

# Teaching matters

Articles and opinions on primary teaching, with tips and ideas for the classroom

## Bring 'Spark' to showcasing school events/projects

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### Popularity based on classroom use

As we approach the Christmas season, it is nice to showcase school work and events – work done to date; Christmas plays, concerts, projects, season's greetings to the school community etc. One of the most popular modules of the PDST Technology in Education summer course entitled *Embedding ICT in teaching and learning in 2016*, concentrated on digital storytelling, and *Adobe Spark* proved to be a very popular tool for teachers. Since then, feedback from classrooms around Ireland is that it is an equally popular tool with pupils.

### Adobe Spark – post, page and video

*Adobe Spark* (at [spark.adobe.com](http://spark.adobe.com)) is a collection of three creation tools – *Spark Post*, *Spark Page* and *Spark Video*. All three can be accessed on a web browser (or apps can be downloaded individually onto tablet devices). *Spark Video* lets pupils create a video by narrating a series of slides. Each slide can have text, images, or icons as building blocks in the story. *Spark Page* lets students build a story to be displayed as one web page while *Spark Post* is a tool for designing images. This article will detail a classroom use for *Spark Page*.

### Preparing to tell a story

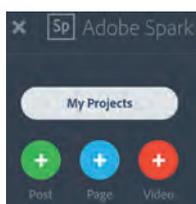
As with any story, it is important to plan the sequence of the story in advance, captions/narratives agreed and whatever images need to be uploaded can be organised into a single folder. If video is to be used, it will need to be uploaded into Youtube or Vimeo in order to be incorporated into *Spark Page*.

### Setting up your Adobe Spark Account

Go to [spark.adobe.com/login](http://spark.adobe.com/login) to create your own individual account by selecting the 'Start now for free' option.



Once signed up for free, navigate to the left top corner and select the 'three lines icon'. Once clicked this will open a menu



with three coloured options namely 'Post', 'Page' and 'Video'. To combine still images, text, video and music into a story, 'Page' is the preferred option.

### Creating an Adobe Spark page

Once 'Page' is selected, a menu will appear and a title and a subtitle can be added by simply clicking on the boxes and typing in content.



Once the 'photo' icon is selected, a menu will appear at the side of the screen allowing a search for Creative Commons linked photos which can be used in the 'page' and there is also the option to upload images

captured on your own devices. One of the best features of *Adobe Spark* is how it cites images used from Creative Commons searches from within the platform so pupils appreciate the importance of citing sources of third party images.

The image will upload to form a backdrop to the text and the focal point of the image can be adjusted also. Alternatively, images can be sourced from other platforms.



Further elements can be added to the story by scrolling down the screen and selecting the '+' icon to reveal a menu to add further photos, text, buttons, video (must be already in Youtube or Vimeo), a photo grid and a glideshow (combination of images and text).



At this stage, the digital stories can go off in a myriad of different directions using combinations of media. The 'Page' can be personalised even further by using the 'Themes' setting.

The 'Preview' button at the top of the screen will allow you to look through work done to date. The 'Share' button allows you to add some metadata to the page (Title, author, photo credits [if non-Creative Commons photos have been used] and it must be categorised Education for school use).



The next stage of the 'Share' process will generate a shareable link to your 'Page' with options to share through social media, email or to use the embed code to add the 'Page' to your school website (in accordance with your acceptable use policy for use of school related images).



We would love to see your stories created as a result of this article so share them with us (if in line with school policy) through Twitter accounts @PDST\_Ireland and @PDST\_TechInEd

We want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support in 2016, to wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas and we look forward to working with you all again in 2017.

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