



# Technology Feature

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## From PowerPoint to Podcasts: Integrating Technology into the Social Studies

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### *Abstract*

*This article begins with a discussion of the need to integrate technology into K-12 social studies classrooms and continues by introducing and providing social studies-based examples of the Moersch Levels of Technology Integration (LoTi) framework. The authors argue that LoTi levels do not coincide with teachers' needed technology skill levels. As a result, the article offers suggestions for encouraging adjustment toward greater technology-infused social studies instructional methods based on teacher skill level. Using text and tabular formats, the authors provide numerous technology integration methods for social studies teachers who are "Starting Out Easy," "Taking the Next Step," or "Beginning to Excel" with technology.*

## Introduction

In his popular book titled *The World is Flat* (2005), Thomas Friedman argues that while the physical Earth is not flattening, communication systems including the Internet are creating a worldwide culture in which political and economic borders are becoming transparent. This blurring creates economic and cultural intermingling that requires new thinking about international social relationships and the media used to facilitate those relationships. Friedman maintains that schools need to gain a greater appreciation of the role technology plays in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Students need access to high-end, real-world technologies during their educational experiences if they are to be competitive within the new global structure (2005). Despite this need for change, schools seldom provide future United States citizens with access to curriculum and instruction that requires rigorous engagement with high-end technologies. In fact, “education is the least technology-intensive enterprise in a ranking of technology use among 55 U.S. industry sectors” (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2003 cited in State Educational Technology Directors Association, International Society of Technology in Education & Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, 2007). According to Larry Cuban, educational technology and school reform expert, the cause of this disconnect is that many teachers do not feel comfortable using technological tools, while others feel comfortable using the tools but lack the knowledge needed to integrate those tools into their instruction (1986). Today’s students are entering a world where their lack of technological expertise will severely affect not only their personal ability to succeed as citizens in a democratic society but will also negatively affect our nation’s ability to compete in a global marketplace.

Many academic and business organizations recognize the need for students to gain technological competence. The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) addresses this need in terms of both content (i.e., the thematic strand “Science, Technology, and Society”) and instruction. In fact, NCSS describes powerful social studies as “integrative” and states: “Integrated social studies teaching and learning include effective use of technology” (1994). This call for technology integration in social studies also aligns with agenda of other organizations. One example is from the International Society for Technology in Education, an organization that advocates for technology-infusion across all subject areas — the “refreshed” National Educational Technology Standards (2007). Another example is the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills (2004), a business, education, and policymaker conglomerate that advocates for schools to prepare students in the use of tools, skills, and content needed to engage effectively within 21<sup>st</sup> century employment arenas. As such, the Partnership recommends students have experience with real-world examples—a call that requires students use 21<sup>st</sup> century tools just as employees use technologies in the workplace. The convergence of these academic standards and business expectations requires teachers challenge themselves to regularly integrate technology by having students use 21<sup>st</sup> century tools to engage in social studies and other content area instruction.

To move from discomfort using technology to skillfully integrating it into social studies instruction, teachers must engage in a continual process of growth. Moersch (1995) introduced a widely adopted framework for this process called Levels of Technology Implementation (LoTi). His continuum describes a hierarchy of technology use that ranges from classroom technology use focusing solely on teacher-directed instructional approaches to methods focusing on student-centered approaches. LoTi levels include non-use, awareness, exploration, infusion, integration (mechanical and routine), expansion, and refinement. Beginning with exploration, descriptions appear below for each level of Moersch’s LoTi.

**Table 1.***Descriptions and Examples of Moersch's Levels of Technology Implementation*

<b>Moersch Level</b>	<b>Description and Example</b>
Exploration	In this level, technological tools complement existing social studies teaching as isolated instructional supplements. For example, during a unit on westward migration, a teacher may choose to have students spend time in the computer lab playing "The Oregon Trail."
Infusion	Here, technological tools, such as including videos in a PowerPoint presentation on Native American tribal dance, augment instruction that might not otherwise include the tools.
Integration	It is at this level that students move from being consumers of information to constructing understanding. With integration, teachers and students use technology tools to identify and solve authentic problems. In a classroom where students are learning about the "Seven Wonders of the Ancient World," teachers may ask students what they consider the "Seven Wonders of the <i>Modern</i> World." After engaging in online research and student reporting of findings to classmates via slideshows, students would compare their findings to those at the <a href="#">New 7 Wonders</a> website.
Expansion	At this level, students venture beyond the confines of the classroom to communicate with others. A unit on weather may involve students following the path of a tropical storm. As questions about the storm arise, the teacher and students engage in videoconference communications with a specialist at the National Weather Service.
Refinement	Refinement is the point at which technology use for learning and technology use for real-world problem solving become indistinguishable. Here, learners use technology because it is the most effective and efficient way to solve authentic problems or complete tasks. For example, students in an economics class may pair with stockbrokers and financial analysts to "play" the stock market using fictitious funds. The students and mentors would communicate weekly over a six-week period using videoconferencing, text messaging, and email to discuss changes in the market and the social and political factors contributing to those changes. Using self-made spreadsheets, real-time data, online news reports, and mentor guidance, students could buy and sell shares in their mock stock market game.

Moersch's framework is helpful in describing methods of technology use in classrooms and in encouraging movement from teacher-centered instructional approaches to those that are learner-centered.

Interestingly, the LoTi framework does not address the technical skills and competencies needed to move across levels. This is because some learner-centered approaches require little teacher and student technology competency, while some teacher-centered activities require high levels. To address the issue of technical competency, it is possible to consult other models such as the Concept-Based Adoption Model referred to as CBAM (Hall & Loucks, 1978) and North Central Regional Educational Laboratory's (NCREL) Learning and Technology Framework (Jones, Valdez, Nowakowski, & Rasmussen, 1995). CBAM's Levels of Use dimension and the Learning and Technology Framework's quadrants both recognize the importance of teacher technical competency as an element for consideration. They identify a relationship between teacher ability to use technologies and how teachers use technologies instructionally. That relationship, however, does not imply a correlation between high teacher technical competency and high student engagement. Activities appearing high on the LoTi scale may correspond with those having low-levels of required technical competency or vice versa.

Recognizing both the importance of technical competency as well as the level of student engagement is critical when teachers design instruction. For example, a teacher who is not yet comfortable using high-end technologies may have students use telephones to communicate with students from other regions of the country about varying perceptions of the Civil War. Though this requires little technologic competency (therefore registering low on CBAM's Levels of Use and NCREL's Learning and Technology Framework), the activity registers high on the LoTi continuum—expansionism. Likewise, producing a monthly podcast informing students and parents of community events, television specials, and recommended web-based resources relating to a class on ancient cultures is at Moersch's awareness level—a relatively low-level use of technology in his framework—but it requires a greater level of technical competency. Ideally, teachers would exhibit a level of technical mastery that enables instruction at all LoTi levels. It behooves teachers to focus on advancing their technology skills while challenging themselves to integrate those skills at higher levels of the Moersch framework.

The next section offers suggestions for teachers challenging themselves to move toward greater technical competency and toward expanding their instructional repertoires across all LoTi levels. It continues by providing concrete examples for teachers seeking ideas for implementing those new skills. The examples appear in three sections—"Starting Out Easy," "Taking the Next Step," and "Beginning to Excel"—each section corresponding with the technical competency needed for teachers to participate in the suggested strategy.

### *Moving Toward Technology Integration*

To be proficient at integrating technologies into classrooms requires a threefold approach. First, teachers must gain competence in comfortably using the technologies; second, they must identify means to skillfully and transparently integrate those technologies into their social studies instruction, and third, they must expand their instructional repertoire to include both teacher-centered and student-centered approaches. Part of this skillful integration requires teachers move from using technologies for productivity and demonstration purposes (early phases of technology use) to providing opportunities for students to use technologies independently, collaboratively, or with adult assistance. In the latter cases, teachers should also provide students opportunities to use technological tools to construct their own knowledge and solve authentic problems. The transition from no- or low-technology use to advanced and interactive use can be a positive and rewarding growth experience for those educators who embrace the three following practices:

- **Start Small:** It is not necessary to have students produce a podcast about Herodotus during your first year of integrating technology. Perhaps you could begin by emailing colleagues to see who has the best lesson plan for teaching about Rosie the Riveter.
- **Get Comfortable:** Using technology should begin in a teacher's personal life before transferring that use to the classroom. Those who are not using handheld devices for personal uses, such as address books or grocery lists, may not be ready to have students using Bluetooth to share population data. One way to start getting comfortable is by first using technologies for productivity purposes (e.g., planning for instruction) because using the technologies out of the classroom builds skills and confidence for a time when the teacher is ready to use them in the classroom.
- **Set Goals:** Each semester, teachers should develop one to three technology goals. These could be as simple as replacing Vietnam War unit transparencies with an

electronic slideshow or letting students play “JumpStart® Explorers” in the school’s computer lab. Goals should (a) challenge teachers to move one step forward each semester, (b) place teachers just slightly out of their technological comfort zones, and (c) be measurable. At the end of each semester, teachers should celebrate their successes and set new goals.

To make change a reality, the first step is a commitment to change. Teachers begin by considering their current technical skill and comfort levels and continue by reviewing possible technology integration techniques that appeal to their teaching styles. They then set small goals requiring they “step out of their comfort zones” and charge ahead.

### **Making It Happen**

Once teachers make the commitment to increase their technical expertise and explore technology integration methods, they are ready to participate in a three-stage process. The process begins by examining current technical comfort levels and abilities while reviewing recent methods of technology integration within ones’ own classroom. Some educators will find themselves needing to begin by “Starting out Easy.” Others may be ready to challenge themselves to move toward greater instructional integration with technologies. They are ready to start “Taking the Next Step.” Finally, there are teachers who are already “Beginning to Excel” by utilizing technology-based pedagogical techniques, requiring both teacher and student technology skills. Note that these stages do not necessarily correspond with Moersch’s LoTi levels. We believe that teachers are more likely to halt the technology integration process because of a lack of technical competence or comfort rather than a lack of ideas for integrating instructional technology. For this reason, we focus on helping teachers become comfortable using technologies first and then moving toward more student engagement with a greater focus on constructivist pedagogical techniques.

The next section provides suggestions for teachers at all technical competency levels. It also offers ideas for those interested in moving toward higher levels of student engagement with technologies, while advancing their technical techniques. The examples include opportunities for teachers to use technology tools for productivity purposes and suggest possibilities for teachers who only feel comfortable when technology is limited to isolated lessons; the examples also offer activities requiring student engagement and communication over complete units of study. We begin by spending substantial time focusing on the beginning stages of technology integration because this is usually the most difficult stage for teachers. Once teachers begin to feel comfortable using basic technologies, they are more willing to take on new challenges.

Corresponding with the three sub-headings of “Starting out Easy,” “Taking the Next Step,” and “Beginning to Excel,” we provide suggestions below as well as additional examples in Table 3 (see Appendix A). The table is intended to help teachers who are committed to improving instructional technology integration into their social studies classrooms, but who may lack the pedagogical expertise in educational technologies or electronically-available social studies resources to do so.

### *Starting Out Easy*

For teachers who consider themselves beginners when it comes to technology, the best place to start may not be with directly integrating technology into instruction, but using it for productivity purposes. A simple starting point is using word processing software to prepare student handouts or using an electronic grade book. These are relatively simple programs to learn, and usually, colleagues are available on-campus with the expertise to answer questions, give demonstrations, and provide assistance. Teachers can gradually learn the new programs before feeling the need to master their advanced features. A benefit of this approach is that it begins to build confidence in teachers' abilities to use technology tools.

Another great place to start is with simple web searching. For the novice, there are online videos that use social studies content to teach how to use web browsers and search engines (e.g., "Keeler's Training Videos" on iTunes). Once comfortable with that process, it is also possible to find lesson plans, graphics, audios, and videos related to given themes — all available free online (but be sure to respect copyright laws).

**Table 2.**

#### *Methods of Internet Searching for Specific Media Types*

Media Sought	Method
Text	To find lessons on specific topics, type the topic (e.g., "climograph," "Maslow's hierarchy") into a browser's search engine along with the words "lesson plan." Access primary documents by simply typing the name of the document (e.g., "Declaration of Independence").
Graphics	Pictures are easily accessible using Google. Type in a search term (e.g., "Underground Railroad Map"), and click on "Images" (found above the search term field).
Audio	Obtain music by typing in a search phrase (e.g., "America the Beautiful") along with the term "MP3" (a popular digital music format).
Video	Though it is possible using the same method to access video as it is to access graphics (using the "Video" option instead) educational videos are not currently as readily available as they will be in the near future. Teachers may elect to search for videos within an educational video repository such as <a href="#">TeacherTube</a> . Another option is to use a fee-based resource. <a href="#">Discovery Education™</a> offers an easily searchable database of photos and videos segmented into brief sections suitable for classroom use.

After progressing from basic Internet searching, it is possible to use online applications for more specialized Internet searches. For instance, [A List of Social Studies Web Sites](#) offers a comprehensive directory of social studies websites along with a brief description of each and tags indicating their intended grade levels, primary social studies subject areas and themes, and possible interdisciplinary connections. Another resource is [Kathy Schrock's Primary Sources Website](#); it provides a list of access points for finding historical documents and other artifacts. From Schrock's list, it is possible to locate text (e.g., the content of the Magna Carta), audios (e.g., Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech), videos (e.g., the 1969 lunar landing), and graphics (e.g., digital photographs of letters written by Elvis Presley relating to the Vietnam War).

The teacher who is just beginning to use technology may wish to display resources directly from the Internet, but eventually he or she will probably wish to download the resources for use during class time. Once comfortable with the downloading process, it is possible to integrate one or many resources into a single slideshow presentation. For example, while teaching a lesson about the Statue of Liberty as it relates to U.S. immigration, a teacher could have students view pictures of Lady Liberty and read “The New Colossus” while listening to patriotic music. An example of this lesson, along with the associated slideshow, is available online at [Lady Liberty-The New Colossus](#).

### ***Taking the Next Step***

Once a teacher has reached a level of familiarity, it is time to creatively incorporate technology throughout instruction. Teachers can begin by identifying a project that uses a technology skill they can use comfortably and with confidence. Email is widely accepted and can be a powerful tool for collaboration, so it may provide a good starting point. Using email, students from all grade levels have the opportunity to collaborate with peers and experts around the world. For example, after reviewing an in-class video on the current archaeological work at the Jamestown settlement, students in Eric Langhorst’s eighth-grade American history class had unanswered questions. Upon locating the official website for the Jamestown settlement, the class wrote a concise email asking if an on-site specialist would willingly answer ten questions via email. An archaeologist replied the next day, and the class prepared a list of mutually approved questions which were answered within a few days. The access to a working expert in the field made the class study of early settlement in the colonies richer with little extra effort and no cost on the part of the teacher or school. The communication with the archaeologist continued each fall for several years. One year, the exchange took place while a hurricane battered the Virginia coast, and several questions related directly to how the Jamestown staff protects active dig sites during severe weather. This information was certainly meaningful and went far beyond what was available in traditional textbooks.

Virtual field trips, which require little technical expertise, offer students additional opportunities to experience locations far beyond their classroom walls. In the past, virtual field trips tended to be limited to viewing a museum's static website which included images of artifacts on display. Today, however, virtual field trips are much more available, interactive, and expansive. Ball State University, for example, offers electronic field trips throughout the school year that incorporate a student-friendly website, a place for teachers to share lesson plans, and a live, on-location television broadcast (see [Current Field Trip Options](#) for availability). Field trips help students explore "Freedom in America—Some Assembly Required" (an interactive experience to learn about the Declaration of Independence and Philadelphia's Independence Hall) and "Desert Diamonds behind Barbed Wire" (lessons on how baseball created a diversion for residents of the Manzanar Relocation Camp during World War II). Electronic field trips such as these are a great way to expand classrooms while utilizing the collaborative power of the World Wide Web.

### ***Beginning to Excel***

An advanced stage of technology integration involves innovation. As teachers begin to utilize high-level technology skills in a consistent manner, new ideas and creative applications

for existing technologies emerge. One example of innovation in the social studies classroom is the use of "studycasts."<sup>i</sup> Using an inexpensive MP3 player, teachers can record an audio review session for upcoming tests. The MP3 file is then uploaded to the Internet and a link to the audio file is placed on the classroom website. Students listen to the studycast at home on a computer through the Internet or as a download on their MP3 players (i.e., iPods). They can listen to the studycast repeatedly and at their convenience. For regular use of studycasts, teachers may elect to podcast their studycasts allowing students to automatically download the audio files via iTunes. Note that it is important to recognize that some students will not have Internet access off-campus. Appreciating this digital divide, teachers may provide students without Internet access the option of borrowing a CD containing the studycast.

When regularly offered studycasts, eighth-grade students and their parents in Liberty, Missouri, incorporated the studycasts into their routine for test preparation. Students expressed their enjoyment at being able to listen to the studycast while doing other activities including exercising, riding the bus, or walking the family dog. Additionally, students with learning disabilities and those who learn primarily through auditory methods benefited greatly from this innovation. In an end-of-year survey, 85% of students who had access to studycasts responded that they were a helpful method of test preparation, and 75% hoped that other teachers in their school would begin using studycasts.<sup>ii</sup>

Another example of advanced technology integration is use of book blogs. Langhorst wanted students in multiple classes to participate in a book study but found it difficult to coordinate students' schedules. He turned to one of the fastest growing forms of media in society: blogs. Over a four-week period, students read *The Year of the Hangman* by Gary Blackwood (2002) while participating in a teacher-managed blog that included student discussion questions and Internet links to topics related to the book. To ensure Internet responsibility and safety, Langhorst reviewed all student comments before posting them, and students used only first names or pen names. Through the "Speaking of History..." podcast (available via iTunes), a home-schooled student in Minnesota and a seventh-grade reading group in New Jersey learned about and joined the blog. In a later book blog, Pat Hughes, the author of *Guerrilla Season* (2003), participated in the blog as students read and commented on her book. She also participated in audio conferencing, telling about the process and excitement of engaging in historical research and writing historical fiction. Other than the cost of the books, this project requires no financial investment from the teacher or school.

## Conclusion

It is the responsibility of educators to set an example of lifelong learning to all students and the world by showing we are dedicated to maintaining pace with technological innovations. Without doing so, educators are limiting the learning opportunities available for delivering content to their students. Additionally, ignoring global changes undercuts our authority as professionals because our students, as well as other community members, *can* effectively, efficiently, and transparently integrate technology into their daily lives.

Now is the time for social studies teachers to venture outside their technology comfort levels. We believe that the suggestions of starting small, getting comfortable, and setting goals discussed in this article can begin to allay technology fears. Teachers may begin to use technology for productivity purposes; they do not need to begin with technology-intensive constructivist methods rooted in the highest levels of Moersch's LoTi framework. While the

degree to which individual teachers incorporate technologies into their social studies instruction will vary depending on teaching styles, personal technology expertise, and technologies available in educational settings, any first step, no matter how large or small, is an important beginning.

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## Appendix A

Table 3.

*Ideas for Integrating Technology into Social Studies Classrooms*

Gauge where you are on the technology integration spectrum by reviewing the below examples and identifying technologies you currently use for instructional purposes. Then challenge yourself to set at least one goal each semester so that your students can experience the 21<sup>st</sup> century beginning in your classroom. Use the column on the left to check off areas in which you are already strong and to identify your areas of focus for the current semester. Feel free to add additional ideas and be sure to celebrate your successes when you master a new integrative technique.

Check	Technology	Ideas for Integration
<b>Starting Out Easy</b>		
	Software	During computer lab time, use programs like those in the <i>Carmen Sandiego</i> and <i>Oregon Trail</i> series (both available at <a href="http://www.learningcompany.com/">http://www.learningcompany.com/</a> ). In a one-computer classroom, spend a day going “On the Campaign Trail” with Tom Snyder’s <a href="http://www.tomsnyder.com/">Decisions, Decisions</a> ( <a href="http://www.tomsnyder.com/">http://www.tomsnyder.com/</a> ).
	Primary Sources	Instead of telling students about the Declaration of Independence, let them see and read it. Many public agencies have scanned primary documents and made them available online. Kathy Schrock provides a <a href="http://kathyschrock.net/navigating/">list of sites</a> to mine for primary sources ( <a href="http://kathyschrock.net/navigating/">http://kathyschrock.net/navigating/</a> ).
	Research	If you’re seeking information on a given social studies topic, try a simple web search or use a <a href="http://del.icio.us/Social_Studies">website specializing in social studies</a> (e.g., <a href="http://del.icio.us/Social_Studies">http://del.icio.us/Social_Studies</a> ).
	Cable in the Classroom	Take advantage of your local cable company’s wealth of resources by having your media specialist video record upcoming television shows (e.g., “Dora the Explorer”) or specials (e.g., “The Presidents”) on cable channels. See <a href="http://www.ciconline.org">Cable in the Classroom Online</a> ( <a href="http://www.ciconline.org">http://www.ciconline.org</a> ).
	Simulations	When students have access to the computer lab, have them spend time playing free simulation games. Cable in the Classroom offers two online social studies simulations: <a href="http://www.ciconline.org/elections/">e-Elections</a> ( <a href="http://www.ciconline.org/elections/">http://www.ciconline.org/elections/</a> ) and <a href="http://www.ciconline.org/windward/">Winward: Outsmart the Weather</a> ( <a href="http://www.ciconline.org/windward/">http://www.ciconline.org/windward/</a> ).
	Slideshows	Use PowerPoint or Keynote slides instead of transparencies. You can even make copies available for students who wish to take notes directly on miniature versions of your slides. Alternatively, require students turn in slideshow reports describing assigned states or countries.
	Video-on-Demand	Take advantage of in-class videos by accessing <a href="http://www.unitedstreaming.com/">Discovery Streaming</a> ( <a href="http://www.unitedstreaming.com/">http://www.unitedstreaming.com/</a> ) (your district may already have a site license). You can log in, search for a specific term (e.g., <i>Titanic</i> ), and review a wide variety of videos separated by grade level and subject areas. Videos are broken into segments, so you can have students view a few minutes of a video instead of the full-length movie. Tech-savvy teachers can download the video and add it to a slideshow presentation. Other fee-based options include <a href="http://www.brainpop.com/">Brain Pop®</a> ( <a href="http://www.brainpop.com/">http://www.brainpop.com/</a> ) and <a href="http://www.brainpopjr.com/">Brain Pop, Jr. ®</a> ( <a href="http://www.brainpopjr.com/">http://www.brainpopjr.com/</a> ) (for primary teachers).
	Images-on-Demand	When studying content best taught visually, find and download images using Google. Do this by using the <a href="http://www.google.com/">Google Search Engine</a> ( <a href="http://www.google.com/">http://www.google.com/</a> ) and clicking on “Images.”
	Newsletters	Have students prepare a newsletter using simple software or free online tools. For example, students may report on the events of July 4, 1776 using <a href="http://www.libertyskids.com/">Liberty's Kids</a> ( <a href="http://www.libertyskids.com/">http://www.libertyskids.com/</a> ).
	Concept Maps	Have students use <a href="http://inspiration.com/">Inspiration</a> ( <a href="http://inspiration.com/">http://inspiration.com/</a> ) to create concept maps. At one point, you may require they create a concept map showing the push and pull factors of immigration,

		and at another, they might create a K-W-L about the Battle of Bull Run.
	WebQuests	Instead of taking chances that students may access inappropriate websites online, require they complete a webquest on medieval times or the Renaissance at <a href="http://bestwebquests.com/">Best WebQuests</a> . ( <a href="http://bestwebquests.com/">http://bestwebquests.com/</a> ).
	Phone Conferencing	Find a teacher from a region your class is studying. Using a speakerphone, have students report on their region and learn from their geographically distant peers.
<b>Taking the Next Step</b>		
	Podcasts	To remain knowledgeable about current trends in the social studies, keep current with world news, and engage in personal professional development, podcasts offer great opportunities. Examples include “Speaking of History....,” “ <i>New York Times</i> Front Page,” and “Great Moments in History.” For more social studies examples, see <a href="http://www.epnweb.org/">EPN Web</a> ( <a href="http://www.epnweb.org/">http://www.epnweb.org/</a> ).
	Class Websites	Create a class website with links to useful resources (e.g., links to preferred websites) and current information (e.g., homework assignments, announcements of upcoming television specials, or local theatrical events relating to the course content).
	iPod Downloads	Students spending time on the bus listening to their iPods can benefit from listening to downloaded speeches or watching videos. Create links from your course website to recommended downloads and encourage parents to have their children listen to these during “downtime.”
	Social Bookmarking	When teaching a given topic, create an online resource of recommended websites. This is an easy task when using <a href="http://del.icio.us/">Delicious</a> ( <a href="http://del.icio.us/">http://del.icio.us/</a> ), a free social bookmarking site. Alternatively, you may have your students use social bookmarking to record their favorite links when researching specific content.
	Handhelds	Free downloadable applications are available for teaching and reinforcing social studies concepts. For instance, “Drop Pairs” offers pre-made quizzes allowing students to match geographical features with the flags of the countries in which they exist, match state names and their shapes, or match the names of U.S. Presidents and their pictures. Other shareware games include “Space Trader” (Students trade goods in an economically diverse market) and “Pocket City” (similar to “SimCity”). There are also useful tools like inflation and currency exchange calculators and world clocks that include moon phase and day/night shadowing information.
	Virtual Field Trips	When funds are not available for field trips, let students travel virtually. They can explore cultural aspects of human longevity at <a href="http://www.bluezones.com/">Blue Zones</a> ( <a href="http://www.bluezones.com/">http://www.bluezones.com/</a> ), the <a href="http://ali.apple.com/lewisandclark/">Lewis and Clark Expedition</a> ( <a href="http://ali.apple.com/lewisandclark/">http://ali.apple.com/lewisandclark/</a> ), <a href="http://www.bsu.edu/eft/">Baseball and Internment Camps</a> ( <a href="http://www.bsu.edu/eft/">http://www.bsu.edu/eft/</a> ), <a href="http://passporttoknowledge.com/rainforest/intro.html">Rainforests</a> ( <a href="http://passporttoknowledge.com/rainforest/intro.html">http://passporttoknowledge.com/rainforest/intro.html</a> ), and other places and times.
	Video-conferencing	Beyond textual communications with individuals from different regions of the world, students can engage in videoconferencing. Simple-to-use and relatively inexpensive hardware are available allowing students to communicate with students from different countries, talk with military personnel stationed abroad, or interview Vietnam Veterans.
	Templates	Have students complete pre-scripted templates with their own words, pictures, audios, and videos. For instance, students may create a history museum using a <a href="http://educationalvirtualmuseums.blogspot.com">PowerPoint Template</a> (see <a href="http://educationalvirtualmuseums.blogspot.com">http://educationalvirtualmuseums.blogspot.com</a> ) or argue for the prosecution or defense in a <a href="http://www.njsbf.com/njsbf/student/teachers/minicourt.cfm">mock trial</a> ( <a href="http://www.njsbf.com/njsbf/student/teachers/minicourt.cfm">http://www.njsbf.com/njsbf/student/teachers/minicourt.cfm</a> ).
	Video Reports	Providing students with video cameras empowers them to be creative using media with which they are very comfortable. Ask students to create a newscast that would air immediately after the stock market crash of 1929.
	Collaboration Projects	Extend the confines of a classroom or community by participating in collaborative projects with students from around the world. Students may communicate with others from different cultures in <a href="http://www.think.com/">student-safe blogs</a> ( <a href="http://www.think.com/">http://www.think.com/</a> ), collect and exchange data with students from around the world at <a href="http://www.globalschoolnet.org/GSH">Global Schoolhouse</a> ( <a href="http://www.globalschoolnet.org/GSH">http://www.globalschoolnet.org/GSH</a> ), or share stories about their <a href="http://www.myhero.com/">favorite heroes</a> ( <a href="http://www.myhero.com/">http://www.myhero.com/</a> ).
	Digital Cameras	Have students take still pictures of their community and create a slideshow to send to students in another location. The pictorial report could focus on geographic or cultural

		features depending on lesson objectives.
<b>Beginning to Excel</b>		
	Studycasts	To prepare students for upcoming exams, record audio information in digital format and post the recording to your class podcast. Students can download the <a href="#">audio notes</a> on the branches of government and listen to them on their iPods (e.g., <a href="http://www.liberty.k12.mo.us/%7Eelanghorst/unit6studycast2007.mp3">http://www.liberty.k12.mo.us/%7Eelanghorst/unit6studycast2007.mp3</a> ). Another option is to simply <a href="#">record lectures</a> as they are delivered in class and make these audios available online (e.g., <a href="http://coe.nevada.edu/ckeeler/SSM/Lessons/Audios/Lecture_WhatAretheSocialStudies_8_29_06.wav">http://coe.nevada.edu/ckeeler/SSM/Lessons/Audios/Lecture_WhatAretheSocialStudies_8_29_06.wav</a> ).
	Book Blogs	As students read books for social studies classes, they can use technology to think more deeply about the concepts addressed in the texts. <a href="#">Create a blog</a> to accompany your class as they read (e.g., <a href="http://www.theyearofthehangman.blogspot.com/">http://www.theyearofthehangman.blogspot.com/</a> ). You might invite the author of the text to join in the discussion, request parents to add their comments, or collaborate with students from another school or region. Imagine a book blog on <i>War and Peace</i> (Tolstoy, 1942) where students from the US and Russia learn literature and history together.
	Podcasts	Give students opportunities to prepare podcasts to post on the Internet. Students could synthesize the information delivered in class, interview individuals knowledgeable about the content under study, and share news about how what they are learning relates to their individual lives. For an example, listen to <a href="#">MES Podcasts</a> , a collection of audios posted by third grade students learning about holidays (available via iTunes).
	Audio Interviews	Provide students with audio recording equipment (e.g., an iRiver or an iPod with a recording attachment) and no-cost audio editing software like <a href="#">Audacity</a> ( <a href="http://audacity.sourceforge.net/">http://audacity.sourceforge.net/</a> ) or GarageBand. Have them prepare a mock interview between themselves and an historical character (e.g., Abraham Lincoln). Students can then alter the voice of the historical figure creating a simulated interview, add music and sound, and read or insert famous speeches. For example, visit <a href="#">Audio Digital Storytelling</a> ( <a href="http://audiodigitalstorytelling.blogspot.com">http://audiodigitalstorytelling.blogspot.com</a> ).
	Newspapers	Have students use page layout software (e.g., PageMaker, Pages) to develop newspapers from different eras. For instance, students may create the front page of a newspaper spotlighting Jesse Owens' victory in the Berlin Olympics or the attack on Pearl Harbor.
	Journal Blogs	Consider having students use a blogspace to prepare fabricated historical journals similar to texts like <i>The Captain's Dog</i> (Smith, 1999) or <i>Patty Reed's Doll</i> (Laurgaard, 1989). See, for example, <a href="#">The Journal of Harriet Tubman</a> ( <a href="http://dowell.typepad.com/harriet_tubman/">http://dowell.typepad.com/harriet_tubman/</a> ).
	Movies	Students can use their skills of downloading pictures, sounds, and video from the Internet as well as using still and video cameras to collect data. Using these resources, they can then create video reports or historical documentaries. See examples of <a href="#">student-generated videos</a> posted at <a href="#">Mabry Middle School's Podcast Central</a> (available via iTunes).

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<sup>i</sup> Eric Langhorst introduced studycasts as part of his eighth-grade American history class during the fall of 2005.

<sup>ii</sup> This reflects results from action research conducted by Eric Langhorst in spring of 2006.