By Christoforos Pappas
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FREE EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

18 Free Digital Storytelling Tools For Teachers And Students

Do you believe that digital storytelling is important in education? Are you looking for a creative, critical, and powerful way to help your students? Would you be interested in a list of free digital storytelling tools?

Free Digital Storytelling Tools For Teachers And Students

Editor's note: We have originally written and published this article in February 2013. Thanks to your useful suggestions and our own following of the latest developments in the fast paced field of technology, we have updated this piece in November 2015 in the hope that you will keep finding it useful. Thank you for sharing!

Stories are important. At the following list you will find 18 free digital storytelling tools, both websites and apps, which will help you use technology to tell a story while being highly creative and having fun.

11 Free Digital Storytelling Websites

1. ACMI Generator
   ACMI Generator is a creative studio space where you can explore the moving image, be inspired, create your own moving image works, and share your creations with the Generator community. Gain a deeper understanding of the context of these inspiring stories through their education themes section. Try the Storyboard Generator and either choose a script or build your own storyboard and share it.

2. Bubblr
   Bubblr is a tool to create comic strips using photos from flickr, just taking a sequence of pictures where you can add bubbles and create a story.

3. Capzles
   All of your media and stories together like never before. Create rich multimedia experiences with videos, photos, music, blogs, and documents.

4. **Comic Master**
   Comic Master allows you to create your own short graphic novel! With Comic Master you can decide how you want the page or your graphic novel to look, add backgrounds, choose characters and props to appear in your scenes, add dialogue and captions, and much more.

5. MakeBeliefsComix
   At MakeBeliefsComix you can create your own comic strip with an easy and fun way. Choose a character and emotion, add talk or thought balloons, and start your character communicating. You can add other characters, colored backgrounds, objects, and panel prompts to keep your viewers interested. When you are done, you can print or email your comic.

6. MapSkip
   The purpose of MapSkip is to create a weave of stories about the places in our lives. Create a free

account and mark up places in Google Maps with your own stories and photos. You can also browse other users' stories, rate them, and discuss them. The best part? MapSkip is free of ads!

7. PicLits

PicLits is a creative writing site that matches beautiful images with carefully selected keywords in order to inspire you. The object is to put the right words in the right place and the right order to capture the essence, story, and meaning of the picture.

8. Slidestory

Slidestory allows you to combine picture slideshows with voice narration. Each picture in a slideshow has an accompanying voice narrated mp3 audio file, optional tags, and text caption. Isn't this a very exciting way to make presentations and share them?

9. Smilebox

Smilebox lets you quickly and easily create slideshows, invitations, greetings, collages, scrapbooks, and photo albums right on your computer. To get started, download and install the Smilebox application. Then simply select the photos you want to use, choose a template, add comments and music, and voila, you've made a Smilebox! With more than 1000 customizable templates to choose from, you'll find inspiration around every corner.

10. Storybird

Storybird lets anyone make visual stories in seconds. They curate artwork from illustrators and animators around the world and inspire writers of any age to turn those images into fresh stories. Note that while making, sharing, and reading stories on Storybird is free, printing them or downloading them have various fees that are clearly explained with each option.

11. ZooBurst

ZooBurst is a digital storytelling tool that lets anyone easily create his or her own 3D popup books. ZooBurst books "live" online and can be experienced on your desktop or laptop computer, or on your iPad via the free ZooBurst mobile app. Authors can arrange characters and props within a 3D world that can be customized using uploaded artwork or items found in a built-in database of over 10,000 free images and materials. The basic, free, account allows you to create 10 books of 10 pages each.

7 Free Apps For Digital Storytelling

1. Adobe Slate

Named App Store Editors' Choice, Adobe Slate lets you turn your next newsletter, report, invitation, or travel adventure into a gorgeous visual story that delights readers on any device. Simply tap to select a unique look; beautiful fonts, color, and magazine-style design are automatically incorporated. Fluid movement and elegant motion are applied instantly. Create your Slate story and share the link anywhere.

2. Puppet Pals

Create your own unique shows with animation and audio in real time! Simply pick out your actors and backdrops, drag them on to the stage, and tap record. Your movements and audio will be recorded in real time for playback later. This app is as fun as your own creativity!

3. ShowMe Interactive Whiteboard

   Turn your iPad into your personal interactive whiteboard: ShowMe allows you to record voice over whiteboard tutorials and share them online. It's an amazingly simple app that anyone can use; no matter how young or old.

4. Sock Puppets

   Sock Puppets lets you create your own lip-synched videos and share them on Facebook and YouTube. Add puppets, props, scenery, and backgrounds and start creating. Hit the record button and the puppets automatically lip-synch to your voice.

5. Toontastic

   Toontastic is a storytelling and creative learning tool that enables kids to draw, animate, and share their own cartoons with friends and family around the world through simple and fun imaginative play! With over 2 million cartoons created in over 150 countries, parents and teachers rave about the app and kids can't stop creating!

6. WeVideo

   Make and share videos using WeVideo's online video editing software, available on Android, iPhone, iPad, Mac, PC, and Chromebook. In this cloud-based collaborative video creation platform, you can save your work to your hard drive, upload to the cloud, and pick up where you left off on another computer. Note that free accounts are limited to 5 minutes of published video time and 2GB of cloud storage.

7. 30hands Starter

   A very easy and exciting way to tell a story, explain a concept, or flip a classroom. Create a multimedia presentation in minutes and publish it as a video to share. This tool was designed to be simple and fast, so it takes backseat to learning and expression. In a single class period, students can complete a video activity. Mapping these activities to a longer project helps students make PBL projects authentic and fun. Whether you are in Kindergarten or College, 30hands Storyteller helps you learn better by following UDL principles and getting you to think and create iteratively.

You may also find the following lists of tools useful:

- List of 13 Free Sticky Notes Tools for Teachers and Students
- 14 Best Online Bibliography and Citation Tools
- 28 Free Social Bookmarking Tools for educators
- 15 Free Web Conferencing Tools
- List of 15 Free Google Tools for eLearning Professionals
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By Rohan Thakare
October 21, 2017

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LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

7 Must-Have Plugins For Moodle

After careful consideration, we present a detailed list of the 7 plugins for Moodle that shoot up at first thought when we were asked about the best plugins available.
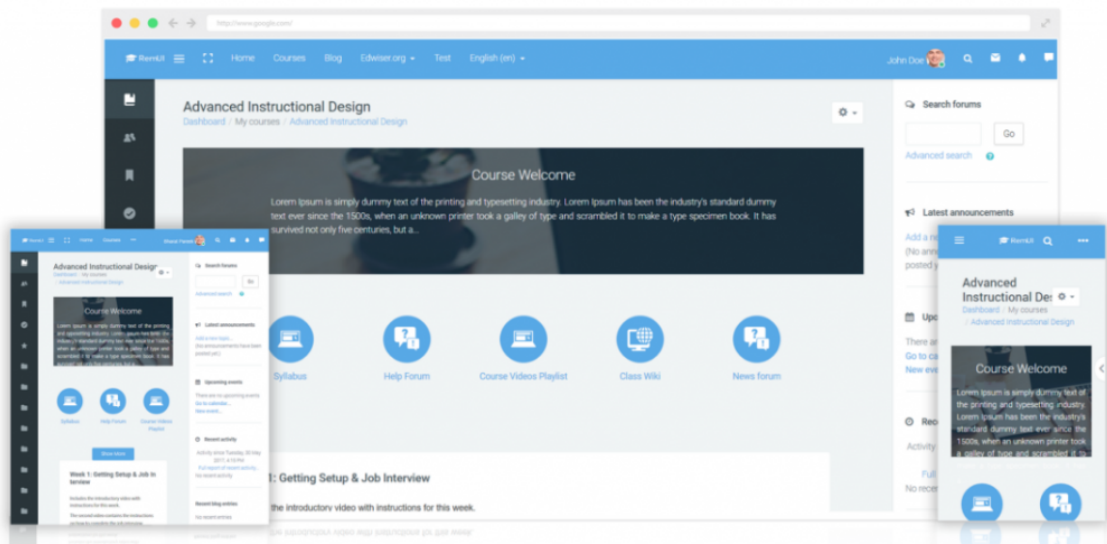
Plugins For Moodle: Comparing The 7 Best Ones

The success story of Moodle definitely talks about the long list of add-ons, open-sourced services, and hundreds of plugins which is backed by a stronghold of loyal soldiers who make the Moodle Community.

To claim one plugin as being the best one would be unfair, because all of them are unique in their functionality, and have an impeccable usability record.
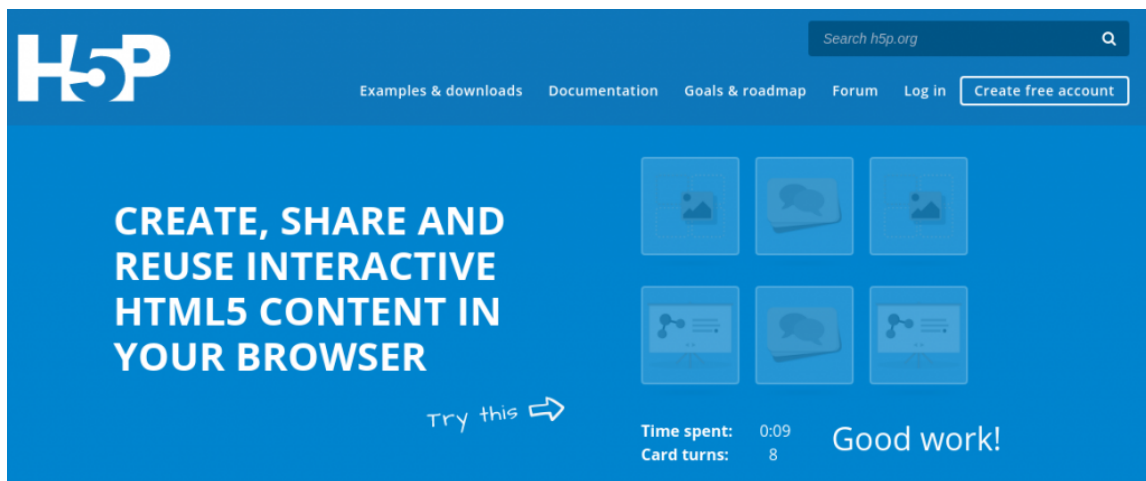
Still, if I start naming the best plugins for Moodle, these 7 plugins shoot up at first thought. This list was formed after careful consideration in terms of User Interface (UI) and User Experience (UX), purpose served, and convenience quotient.

1. Edwiser RemUI

To begin with, the RemUI theme for Moodle has been labeled as being the best theme for the multi-functional Learning Management System. It scores well in all aspects of the prerequisites that are taken into account while judging a theme. With unique features like the full-screen mode, messaging service, and a course progress bar, RemUI has earned the tag for itself - and rightly so.

2. H5P

H5P specializes in creating interactive tools for eLearning videos that help in keeping the viewer attentive and focused throughout the running time. You can practically make videos for anything and everything that can be named on the internet.
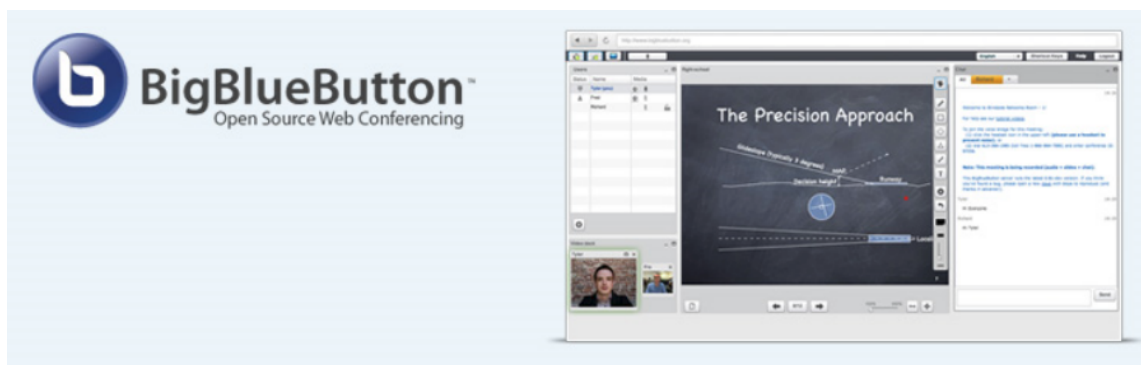
H5P is largely popular for 2 things:

- **It's free.**
- **There is no coding involved on the user side.**

H5P has contributed largely to creative learning, making way for the next generation of digital classrooms.

3. BigBlueButton

This cleverly named plugin is a tool for sharing audio, video, and textual content in real time. What makes BigBlueButton [1] a hot favorite is its live chalkboard feature. It's a boon for every user who intends to present or visually explain a topic to peers, colleagues or disciples. You can zoom in and out, highlight text, and graphically describe subjects which may otherwise be difficult to explain. It also becomes easier for the viewer to make notes while looking at your presentation, because of its grasping factor.

4. Edwiser Bridge (And Its Extensions)

Edwiser Bridge brings its extensions to the table that are worth giving a look for those who are looking to monetize their Moodle courses. These powerful extensions let you effortlessly combine eCommerce attributes with your Moodle LMS via WooCommerce integration, providing most of the functionalities of an eStore, like the Single Sign-On (SSO), and Bulk Purchase.

5. Questionnaire

A plugin solely built for carrying out surveys and acquiring feedback. It is not intended for conducting tests and examinations. Questionnaire [2] creates the means to gather student reactions and responses regarding the latest courses and activities that are being held on the site. The simple workflow makes this plugin a delightful interface to work with.

6. HotPot

Innovative and convenient, HotPot [3] keeps you up-to-date with the statistical trends observed in the scores achieved by students in tests. It lets the teacher role to administer Hot Potatoes and TexToys quizzes via Moodle and view the results on the front-end. Based on these statistics it becomes easier to understand which technique is more suitable for teaching, or which subject needs more attention.

7. Configurable Reports

Using this smart plugin you can create impressive reports without depending on an extensive knowledge of SQL. Configurable Reports [4] will help you make in-depth reports on the courses you have undertaken, reports based on categories and a time-based report on all the activities that had taken place in that duration. You may also choose who gets to access these reports, and who is to be restricted from viewing it.

The Last Word

This rounds up our list of the 7 must-have plugins for Moodle. The diverse functionalities offered by these add-ons are useful in setting up a full-fledged LMS website, with a powerhouse of features.

The Edwiser RemUI theme gives you a great interface, the H5P plugin helps you make your content more interactive, while BigBlueButton is instrumental in bringing the live learning experience to the virtual platform. HotPot is crucial for keeping track of student and teacher performance, and if you need to hear the feedback straight from the horse's mouth, you can always opt for Questionnaire.

Configurable reports help you keep and share comprehensive student records with ease, and to top that off, Edwiser Bridge assists you in monetizing the website, so that all your hard work turns up a pretty penny!

What other plugins would you recommend for Moodle? Share your thoughts with us in the comments section below!

References:

1. BigBlueButton
2. Questionnaire
3. HotPot
4. Configurable Reports

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