

To Blog or not to blog...

What is a Blog? How would I use it in class?

A blog is an online journal/diary. Blogs have become a huge force in how we communicate, share views and access all sorts of up-to-date information. For me a classroom blog is much more! It is an online space whereby children and teachers can collaborate, communicate thoughts, ideas and opinions and also share/publish their work with a much wider audience online.

Blogs help to increase motivation for writing and reading and children take great pride in their blog. Blogs can allow text, images, audio and can link to and from other sites. A blog can be updated and accessed wherever you have internet access.

Shared class blogs are much more common and manageable than individual blogs for each child. A blog can allow children who are often too shy to speak in class to participate in a discussion. A blog also allow children to give more thoughtful and critical feedback as they can carry out some research before posting their comments.

What could children blog about?

- Publish their book reviews on their blog
- Share their artwork via a gallery on the blog
- Create a poetry page on their classroom blog where they publish their poems
- Write about visitors to the school
- School trips
- Creative writing – Publish their writing on the blog
- Celebrations and Achievements in class
- Reports on sports and other events in the school
- The school garden



- Maths puzzles and riddles
- Discuss and monitor a science investigation
- Festivals
- Local History and local events
- Current affairs
- Project work

Check out Irish primary school blogs at www.scoilnet.ie/hp_schoolsthatblog.shtm

Written by ANNE WHITE



REMINDER
WWW.FISFESTIVAL.COM

ICT: Explore and up-skill with NCTE

NCTE offers professional development opportunities on a range of topics to do with technology in the classroom throughout the year, including summer courses that qualify for EPV days. The hands-on, practical nature of the learning experience is a key feature of NCTE courses, as is the fact that NCTE tutors are fully qualified teachers who understand the challenges teachers experience in using ICT in the classroom. Some current topics:

- Using a visualiser for learning – 2.5 hour support group

- Web 2.0 for Learning (blogs, podcasts and wikis) – 7.5 hour NCTE course
- Fis (Film in Schools) – 2.5 hour support group
- An Introduction to your Interactive Whiteboard – 7.5 hour NCTE whole school training course
- ICT and Language in the Primary Classroom – 5 hour course NCTE/MLPSI course

Check the NCTE website for the latest information on online summer courses also! Full CPD details on www.ncte.ie/ICTTraining/



Star site



St Conleth's NS, Derrinturn
www.stconlethns.ie

Colourful website with a clear navigation and well used by staff and students. It gives a great sense of what is going on in the school.

My favourite sites

Maria Collins, retired teacher from Cork, who loves music.



NCH - Explore Music
www.exploremusic.ie

Learn about the orchestra and explore traditional Irish music.

Carnegie Hall Listening Adventures

www.carnegiehall.org/article/explore_and_learn/art_online_resources_listening_adventures.html

The guide to the orchestra and Dvorak's Symphony are great.

SFS Kids
www.sfskids.org

The place for children really into music.

Top 10 sites

The most viewed resources in January

- 1 Stories of the Saints**
www.adena.com/adena/sts/index.htm
Info on saints, like St Brigid.
- 2 Irish Culture and Customs**
www.irishcultureandcustoms.com/index.html
Looks at various Irish feasts.
- 3 Multiplication Tables Games**
www.teachingtables.co.uk
Interactive games to make learning tables fun.
- 4 Rivers**
www.bbc.co.uk/schools/riversandcoasts/rivers/what_is_river/index.shtml
Interactive covering most aspects of rivers for Geography.
- 5 Hooda Math**
<http://hoodamath.com/>
Tutorials and games to reinforce Maths.
- 6 Explore a Skeleton**
www.eskeletons.org
Digitised versions of human and non-human skeletons.
- 7 Kids Astronomy**
www.kidsastronomy.com
Explore the solar system.
- 8 Attacking and Defending a Castle**
www.historyonthenet.com/Lessons/attackdefendcastle/attackdefendmain.htm
Useful if you want to get into a Norman castle.
- 9 Memory Game**
www.mathplayground.com/logicgames.html
Mostly puzzles and games.
- 10 Dance Mat Typing**
www.bbc.co.uk/schools/typing
Instructions on how to touch type.