

Top 10 FREE Web 2.0 Sites for Educators (and a few honorable mentions)



1) [Del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us) - This social bookmarking engine was by far the overall winner. It got the most votes by a landslide. It connects people to troves of websites that are tagged, described and organized by freshness. While there are ample features built into the site, and more being added regularly, the open API has allowed for the creation of numerous community built [hacks](#) and [extensions](#). An RSS feed on every page is just the icing on the cake.



2) [Bloglines](http://bloglines.com) - This is my aggregator of choice still, despite trying many others. While Google Reader may be newer and shinier, it's still missing one feature that I deem to be important in the world of Web 2.0, and that's the ability to connect people together. With Bloglines, you can see who else has subscribed to a blog you are a fan of, and follow the trail along to see what they read as well. I find it invaluable to be able to see what people like [Will Richardson](#) and [Bernie Dodge](#) are reading, which really sets Bloglines apart.



3) [Flickr](http://www.flickr.com) - Flickr is clearly the premiere social photo sharing site of the Web 2.0 world. It is packed with 2.0 features like RSS throughout, contacts, comments, groups, geotagging, and of course an Open API. There are few sites with more hacks and extensions available to them. My personal favorites are [Spell with Flickr](#), [Memry](#), and the entire [Flickr Toys](#) collection. Additionally, the ability to do search for [Creative Commons images](#) that students actually have the rights to use in their presentations and digital stories is invaluable.



4) [Picnik](http://picnik.com) - There are a plethora of image editing sites in the world of Web 2.0, but Picnik stands out for a few reasons. For one thing, it's pretty. The site is well laid out, easy to navigate, and incredibly intuitive. You can use the website without even registering, making it incredibly education-friendly. It may not have every feature that Photoshop has, but it does allow you to crop, resize, eliminate red-eye, adjust color and brightness levels, and save in a variety of formats. Throw in the ability to import directly from [Flickr](#), and export to a variety of services including [Flickr](#), [Photobucket](#) and [Kodak Easyshare](#), and you have an app that integrates well into the rest of the 2.0 world.



5) [Jumpcut](#) - With free video editing solutions like [iMovie](#) and [Movie Maker](#) readily available, you might wonder why I'm including an online video editing service in this list. I can answer that with one question. When was the last time you told your students, "Finish editing your video at home so we can show them in class tomorrow"? Jumpcut allows students to work on their digital stories from any computer in any browser. It is surprisingly robust, with features you might not expect in an online video editor, like titles, effects, and the ability to overlay audio files. While I wouldn't recommend you have students explore Jumpcut for video content to include in their stories some are trash, it can certainly be a powerful tool to use in a classroom setting. Just stick to the editor.



6) [GCast](#) - With Audioblogger gone, GCast is recognized as the most popular platform for MobCasts (podcasts created via cell phone). However, it is also a powerful solution for podcasters who don't quite understand how the RSS piece works. Anybody can upload audio files to GCast, organize them into a single or multiple podcast feeds, and then generate a flash player that is incredibly easy to embed into a blog or web site. The flash player includes subscription links, allowing listeners to subscribe via iTunes or email. While the site doesn't look or feel like a typical Web 2.0 site (no Ajax, no drag and drop, no bubbly letters), it is such a simple and elegant solution to the most challenging part of the podcasting process, and rightfully deserves a slot in the list.



7) [Google Docs and Spreadsheets](#) - I'm sure that there are 100's of features missing from Google's version of Word and Excel, but I can't seem to figure out what they are. Docs and Spreadsheets also has one clear advantage over the desktop version: it's collaborative. While editing a document, you can invite other people to work on it with you. Windows or Mac, Firefox or Explorer, Docs and Spreadsheets has everything you'd expect in a word processor and spreadsheet program. Throw in the ability to import and export in a variety of formats, including Office, [OpenOffice](#), and PDF, and you have a full featured replacement for zero cost.



😊 [Vyew](#) - This is a pretty specialized application that really has more application for tech coordinators and trainers than it does for teachers in general. This is essentially a free webinar solution, similar to [WebEx](#) and [Elluminate](#). It does have features that you'd normally pay tens of thousands for, such as the ability to share PowerPoints, whiteboarding and the holy grail of webinars, desktop sharing. It also provides you with a phone number that you can use to host an audio conference with up to 100 people.

Personally, I like doing the audio by the phone lines because it conserves bandwidth. Your presentation room can hang around, even when you aren't there, so people who couldn't attend can still pop in to see the slides, notes and chat. Perfect for distance learning and live demonstrations at a moments notice. Vyew is quite possibly the best value on the list (compared to the cost of similar solutions).



9) & 10) [pbWiki](#) & [WikiSpaces](#) - It quickly became clear that wikis would have to be included in this list, but the votes were evenly split between these two websites. After reviewing both, I decided that they both deserved roster spots on this list. pbWiki is a little shinier, with it's new point and click editor and template that's easy on the eyes. You can also save your wikis as a PDF or create a slide show from it, unusual amongst wiki engines. Wikispaces is firmly committed to education and is in the process of giving away 100,000 ad-free wikis to educators. It has a simple WYSIWYG editor that does support embedable media (like from [YouTube](#) or [Google Video](#)). Wikispaces looks more like a typical wiki engine, and has a discussion tab like you'd find on [Wikipedia](#).

Honorable Mentions - These are sites that didn't quite make the Top 10, but are notable for one reason or another.

[Stikkit](#) - This site looks amazing, and could be great for group projects and collaborative note taking. Looking forward to exploring it more in the future.

[Ning](#) - As I wrote recently, I think this is definitely one to watch. Launched too recently to include right now.

[Skype](#) and [Google Earth](#) - Lots of votes, but they're desktop applications.

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