Web 2.0 Tools for Students and Educators
SimplyHeadlines and Pageflakes

SimplyHeadlines and Pageflakes are two of the latest online tools for educators and students. The information below offers quick setup directions for basic implementation in the classroom. However, the possibilities are endless to excite your students and impress their parents with free online tools that rival software from billion dollar corporations.

What Is Web 2.0?

Web 2.0 refers to the second generation of Internet-based services that include social networking sites, blogs, wikis, RSS (Really Simple Syndication), and communication tools. A major component of Web 2.0 is an enhanced technological advance enabled by AJAX (Asynchronous JavaScript and XML), which allows Web-based applications that work similarly to software installed on your computer. The user experience is much like using your desktop. RSS is a technology that is used to publish frequently updated digital content such as blogs, news feeds, or podcasts. Web 2.0 emphasizes online collaboration and sharing among users.

SimplyHeadlines

SimplyHeadlines is a free, personalized daily email newspaper that presents the latest news items from your favorite information sources, Web sites, and blogs. It includes thousands of online newspapers and sources that feature categories such as news, sports, entertainment, travel, weather, and stock quotes. It can access any site that has its own RSS feed. An email will come each day at a specific time that you set.
simplyheadlines.com

Setup

Create your free account by signing up on the home page. Your name, email address, and password are requested. Customize your paper by choosing the delivery time, graphical or text format, and your news and special features. You can change, edit, or add any news item or feature that you want by following the easy-to-follow subscriber menu.

Adding an RSS Feed

- Under the subscriber menu, select "Choose your news and special feature."
- Scroll down to the bottom of the page and select, "Add an RSS or OPML news source."
- Enter a valid link and submit.

How do you find an RSS link? If your browser's RSS link is highlighted on any Web site, click on it. This will bring you to the RSS page that will allow you to add it to your customized newspaper. You can also subscribe to a feed. However, this will be viewed only via your RSS feed section in your browser (IE 7 or Firefox 2.0).

Educational Value

According to creator Joshua Lippiner, "SimplyHeadlines provides an audience with a simple way to stay up-to-date with the news without having to sit down to read the paper or spend time clicking around news sites. An educator can create their ideal paper, such as a history teacher including 'today in history' and a science teacher including news sources on technology, and have their eNewspaper sent to them every day. They can then forward that paper directly to their students or print a few copies to distribute in class."

If you have some special requests or RSS feeds pertaining to education, contact Joshua Lippiner at josh@simplyheadlines.com. He will be more than happy to enrich his site with educational content.

Pageflakes

Pageflakes is a free personalized desktop that allows users to set up their favorite Internet applications, blogs, news feeds, bookmarks, calendar, word processing, email, and numerous other Web services and applications. One can add over a hundred widgets or "flakes," as the company calls them, to truly enrich a customizable desktop with feature-rich Web-based applications.
www.pageflakes.com

Setup

You can test the page by going to the home page and creating a desktop without registering. However, if you want it to be saved permanently and accessible on all computers, you need to register with your email address and a password. Basic and advanced features are explained in the FAQ section.

Quick Tips

- Moving your flakes on your desktop is done by placing your cursor on the solid gray heading and dragging it to your desired location.
- Click on Add Flake or Add Feed to add the available list of flakes or RSS feeds.
- Each flake has 3-4 icons to the right of the title. The wrench allows you to open and customize each module. The triangle facing down closes the module and the triangle facing up opens each one. The X lets users remove each module permanently. The circular arrows refresh the RSS feeds.

Educational Value

Christoph Janz, cofounder of Pageflakes says, "Pageflakes lets students and teachers put all the things they need on one page: news, blogs, bookmarks, to-do lists, and more. Pageflakes even allows classes to set up a shared page that is perfect for sharing information, photos, and all kinds of digital content." Some additional educational flakes include bookmarks, a calculator, currency converter, dictionary, word of the day, and a world time clock. A new page dedicated to *Connected Newsletter* readers is being developed that will give students and educators more information on the integration of Pageflakes in the classroom.
www.pageflakes.com/CC

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