Digital Content

By Gina Persichini

Let's face it, many of the students in our lives are convinced that online content is the only way to go. It may be they believe it's just easier to go with something found from a search engine. Easy is nice, no one will dispute that. But is this quick and easy information good? Is it valuable? Is it accurate? Does it support learning and the formation of ideas? Well, there's good news: there is a lot of a high-quality educational digital content available.

Libraries and other cultural institutions have been digitizing content for some time. As a result, they have created vast online collections of materials, which are freely available. Much of it is primary source content that supports curriculum and Idaho education standards.

The Library of Congress has organized much of their digital content into themed primary source sets. They have lesson plans, presentations, activities, and links to specific curriculum standards. Content includes a variety of subject matter from the papers of Abraham Lincoln to historic baseball cards and influential musicians.

Our National Archives site has a similar collection of digital primary source content. Use their tools to introduce beginning research activities, find diaries and letters of American presidents, the founding documents of our nation, and even records that trace how the government has influenced the American diet.

DPLA
DIGITAL PUBLIC LIBRARY OF AMERICA

The Digital Public Library of America brings together the riches of America's libraries, archives, and museums, and makes them freely available to the world.

The Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) is a collaborative effort of museums and libraries across the U.S. Libraries digitize collections locally, then share their collections through regional networks that feed the DPLA site. At DPLA, students can explore videos, photographs, and digital versions of original documents.

Idaho Libraries have large collections of digital content about music, forestry, mining history, and historic Idaho figures. These are found in the Celebrate Idaho guide with the libraries' digital collections.

When our students are seeking online information for their school work, we can steer them to these sites for quality content they might not find through a traditional search engine. This doesn't discount the valuable printed content available, but it's a reminder for all of us that there's great information in all formats. A lot of it is just a click away.

LINKS TO MORE LEARNING

National Archives: Getting Started
https://www.archives.gov/education/research
This site is for teachers and students. There are research activities, citation information, and tips along with a lot of primary resources.

Using Primary Sources in the Classroom (Schrock Guide)
http://www.schrockguide.net/primary-sources.html
A guide with books on the topic, links to great resources, subject-specific lists, and presentation support materials.

Library of Congress: Lesson Plans
https://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/
Teacher-created, classroom-tested lesson plans using primary sources of the digital collections of the Library of Congress.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Crash Course:

Brought to you by John Green (yes, that John Green) and his cool brother Hank, Crash Course is a YouTube channel with series on subjects ranging from the History of Gaming to Philosophy to History to Physics with new content all the time. These are hip, fast-moving, and stylized short lessons that students will enjoy. They are free, but fans can donate to support Crash Course, too. Where to go to get started?

https://www.youtube.com/user/crashcourse

DIGITAL TOOLS

National Archives
https://www.archives.gov/education/research/primary-sources

Library of Congress Primary Source Sets
http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/

Digital Public Library of America (DPLA)
http://dp.la

Celebrate Idaho
http://guides.lili.org/CelebrateIdaho