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With the convergence of existing technologies, a great future awaits. Televisions have become home theatres, sound files can be listened to on portable music devices, laptops and PC's and digital photos can be viewed on DVD players.

Some sections of the population have already taken to these new devices and there is a geographical/spatial element to these devices. Multinational companies such as Google have provided solutions to make life easier, but these technologies have also in this next generation obtained a geographical element to them.

Mainstreaming satellite imagery to mobile phones, accessing early 20th Century film footage via the internet for free have become advances in the name of progress. Changes to this mix are that developing nations are now able to provide suitable content to show their environment in modern terms. The difference we need to convey is about how sustainable our practices are in this new generation.

Google Video Beta Version:

<http://video.google.com/>

In Larry Page's address (one of the CEO's of Google) in January this year, Google Video was released amongst a raft of other products from the company's development stable.

Google Video sets up an audio-visual player (with their own file format or Macromedia Shockwave content) in order to display free to view and pay per view files. There is certainly a commercial component here (CBS is a major partner with Google in its release), the free to view files is where the interest lies.

Government departments from the USA and other organizations have utilised the facility to display their own content. For example, Indian researchers have made available information about Himalayan mountain area national parks and biodiversity.

This resource will be one to watch as free to air television has greater competition from an online source.

Microsoft Photo Story:

<http://www.microsoft.com>

Tired of using PowerPoint for all of your presentations? Would you like to add music and video footage to your content? A free download as part of the Microsoft Suite of programs is Photo Story.

The downloading ensures you have a legitimate copy of Windows software but this should not worry those in the education community. The program is easy to use rather

than having to learn video editing software.

Stills, moving images, text and voiceovers can be used in this program to give a higher standard of presentation rather than just animations, clipart and basic sounds.

Seek out this piece of software quickly before your students beat you to it!

Editor's note: Year 6 students at my school produced the 2005 Graduation 'Movie' using Photo Story. They found it easy to use and it was very engaging!

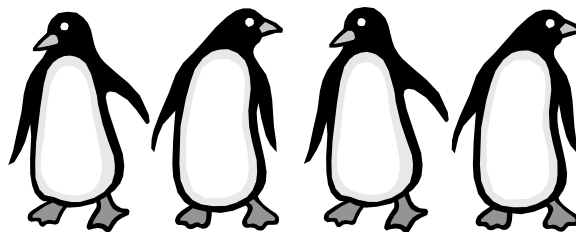
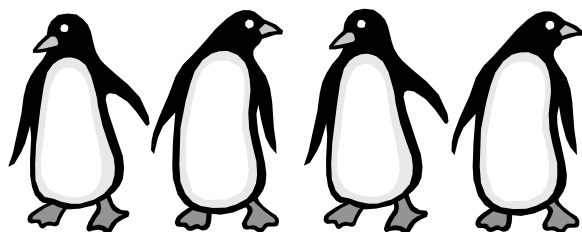
Wikipedia:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

Whilst Wikipedia is a number of years old, it is a great resource for research and assessment. Wikipedia is a combination of an encyclopaedia and a wiki, a common area for sharing on the Internet.

Content accuracy may be a concern as these pages are open to change by any member of the public. However, there are voluntary editors who maintain particular sections of the site, ensuring the information is valid and can be cross-checked with other factual information.

The ability for students to add content to this site is the added advantage. A very real assessment possibility is documenting a suburb, area or locality as a local study. Students could add content for their assessment task. This action-based activity ties in well to the sustainability section of courses and as part of the active citizenship and values component of curriculum documents.



University of Leeds Teaching Resources in Structural Geology:

<http://earth.leeds.ac.uk/learnstructure/index.htm>

Geomorphology tends to be Geography's poorer sister. The lack of interactive information about rocks and landforms means that it can be boring for students and difficult to comprehend. This site from the University of Leeds is a comprehensive guide which can be used for middle school and senior school studies to enliven the subject and give it more kudos.

Animations form the basis of a section of the content on folding and faulting. The interactive content is backed up by activities, glossaries and practical examples completed in a user friendly fashion.

Given the new interest in Roxby Downs with new finds and the Gawler Craton future discoveries, this site could be easily utilised as a resource for a unit on different landforms.

The Adelie Penguin:

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

As a prelude to the International Polar Year, this overseas site is a way of exploring the 'fur and feathers' aspect of the Antarctic ecosystem. The New Zealand based site is image rich and shows information in a student friendly manner.

Although the method of links and menus may confuse students, this site is a relevant accompaniment to the "March of the Penguins" film release.

Marine Discovery Centre

<http://www.marinediscoverycentre.com.au/>

This local site is the home to the Marine Discovery Centre (MDC) at Henley Beach. The site showcases the MDC which is a very popular venue (bookings are made for years in advance).

The site enables the education community to keep up with the happenings at the centre, the resources available and some resources which can be downloaded. There is a newsletter in PDF format which can be downloaded or sent via email.

Save Our Spit

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

Although already featured in a previous edition of Net Directions, this community-based NIMBY site gives a good demonstration on what the individual and community groups can do to elicit change in their environment.

The site has improved since first featured with regular media releases, community links to other relevant sites. The site's main focus is protecting the South Stradbroke Beach environment in an anti-development stance.

The Save Our Spit group has also taken on more than just a local approach to community campaigning on one issue. It is a good example for senior students in Sustainable Futures, Studies of Society and Geography of what can be done in with a technological and social capacity to engage people in change.

Landcare Research and Green Toolbox software:

<http://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/research/>

<http://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/research/biodiversity/greentoolbox/index.asp>

This New Zealand Government site is a good companion for any geographer looking at natural resource management content. The software is a relatively small file and easy to install.

As the program is freeware, it allows students to explore the biosphere in an interactive fashion rather than just on a textbook basis. Although these are both overseas based resources, comparisons could be made with the similarities and differences between Australia and the Land of the Long White Cloud.

Sourceforge

<http://www.sourceforge.net>

This site is a repository of freeware programs worked on by software engineers, the keen in computing and those wanting an alternative to conventional paid software.

The site has been featured before in SA Geographer, but is a worthy inclusion as the increasing reliance on technology means that freeware alternatives may be a valid option for those with limited budgets.

This site is not just confined to geographical programs but is a community of people devoted to developing a 'better way' to do things.

Whilst the site may be a little confusing to first time users, the first part of the domain name becomes a sub-domain for a particular program: <http://audacity.sourceforge.net> is devoted to the Audacity sound recording program (suitable for creating podcasts).

This site is definitely worth a look if you are looking for programs which will save you (or your students) time and to increase productivity.

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