

Free Tips, Tricks & Technology Tools for Teachers

You can access the digital version (with live links) of this document at: tinyurl.com/ygwn4fm

Keyboard Shortcuts (see the Tropical Teachers website for full list and explanations)

- **Windows:** The Windows Key, win-d, win-e, alt-tab, alt-esc, f2, double click titlebar
- **Browsers:** f4(or ctrl-l), F11, F5, ctrl-tab, ctrl-Enter
- **Most Applications:** ctrl-n, ctrl-x, c, v, a, s, alt-F4
- **Bonus:** Group file naming, copying, Magnifier. Setup your environment.

PRODUCTIVITY (OFFICE) APPLICATIONS

Open Office - openoffice.org/ Writer, Calc, Impress, Draw, and Base

Google Docs - docs.google.com/ Word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, forms - but web-based, shareable, and with integrated organization tools.

Google Apps - google.com/apps/ Gmail, Calendars, Groups, Sites, Video, Chrome - each works alone, but can work with others, and collaboration/team elements are tied throughout.

UTILITIES AND MEDIA EDITORS

Irfanview - irfanview.com Image file manipulation utility - less for photo editing but more for file editing- everything from cropping and conversions to batch processes. Free and small.

GIMP - gimp.org open-source competitor to Photoshop, should do what you need to do, and likely a lot more.

Flickr - flickr.com An incredible photo sharing site, whose collection grows by 5k each minute. Features include using CC licensing, sharing publicly or privately, automatic creation of multiple sizes from thumbnails to full quality, geotagging, tagging, groups, clouds, etc...

Web Stopwatch - online-stopwatch.com - There are many tools out there that act as timers- the web stopwatch is simple, clear, and allows up or down timing as well as full screen.

Window Movie Maker - Free for all PC's- included or easily downloadable. Imports and easily creates and publishes videos.

Audacity - Open-source audio editing application. Can open, edit, and save a variety of audio formats, and clean up recordings by adjusting levels.

COLLABORATION AND CONVENIENCE

Skype - Easily the most-used voice over network application world-wide. Skype functions as a chat, voice sharing, video conferencing and file transfer tool, and has the option of accepting from or making calls to land-lines and cell phones around the world.

Illuminate V-Rooms - Illuminate offers a free 3-person conferencing room to educators - great for lab/office hours, tutoring, or just collaborating with small groups.

My DropBox - Dropbox creates a file folder whose contents are automatically synchronized with web-based file storage, which automatically synchronizes with any other installations of dropbox mapped to your account. 2GB for free!

Jing - By the people who bring you Camtasia, Jing is a super-simple utility that allows you to easily and quickly grab screenshots or short (<5min) screen captures, and then either save them or upload them to a free hosted site.

Prezi - A much more visual take on the same old slideshow presentations - Prezi allows you to fly thru, in and out and around your contents in much more dynamic ways.

Bubble.us - Mindmapping and flowcharting on a web-based shared platform. Easy to get started and build on.

Websites - see all Wikimedia tools, Ted.com, Google Tech Talks, Common Craft, and the Open Courseware from Yale, MIT, and other universities.

Concepts - Creative Commons, Mashups, Web 1, 2.0, 3.0, Semantic Web, Crowdsourcing, Tagging, Geotagging

A Little Fun - Wordle, Baby Names Voyager, Spell with Flickr

Review

Use these exercises to reinforce your learning from the presentation.

1. Supposing you are doing some web work that involves editing a document, saving it, then switching to a browser to review the results, then going back and editing it again. Assuming all these applications were already open, what shortcuts would you use to:

-save your edits? _____
-switch to the browser? _____
-refresh the webpage to see your changes? _____
-go to another open browser tab to check the weather? _____
-go back to your editing application to make another change? _____
2. You'd like to brainstorm an activity with your students - and want as much feedback from them as possible in one location, over the next week. How would you do this?
3. You run a team/club and need to publish a calendar of events and activities to the web, and also have a more restricted forum and email list for the members of the team and their parents. What do you use?
4. You have a famous speech or writing and you'd like your students to get a "feel" for what terms and/or ideas were highlights of the speech. What will help you visualize this?
5. You have hundreds of pictures the students have given you on various CD's, DVD's and memory sticks, and you want to organize them, edit them, and then make a movie that goes between images and video you shoot in the classroom. You want to distribute this on a data CD to the students. What tools will you use?
6. You've got the opportunity to take a bunch of old laptops to a developing country, but they've been wiped clean and only have windows installed. You have no budget for licenses, and they won't have web access anyway. What might be worth installing on these machines, and why?
7. You want your students to do an autobiographical presentation, but to make it more interesting than a normal slideshow. What are your options?

KEY:

1. ctrl-s, alt-tab, F5, ctrl-tab, alt-tab
2. make a public google doc and allow anyone to edit it- share the link only with your students. Or limit access and invite them by email, and track changes by user login
3. make a google calendar and share it. For the forums use google groups and restrict to invited only.
4. paste it into worldle, and play around with the options/randomization til you like how it looks.
5. Organize them all into folders and /crop/rename/edit them as needed with irfanview and the GIMP, then create the video with Windows Movie Maker
6. Open office - will give them similar experience to using MS Office, legally. Also GIMP and Audacity to complement - and grab a handful of cheap mics and some cameras too!
7. Prezi, or even mindmapping tools - anything but the regular slideshow!