

Interpretation and Education:

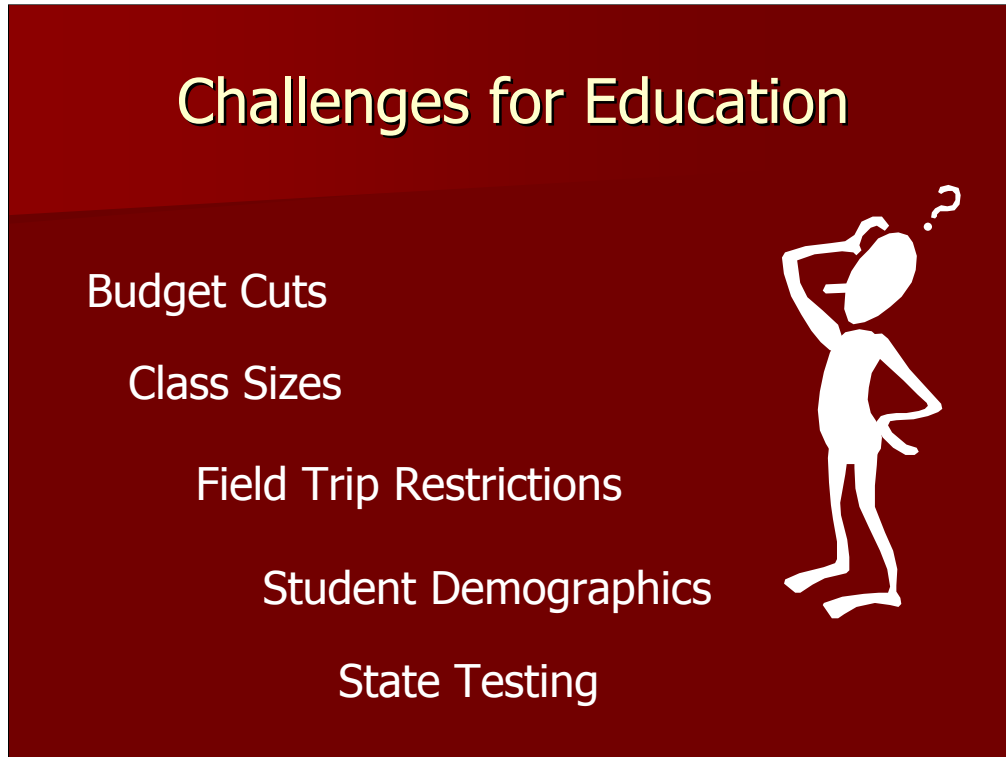
Using Technology to Engage New Audiences



Overview

- Challenges facing education
- Role of technology
- Innovative uses of technology in interpretation

Today I will be discussing some of the challenges the educational community is facing and the role of technology in engaging audiences. We will also explore some of the innovative applications of technology in State Parks.



1. Like State Parks, education has taken a significant hit in budget cuts, approximately \$18 billion in three year.
2. This is resulting in larger class sizes and teacher layoffs. According to the California Educational Opportunity Report published in January 2010, 74% of elementary school principals are reporting class size increases.
3. Teachers are finding it more difficult to take field trips due to transportation costs and time constraints. It costs approximately \$9 per student for a field trip. Many teachers I have talked to this year said their principal or district put a blanket restriction on field trips.
4. Student demographics are changing. The number of English Language Learner students is rising where english is not spoken at home.
5. State testing is consuming a lot of teachers' time as they try to prepare students for the tests. Everything they teach must be tied into the state academic content standards.

But a large challenge for teachers is...
engaging the digital natives—today's students.

Have you been
paying attention?

[YouTube Video—Have You Been Paying Attention](http://youtu.be/aEFKfXiCbLw)

A large challenge for teachers is engaging the digital natives-today's students. Today's students are so connected to technology it is second nature to them. I would like to show you a YouTube video (<http://youtu.be/aEFKfXiCbLw>) highlighting this major challenge for teachers. This video has many implications for state park audiences as well.

Student Attitudes

- 28% of 12th grade students believe that schoolwork is meaningful
- 21% believe their courses are interesting
- 39% believe that school work will have any bearing in later life



National Center for Educational Statistics, 2006

Reiterate the statistics.

Teachers are facing an uphill battle to connect with and engage these students, especially when their resources are being cut. Sound familiar?

Tools to Engage



Created in Wordle

More and more teachers are looking at the technology students use and are building that same technology into their lesson plans. As one principal said in the video, “if you can’t beat them, join them.” Teachers are looking for free technology resources that can enhance their standard curriculum and provide students with real life examples and applications of what they are learning.

Challenges for State Parks

- Budget Cuts
- Field Trip Restrictions ≈ Fewer school groups visiting parks
- Class Sizes ≈ Serving a larger audience with limited resources
- Student Demographics ≈ Visitor Demographics
- Digitally connected audience

Some of you are probably wondering what all of this has to do with State Parks. State Parks is facing the same reality and challenges as the educational community: budget cuts, reduced number of school groups visiting parks, serving a larger audience with limited and reduced resources, visitor demographics, and a more digitally connected audience. Park visitors are reluctant to “unplug” from their digital devices, instead relying on their smart phones and gps to get information relevant to their recreational activity.

Engaging a Digitally-Connected Audience?



Created in Wordle

So how do we reach and engage a growing demographic that is so digitally connected? We can take a page out of education's book and use the same technology our audience to which our audience is connected. These technologies can be another tool in a park's interpretive toolkit.

Technology and Interpretation

- Spread awareness of state parks
- Provide educational resources
- Broaden audience base
- Connect a new generation to parks
- Advertisement tool for interpretive programs and special events
- Tool to enhance interpretive programs

Technology can have many benefits for interpretation if used appropriately:

Spread awareness of state parks

Provide educational resources

Broaden audience base

Connect a new generation of audience to parks

Advertisement tool for interpretive programs

Tool to enhance interpretive programs

Now I will share some innovative applications of technology currently being used in state parks.

Parks Online Resources for Teachers and Students (PORTS)



Brief description of PORTS-engaging students who would otherwise not come to parks due to economic, social or geographic barriers. First exposure to parks. Reach 38,000 students through 1,200 interpretive programs this school year. While PORTS uses complex technology set-ups like green screen studios or the EduGator to deliver the programs, the focus of PORTS is not on the technology but on providing quality interpretive programs to schools. The technology is just a tool to augment the interpretive program. I want to show you a snippet of the PORTS Redwood Ecology program and as you watch the video I want you to pay close attention to some technologies she is using beside videoconferencing.

Tools and Tricks



I want to highlight briefly some of the simple technology tools the educational community and PORTS are using to engage students. What were the two technologies Jenn used? (powerpoint, Google Earth)

1. Powerpoints-provided as part of the online units of study and lessons.
2. Google Earth-visual orientation of parks, virtual tours
3. Document cameras-a teacher's most valuable tool in the classroom. Great application for interpretation. Examples
4. IPODS-store video clips, photographs, audio clips, powerpoints. Examples.
5. Digital microscopes-John Werminski's sand program, compare the different sand grains for a large audience.
6. Interactive games-Jeopardy

Teachers are also utilizing a number of educational technology resources on the web, besides PORTS. In the next few minutes I am going to highlight a few and share some possible applications for interpretation.

Podcasts

- A podcast is an audio or video episode that can be listened to or viewed on the web or downloaded to a mobile device. Podcasts can be audio only or combine audio or video



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Possibilities for podcasts:

1. Record lectures by guest speakers or park staff
2. Training tool for docents and volunteers
3. Option for providing multi-lingual programs
4. Communicate with your community
5. Share pertinent information visitors might need to know if they will be visiting a park—location, climate, etc.

Podcast produced by the California State Parks Foundation on Point Lobos' cultural history (<http://www.calparks.org/podcasts/podcast/cspf-best-trails-low-sabado.html>).

Wikis

- A wiki is a website that allows visitors to add, remove, and edit content. It is an effective tool for mass collaborative writing.



<http://teachnology.pbworks.com/w/page/19978668/Using-Podcasts-in-the-Classroom>

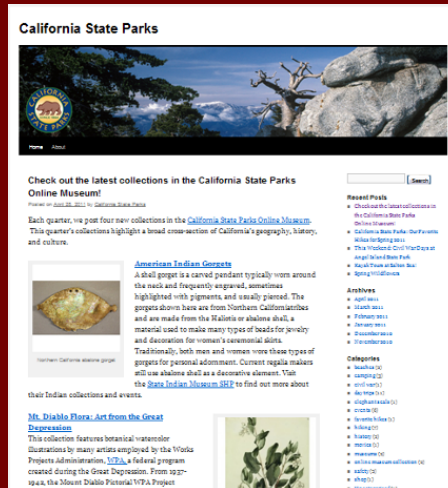
A wiki is a website that allows visitors to add, remove, and edit content. It is an effective tool for mass collaborative writing. Most well-known wiki is wikipedia. While there is concern about allowing everyone edit rights, wikis can be a valuable tool if your cooperative association is working collaborative on a project or you are trying to garner feedback from a certain audience.

I have posted a link to an education technology wiki that I discovered about a year ago and have used as a resource numerous times. (briefly show wikis structure)

Blogs

A blog is a website on which an individual or group of users record articles, opinions, information, etc. on a regular basis.

California State Parks official blog



<http://castateparks.wordpress.com/>

A blog is a website on which an individual or group of users record opinions, information, etc. on a regular basis.

Show CSP official blog (<http://castateparks.wordpress.com/>).

Benefits:

1. Generate user comments
2. Users can “follow” a blog and receive regular updates either through email or an RSS feed. RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication and is a family of web feed formats used to publish frequently updated works.
3. Simple to set-up and post to, requiring no website design experience or training.
4. Highlight PORTS idea as a way to provide supplemental information to teachers on a particular subject discussed during educational program.

YouTube & Vimeo

- YouTube and Vimeo are forums that allow people to discover, watch, and share originally created videos.



[California State Parks: Railtown 1897
SHP Sierra No. 3](#)

Like podcasts, online videos posted on websites like YouTube or Vimeo are a way to highlight special features of your park, showcases interpretive programs, provide practical information about your park, or like the following YouTube video commemorate a special event (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g9CUz6kugcU>). Just as a warning, videos posted online do need to be captioned, but fortunately YouTube has just come out with a feature that captions videos you upload to YouTube.

YouTube & Vimeo

- YouTube and Vimeo are forums that allow people to discover, watch, and share originally created videos.

www.SchoolTube.com

www.TeacherTube.com

Teachers are always looking for online videos to augment their curriculum or to teach students a new skill. However, most school districts have blocked YouTube. If you have videos you would like to share with the educational community post them to the educational version of YouTube, SchoolTube or TeacherTube.

Thank you!



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