Using digital tools to develop academic literacy skills - reading, writing, speaking, listening and thinking – is often highly motivating and engaging to students. These tools can provide support for extensive and independent reading and writing, assist with language scaffolding and provide opportunities for authentic research and the publication of purposeful texts in a variety of media and genres.

The following is a selection of web tools that can be used in the classroom to develop students’ academic literacy skills.

Any websites marked with an * asterisk are useful when teaching key vocabulary

**AnswerGarden** is a digital brainstorming tool where teachers and students can creatively brainstorm a topic or concept. ([http://answergarden.ch](http://answergarden.ch))

**Ahead** is a web-based tool that allows students and teachers to create non-linear presentations, similar to Prezi.com. It allows users to upload high resolution images and videos as part of a zooming and moving interactive presentation. Like Prezi it is a great tool to create presentations. ([http://ahead.com](http://ahead.com))

**Animoto** allows teachers and students create video presentations with no additional software. Choose your photos, videos and text, add music and then wait a few moments while your video is finalised. ([http://www.animoto.com](http://www.animoto.com))

**Blabberize** is a photo editing tool that creates talking animations from a photo or other images. You can pre-record your voice and upload it or you can record via the website. Search the ready-made blabbers and show these as examples for students.

**Bitstrips** is an easy to use comic building site. Students (and teachers) can use this to create a comic cell, strip, or story. Simply click on attributes of a character’s, pick the colours, the background and add dialogue. It would be used to illustrate a scene from a novel or play, summarise a historical event or science experiment, demonstrate a
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**Bookr** is a tool to create a photo book using Flickr images. You search through the library of images, choose those that match your story or skill being taught, add text to the photo book and then create it. ([http://www.pimpampum.net/en/content/bookr](http://www.pimpampum.net/en/content/bookr))

**Bubbl.us** is a free mind map and brainstorming tool. ([http://bubbl.us](http://bubbl.us))

**Capzles** is a site that allows users to create multimedia timeline presentations. Students can upload images, video files, and documents (PDF/Word/PPT/etc.) to create animated timelines that can be shared and annotated. Great for making historical timelines and interactive multimedia presentations. ([http://capzles.com/](http://capzles.com/))

**Creaza** is a set of web-based creativity tools that can help students organise knowledge and tell stories in creative ways. Mindomo is the mind mapping tool that organises thoughts, ideas, links and other information visually. The mind map topics can contain media files, links, and text. Cartoonist is a cartooning tool used to create multimedia stories. It can be used to create comic strips and the finished product can be viewed online or printed. Movie Editor helps students produce their own movies based on Creaza’s thematic universes, video, images, and sound clips. Students use the Movie Editor to edit a short film, create a newscast, an advert, a film/novel trailer, a story, a behaviour for learning skill movie, etc. Movie editor can import film clips, sound clips and images to tell a story. Audio Editor allows students to produce audio clips. ([http://creaza.com](http://creaza.com))

**English Central** has video clips from news shows and movies and shows the text as the words are spoken. Users are then prompted to repeat the words that are shown and the online software “scores” how well the student has pronounced the text. The free site takes into account the particular native accent of the speaker. ([http://www.englishcentral.com/en/videos](http://www.englishcentral.com/en/videos))

**Fotobabble** allows students to create and share talking photos. You upload a photo, record your voice, and send or embed it. Students can take pictures or find creative commons images that illustrate a behaviour for learning skills or illustrate vocabulary they are learning. They can record themselves, for example, saying the definition and using a word in a sentence or they could create their own subject specific talking dictionary. Students could also upload their own illustrations and record a story that they have written in their own voice. The format is valuable for aural and visual learners. ([http://fotobabble.com](http://fotobabble.com))

**Footee** allows students to create an avatar and play Maths, English, Science, Geography, D&T and PE games based around football. You earn 'balls' for playing the educational games and with these you can buy players for your fantasy Footee team (e.g. Rooney). Your team then plays against other user teams in a fantasy league. The parent and teacher sections explain how the site can be used. ([http://footee.com](http://footee.com))
Flipbook is a web tool that allows teachers and students to create a digitally animated flipbook. It is easy to create and a creative way for students (or teachers) to animate a story, a learning skill, a school rule and routine, an historical event, show the visual representation of how to do a maths equation, show a scientific process, or retell a scene from a book or play, etc. (http://www.benettonplay.com/toys/flipbookdeluxe/guest.php)

Go Animate is a free online animation tool where students can create their own animated stories. The site provides a library of characters, backgrounds, props, sound effects and music for use in creating an animation. Students can plan and draft their stories and then use the site to create an animated version of what they have written. (http://goanimate.com/)

Glogster A ‘glog’ is basically an online poster. Students can combine text, pictures, graphics, video and audio to create an interactive online poster. Students can create interactive content to summarise a story or display information in history, maths, book reviews, science, etc. Because Glogster has the ability to handle audio, students can also create podcasts (using Audacity, Garageband, etc) and upload the content to their glog. Glogster EDU is specifically for schools. (http://www.edu.glogster.com/)

Kerpoof is an online creativity center that lets students create their own pictures, drawings, storybooks, movies and practice spelling. It provides students with scenes, characters, and props and students can use these tools to create pictures, stories, or movies that they can write and direct. As students create with the Kerpoof pictures, info bubbles pop up above the pictures (denoted by a question mark). These info bubbles teach students a fun fact related to the picture. Students can practice writing poetry, collaborative stories, illustrated science journals and nonfiction books or illustrate their stories or create a movie out of their own writing. (http://kerpoof.com)

Lino allows teachers and students to create digital bulletin boards which could be used to brainstorm ideas, create summarises or share research on a topic. (http://en.linoit.com/)

MakeBeliefsComix allows users to create their own digital comic strips like the ones that appear in Sunday newspapers. Everything from the images to the text is editable and users can print the final version of their strip for sharing. On the teacher section you can download a guide with ideas on using the site with students. The lesson plan and special needs sections also contain ideas for use in the classroom. http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/How-to-Play/Educators/

Museum Box provides the tools for teachers and students to build a description of an event, person or historical period by placing items in a virtual box e.g. the life of a serf or Roman soldier. Text files, PDFs, videos, images, a webcam video or audio recording can be displayed. You can also view and comment on the Museum See boxes submitted by others. (http://museumbox.e2bn.org/index.php)

Neo K12 is a collection of educational videos, lessons, and games
for students in both primary and secondary school. Subjects include physical science, life science, human body, geography, history, maths, english (including phonics, stories, and grammar) and fun videos such as time lapse, slow motion, arts and crafts, music and sports lessons. When students or teachers search a subject they are given a list of related videos, quizzes, games, and puzzles. Neo K12 also has web 2.0 tools. The School Presentation tool is a mashup of Flickr and Wikipedia and allows students to create and share presentations online. Students choose pictures for their presentation from Flickr, read an article about the subject from Wikipedia and then add text to their presentation. The presentation can be printed or viewed online as a slide show. Teachers can create and share video playlists complete with notes and instructions for students. (http://neok12.com)

One Word offers a one word prompt and gives the student 60 seconds to start writing. (http://oneword.com/)

Prezi makes it possible for students and teachers to create "zooming" presentations and insert images, videos and other media to enhance the presentation. Prezi could be used within classrooms for story telling, defending an opinion, sharing information, beginning discussion, inspiring thinking and delivering ideas. Prezi is a cloud based programme which can be accessed from any computer online. There are also private versions of Prezi which you can purchase to use on your computer without needing internet access. http://prezi.com/

Quia, short for Quintessential Instructional Archive. provides a variety of tools, including templates for creating 16 types of online games and activities that can be used to learn content or keywords. Flashcards, word search, matching, hangman, cloze, quizzes are just some of the activities that can be created. You can sign up for a free trail before subscribing. (http://www.quia.com/web)

Quizlet is a free website providing learning tools for students, that can be used to teach key vocabulary and content. You start by creating a set of terms and definitions and then add an image. The set of terms created can then be learned on the website using a variety of study tools such as flashcards. (http://quizlet.com/)

Sharendipity makes it possible for students and teachers to quickly create and share simple video games. The drag and drop creation tools can be used to create a game in as few as four steps. The tutorials provide clear directions and helpful game ideas. (http://beta.sharendipity.com/)

Shelfari is a virtual bookshelf to show off books read and recommended. Shelfari is a way to discover new titles, discuss books or start an online book club. Teachers could build a bookshelf of age appropriate reading for students and students can comment and rate the books they read or check out other student’s reviews. (http://shelfari.com)

Study Stack allows you to create a stack of "virtual cards" which
contain information about a certain subject or topic - just like flashcards. The study stack words can then be studied online using different activities such as flashcards, matching games, word searches and hangman. (http://www.studystack.com/)

**Showbeyond** is a multimedia slidecast creator, where you can use your own images, add your own sound (including recording your own voiceover) and add text to create multimedia stories. You can upload images and on each slide you can add a text description or narrative. Click ‘Tour’ on the bottom of the homepage to see how easy it is to create a book slideshow and browse the archives to see the variety of stories and ways this tool can be used. (http://www.showbeyond.com/)

**Storybird** is a collaborative storytelling website. Students and teachers can create stories together by combining artwork and text. Students can work together in teams to create stories. Storybird could also be used during DEAR time for students to read the stories their classmates have created. (http://storybird.com)

**Sumo Paint** is a web-based tool and downloadable programme similar to PhotoShop but free. Students can create visual masterpieces using the art programme and edit and touch up photos that they upload. The files can be saved on the computer as a JPEG or on the web. (http://www.sumopaint.com/app/)

*Tagxedo turns text you provide e.g. famous speeches, news articles, etc. into a word cloud. It is similar to wordle.net (see below). Tagxedo creates shapes out of your words clouds. You can upload your own images to create a word shape or use the ready-made templates on the site. (http://www.tagxedo.com)

* **Weebly** for Education can be used to start a digital portfolio, a personal blog or to create a website for any school club or extracurricular activity, etc. Weebly offers features such as polls, embeddable maps and videos and much more to make the site interactive and a nice way to display student work. (http://education.weebly.com/)

* **Wordle** is a tool for generating “word clouds” from text that you provide. The clouds give greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the text. You can tweak your clouds with different fonts, layouts, and colour schemes. Could be used to introduce key vocabulary, revision of a topic, etc. (http://www.wordle.net)

**Zimmer Twins** Edgar and Eva Zimmer are 12 year old twins who appear normal but have developed psychic powers. Strange things began to happen when the twins adopted a black cat named 13. On the Zimmer Twins website, students can create their own cartoon movie endings to a story starter or create their own animated movie from scratch starring the Edgar, Eva, and 13. Students can create and edit movies solo or “Collab-o-write” and work together or with the teacher on creating a collaborative movie. Students could also create movies about historical events, describing a science experiment or learning skill, or for vocabulary practice on a topic. Zimmer Twins is aimed at 8yrs to 17 yr olds. (http://zimmertwins.com)
Zondle is a games-based learning website that enables teachers and students to create games to support exactly their learning needs. Teachers and students can choose learning topics or create their own. The chosen topic can then be played in any of a large and growing selection of games. The Code Breakers: phonics’ section is specially dedicated to phonics games based learning. There is also a Zondle App available. ([https://www.zondle.com](https://www.zondle.com))

Other web 2.0 tools are listed in the NBSS resource ‘Building Whole School Reading Communities’.

Contact the NBSS for a copy of this resource.

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More Information on the NBSS Model of Support to Schools, NBSS Interventions, Initiatives & Projects and NBSS Publications and Resources can be found at www.nbss.ie