

## Digital Commonwealth of Massachusetts

<http://www.digitalcommonwealth.org>

Primary Sources! Digital Commonwealth is a portal to the cultural heritage and history that is held in various libraries and repositories throughout our state. Using the site, researchers can search or browse the digitized collections of these institutions. Students of history will find manuscripts, images, photographs, historical documents, sound recordings, and other primary source materials.

The Digital Commonwealth (DC) has always been interested in linking its digitized presentations to the MA Curriculum Frameworks and involving school librarians and other educators in that process. I serve as the MSLA liaison to the DC executive board. DC funded a pilot mini-grant to help build the curriculum content on the DC portal. A request for proposals was sent out in late spring, 2009, and a proposal was selected during the early summer.

During the 2009-2010 school year, Sudi Smoller, grade 6-8 school librarian at Higgins Middle School in Peabody, collaborated with grade 8 math teacher Diane Devine on a social studies/math unit that incorporated Digital Commonwealth primary sources. The unit, *Peabody Math Trail 3: Government Connections* is designed to help "students... understand that primary resources are eyewitness accounts of



history and that by looking at how ordinary people experienced events they can better understand some of the key points in American history." The students investigated the historical and mathematical features of the Peabody Fire Station, City Hall, and Peabody Institute Library.

The winning unit that provided a great learning opportunity for the students at Higgins Middle School can be found at <http://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/doc/curricula>

Many aspects of the unit can be replicated by other school librarians and content teachers. Collaboration is a vital part of student learning and achievement, and browsing and searching the digitized images on the DC website can provide inspiration for future collaboration.



*Linda Friel has retired as Supervisor of Media Services in Methuen, but she has hardly retired from school librarianship. Besides being the treasurer of MSLA, she is an ALA Councilor-at-Large, serves on the AASL Best Websites, and is the MSLA representative on the Digital Commonwealth advisory board. As of this fall, Linda is teaching at Simmons College in the School Library Teacher Program.*

## Year #2: Best Websites for Teaching & Learning

This is the second year that our AASL committee has selected the Best 25 Websites for Teaching and Learning. All sites are free, web-based, and user-friendly; these sites are creative, collaborative, interactive, and encourage exploration, discovery, and student-centered, inquiry-based learning. Additionally, the selected websites are linked to AASL's Standards for the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Learner and enhance learning and curriculum development.

Our committee used e-mail, Skype, and a wiki on Wikispaces to communicate on a regular basis; the committee also met in-person at several conferences. The group worked diligently to locate possible sites and used Diigo to list, annotate, and organize. After seemingly-endless discussion and debate, the committee selected and categorized the top 25 websites' web 2.0 tools and resources under seven headings: media sharing, digital storytelling, managing and organizing, social networking and communication, curriculum sharing, content resources: lesson plans and more, and content collaboration.

At ALA in Washington, D.C., the committee presented a pre-conference to help school librarians select, use, and integrate the top websites into their school library programs. There was also a session that announced and honored this year's winners. Again, some winners sent representatives to accept, while others sent their appreciation via videos and web 2.0 tools. This year's winning websites will display special logos on their websites.

Reflecting on the repeat experience, I worked with wonderful colleagues from around the country, learned about exemplary websites that can be used to expand learning opportunities and help improve student achievement, and gave something back to my chosen profession. I am eagerly anticipating the upcoming year's committee work .

I highly recommend participation on an AASL committee or task force. Fill out the volunteer form online, on the AASL website.

**Attend Linda's Workshop at the MSLA Conference**  
*She will give a "guided tour" of*  
**AASL's 25 Top Websites for Teaching and Learning**  
**Monday, 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM Bring your laptop!**

# 2010 AASL BEST WEBSITES FOR TEACHING & LEARNING

<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/guidelinesandstandards/bestlist/bestwebsites25.cfm>



## AASL Standards for the 21st-Century Learner

## SELECTED WEBSITES

<b>Media Sharing</b>	<p><b>2.1.4</b> Use technology and other information tools to organize and display knowledge and understanding in ways that others can view, use and assess.</p> <p><b>3.3.4</b> Create products that apply to authentic, real-world context.</p> <p><b>4.1.8</b> Use creative and artistic formats to express personal learning.</p>	<p><b>Glogster</b> <a href="http://edu.glogster.com">http://edu.glogster.com</a>  <b>Masher</b> <a href="http://www.masher.com">http://www.masher.com</a>  <b>Prezi</b> <a href="http://prezi.com">http://prezi.com</a>  <b>Professor Garfield</b> <a href="http://www.professorgarfield.com">http://www.professorgarfield.com</a>  <b>SchoolTube</b> <a href="http://schooltube.com">http://schooltube.com</a>  <b>Scratch</b> <a href="http://scratch.mit.edu">http://scratch.mit.edu</a>  <b>WatchKnow.org</b> <a href="http://watchknow.org">http://watchknow.org</a>  <b>Prezi</b> <a href="http://prezi.com">http://prezi.com</a>  <b>DIGITAL STORYTELLING:</b>  <b>Internat'l Children's Digital Library</b> <a href="http://icdlbooks.org">http://icdlbooks.org</a>  <b>Jing</b> <a href="http://www.jingproject.com">http://www.jingproject.com</a>  <b>Storybird</b> <a href="http://www.storybird.com">http://www.storybird.com</a></p>
<b>Manage &amp; Organize</b>	<p><b>2.1.2</b> Organize knowledge so that it is useful.</p> <p><b>2.1.4</b> Use technology and other information tools to analyze and organize information.</p> <p><b>3.1.4</b> Use technology and other information tools to organize and display knowledge and understanding in ways that others can view, use and assess.</p>	<p><b>Evernote</b> <a href="http://www.evernote.com">http://www.evernote.com</a>  <b>jogtheweb</b> <a href="http://www.jogtheweb.com">http://www.jogtheweb.com</a>  <b>Live Binders</b> <a href="http://livebinders.com">http://livebinders.com</a>  <b>MuseumBox</b> <a href="http://museumbox.e2bn.org">http://museumbox.e2bn.org</a>  <b>Pageflakes</b> <a href="http://www.pageflakes.com">http://www.pageflakes.com</a>  <b>Weblist</b> <a href="http://www.weblist.me">http://www.weblist.me</a></p>
<b>Social Networking &amp; Communication</b>	<p><b>3.1.2</b> Participate and collaborate as members of a social and intellectual network of learners</p> <p><b>4.1.7</b> Use social networks and information tools to gather and share information.</p> <p><b>4.3.1</b> Participate in the social exchange of ideas, both electronically and in person.</p>	<p><b>Creative Commons</b> <a href="http://creativecommons.org">http://creativecommons.org</a>  <b>Learn Central</b> <a href="http://www.learncentral.org">http://www.learncentral.org</a>  <b>TED</b> <a href="http://www.ted.com">http://www.ted.com</a></p>
<b>Content Collaboration</b>	<p><b>1.3.4</b> Contribute to exchange of ideas in learning community. Participate and collaborate as members of a social and intellectual network of learners.</p> <p><b>3.1.2</b> Use technology and other information tools to organize and display knowledge and understanding in ways that others can view, use and assess.</p> <p><b>3.1.4</b> Use technology and other information tools to organize and display knowledge and understanding in ways that others can view, use and assess.</p>	<p><b>Debategraph</b> <a href="http://www.debategraph.org">http://www.debategraph.org</a></p>
<b>Curriculum Sharing</b>	<p><b>Guidelines for School Library Programs: Instructional Partner</b>            "The School Librarian collaborates with classroom teachers to develop assignments that are matched to academic standards and include critical thinking skills, technology and information literacy skills, and core social skills and cultural competencies. The School Librarian guides instructional design by working with the classroom teacher to establish learning objectives and goals, and by implementing assessment strategies before, during and after assigned units of study."</p>	<p><b>Exploratree</b> <a href="http://www.exploratree.org.uk">http://www.exploratree.org.uk</a>  <b>The Jason Project</b>  <a href="http://www.jason.org/public/whatis/start.aspx">http://www.jason.org/public/whatis/start.aspx</a>  <b>National Science Digital Library</b> <a href="http://nsdl.org">http://nsdl.org</a>            CONTENT RESOURCES: Plan Lessons  <b>Edsitement</b> <a href="http://edsitement.neh.gov">http://edsitement.neh.gov</a>  <b>The National Archives' Digital Classroom</b>  <a href="http://www.archives.gov/education">http://www.archives.gov/education</a></p>