

Enabled, Engaged, Empowered

A survey of 294,399 Students

42,267 Parents

37,720 Teachers/Librarians

4,969 Administrators/Tech Leaders

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Each year, Project Tomorrow conducts massive surveys of K-12 teachers, administrators, teacher librarians, technology coordinators, parents, and students.

The report, *The New 3 E's of Education: Enabled, Engage, Empowered: How Today's Educators are Advancing a New Vision for Teaching and Learning*, May, 2011 (available for download at:

www.tomorrow.org) provides a very interesting glimpse into the role of the teacher librarian in technology.

As expected, we are masters in helping select and push quality resources from the digital world. The report states:

"The role of the school librarian is increasingly focused around the use of digital content in the classroom. Librarians or media specialists in many schools have the responsibility for identifying, evaluating and recommending digital resources to teachers. On one level, the school librarian is the "go-to" person to identify websites for classroom use (78 percent), create collections of resources for curriculum support (56 percent) and to find specific digital content, podcasts and videos to support classroom lessons (47 percent). However, librarians are also enabling and empowering teachers' skills with digital content - answering questions about technology tools (85 percent), participating with teachers in professional learning communities (66 percent) and training teachers how to locate and evaluate digital content (33 percent). With the increased variety and depth of the digital resources available for classroom use, the librarian is emerging as a critical player in enabling the use of these tools in the classroom, taking on the twin roles of cheerleader and exploration sherpa." (p. 13)

Teacher librarians are not quite as astute in recommending various types of technologies as shown in the table below (from p. 13). We suspect they are punting to tech coordinators for that role.

Later in the report, the writers make a major statement of the value of the teacher librarian that needs broadcasting all over the education world:

"This disconnect between the value propositions of principals and teachers has interesting ramifications as schools and districts explore how to expand the role of digital content within instruction. In some schools, teachers have the author-

Table 6: Digital Content in the Classroom
What are teachers using and librarians recommending?

Digital Content	Teachers' Usage Gr K-5	Teachers' Usage Gr 6-8	Teachers' Usage Gr 9-12	Librarians' Recommendations
Virtual labs	4%	9%	11%	11%
Games	32%	21%	13%	16%
Animations/simulations	18%	21%	26%	16%
Online textbooks	26%	28%	26%	19%
Virtual field trips	22%	14%	11%	31%
Podcasts/videos	28%	34%	36%	38%
Skill development software	52%	31%	21%	39%
Real time data	27%	24%	10%	40%



PICTURE BOOKS

TIME FOR VACATION!

Carl's summer vacation. Alexandra Day. Farrar Straus Giroux. 2008. 9780374310851. \$12.95. PreS-Grade. 2. A day exploring the woods and lake near their summer cabin is anything but restful for little Madeleine and her marvelous Rottweiler nanny—in fact, it's so exciting that not even a fireworks show can keep her awake that night. Day's big, fully detailed paintings are, as ever, eye-filling and as rich in humor as the nearly wordless storyline.

A couple of boys have the best week ever. Marla Frazee. Harcourt. 2008. 9780152060206. \$16.00. Grades 1-2. The contrast between the relatively staid narrative and the wild horseplay in Frazee's freely drawn pictures will draw gales of laughter as two irrepressible lads sent off to stay with grandparents find more than enough to do to stave off boredom.

Froggy goes to Hawaii. Jonathan London. Ill. Frank Remkiewicz. Viking. 2011. 9780670012213. \$15.99. K-Grade 1. Swimming! Surfing! Hula dancing! Froggy is ready to have a good time in Hawaii—but, as fans of his previous misadventures will expect, the best laid plans of little frogs often go awry. Bright cartoon scenes of fun in the tropical sun light up Froggy's latest outing.

I love vacations. Anna Walker. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers. 2011. 9781416983217. \$9.99. PreS-Grade 1. A very short and simple paean to fun on the beach, featuring a little zebra, a proper assortment of toys and local wildlife, splashing, sand, an upbeat narrative and a cozy bedding down after a day's explorations.

Oops! Jean-Luc Fromental. Ill. Joëlle Jolivet. Abrams Books for Young Readers. 2010. 9780810987494. \$17.95. A Parisian family's efforts to get to the airport and start their vacation run into hilarious trouble as a cascading series of surreal near-disasters raise one obstacle after another. An action packed adventure, made even more engrossing by the book's jumbo trim size and a closing foldout.

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ity to select their own digital resources; in others, that responsibility is held by a district committee. In the middle of many of these discussions is the school librarian. The librarian view on how to effectively evaluate digital resources is an interesting blend of the teachers' and principals' points of view. Within the librarians' evaluation rubric, the most important factors when recommending digital content to teachers are:

- Content accuracy (81 percent)
- Ease of use by teachers and students (76 percent)
- Alignment to curriculum standards (73 percent)
- Credibility of the content publishing organization (66 percent)
- Cost (60 percent)
- Level of engagement and interactivity (50 percent)" (p. 16)

So, we can be proud that someone else, other than ourselves, with a major national report recognizes our value in teaching and learning.

However, not covered in the report is a new set of tools that teacher librarians can use to push even further into the center of teaching and learning. These are Web 2.0 tools popularized and supported by Sig MS in ISTE, the AASL tech committees, and such leading professionals as Joyce Valenza, Buffy Hamilton, and Vicki Davis.

Of the myriad of Web 2.0 tools now available for free, there is a class of these tools that provide innovative potential for collaborative learning and collective intelligence creation. We all recognize the need for an individual student to master various skills and build deep personal understanding in the various content areas of

math, social studies, fine arts, science, and the language arts, but there are new opportunities to combine "what I know" with "what you know" to create even deeper understanding and new collective knowledge.

We refer to tools such as the Google Document where groups of writers can create, edit, and build. Using the Google Form to collect data or ideas that end up in a Google Spreadsheet in real time allows learners to do analysis and synthesis not possible in any other medium. Collaborative mind maps allow groups to build and structure collective knowledge. Google Presentations allows up to seven individuals to simultaneously create visual summaries of what they know. Collaborative brainstorming tools such as TitanPad allow real time exploration of ideas. These and many more belong to a new class of tools that teacher librarians should use and promote to help illustrate that collective thinking is a powerful way to prepare for careers and for college.

It is all a part of "the use of ideas and information" called for by the AASL Standards which also promote the effective use of quality ideas and quality information to build both individual and collaborative skills and knowledge.