grade 8
- ☐ Grade 9
- ☐ Grade 10
- ☐ Grade 11
- ☐ Grade 12
- ☐ Post Secondary