

Tuesday, September 30, 2008

## Top Tips

### Online Newspaper Services for Kids

The election presents a chance for students to learn from newspapers and primary sources. However, many original sources are difficult to read and content that is relevant to students' levels of reading and understanding is sparse.

The solution is to find online newspapers that are written for the age and interest level of your students.

And, the trend is for these "kiddie" publications to be colorful, even a bit garish." This may grate on adults' sensibilities and impinge on readability, but children must respond to "impact color," otherwise, why would so many world-class sponsoring organizations be using the same format?

(Too bad that these world-class sponsoring organizations make themselves look amateurish by the design of these sites.) Quality Content Reporters that write for children try the "Hey Kids!" style of writing, as if they were "buddies. Of course young people see through this ploy. Students know that the writers are not kids, and it is amazing that they read past the initial sentence of these stories.

Quality reporting for students requires the same level of respect and support for students' competencies that teachers demonstrate, hour by hour, in classrooms everywhere.

It is amazing that reporters ignore the classrooms of Master Teachers where they could learn how to write for young people.

Of course, there are a lot of teachers who teach well, but can't write for children or adults; so reporters need to evaluate and choose which teachers they observe and imitate. Rules for Writing for Young People Rules for young people begin with a respectful attitude and honest, straight talk. Adults that pretend to be kids lack credibility.

Writers for kids need to understand that they are "under contract" to the young people, and that they must deliver value to kids in the same way that reporters for adults also must deliver value to their readers.

For example, why would an online kids news magazine display an ad for Lasik+ eye surgery, and show a young adult couple looking into each other's eyes? What about an ad for a Body Diagnostic mattress?

To their credit, Yahoo seems to have changed the name of their site from "Yahooligans" (Meaning: Young Criminal Gang Thugs") to "Yahoo Kids." Writing News Materials The ideal source of news materials is the students' teacher.

But, teachers' time is too precious and scarce to take on this task.

However, a "syndicate" of teachers researching and contributing could spread the work load and make the process viable.

One caution is that teachers need to compare three news sources and not use any three words in a row from any source to avoid charges of plagiarizing the news article.

Another issue is that some school districts claim ownership of all writings (probably illegally) that employee teachers create.

Another caution includes the of huge value but limited in usefulness is to have older students write the news articles for younger students.

Although student-written material holds greater sway with students than adult material, copyright issues involving under-legal-contract-age arrangements with student writers limit how these materials can be distributed.

The safest arrangements involve classroom writing projects where students research and share their articles, compositions and reports with members of their class or campus. Student Publications Here are some of the available publications, ostensibly targeted for students: Kids Post ( Sponsor: Washington Post)

National Geographic for Kids (Sponsor: National Geographic)

Scholastic for Kids (Sponsor: Scholastic)

Kids Newsroom (Source: Kids Newsroom.Org)

The Newseum (Source: Newseum - more adult oriented)

Scholastic News Zone (Sponsor: Scholastic)

Sports Illustrated for Kids (Sponsor: Sports Illustrated)

Student Connections (Sponsor: New York Times)

Time for Kids (Sponsor: Time, Inc.)

Weekly Reader (Sponsor: Weekly Reader)

Yahoo Kids (Sponsor: Yahoo)

Yak's Corner Sponsor: Detroit Free Press) Foreign Publications K-Zone (Australia - Sponsor: Pacific Magazines)

The Newsroom (Great Britain - Sponsor: BBC)

KidsNetwork (India - Sponsor: Pitara.com)

Newspapers Around the World (Sponsor: refdesk.com) Other Publication Resources Crayola Kids Magazine (Sponsor: Crayola)

Dig - archaeology (Sponsor: Cobblestone Publishing)

Family Corner Online (Sponsor: Family Corner Magazine)

In the News - news puzzles (Sponsor: BBC)

WayBack - US History for Kids magazine (Sponsor: WGBH Educational Foundation)

Yes Mag -Canada's Science Magazine for Kids (Sponsor: Peter Piper Publishing)ReferenceEncyclopedia.com

The Informationsphere

OneLook Dictionaries

Quotations Page

Research It!

Roget's ThesaurusSidebarLinks courtesy of: Mr. Donn.Org

California State University, Northridge

Posted by Classroom Toolkit Newsletter in Top Tips at 07:00