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Assistive Technology Network **ATN**

WELCOME TO THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER DE-SIGNED TO PROVIDE EDUCATORS WITH TIPS AND TRICKS WHEN INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

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Tools that Provide Access to the General Education Curiculum

There are many technologies available to provide access to educational activities that will benefit children with disabilities. You may already be familiar with some of the applications. We hope to expand your use by thinking of activities that are atypical. For example, why not try social stories in Photo Story 3, digital books with SwitchIt Maker, or an interactive science book with BoardMaker Plus? Making accessible curriculum activities can be more than scanning and digitizing.

The T-TAC/ODU Lending Library has software available for educators to borrow for 30 days and try before purchasing. Visit our electronic database online at *https://ttac.biblion-ix.com/atoz/catalog/*

Photo Story 3:
Microsoft's Hidden Jewel
(and it's free!)

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I have recently begun using Microsoft's Windows 7 software and am amazed by the number of items that are listed under "programs" that I have never explored. Photo Story 3 is one of these resources that I began to investigate and use. Since then it has become a quantifiable hit with me.

For the unfamiliar reader, Photo Story 3 is a free downloadable program offered by Microsoft. It can be obtained by going to their website, Microsoft.com and following their simple instructions for the download. In a nutshell, the program involves following a few steps that help you create your own digital book, book report or story. To begin, you select and edit your images, arrange your pictures, caption or title your slides, narrate your pictures, and select music to accompany them. Name and save your story, add transitions, if you like, and your movie is complete. When saved, your Photo Story 3 file is converted into a Windows Media Player file.

Photo Story 3 can be used for personal use to digitize photos from a favorite trip, to capture the special moments in a wedding, or to sequence a social story depicting specific behaviors you want a student to develop. Because motion is added to the photos, it becomes like a "movie" and is very interesting to look at and listen to. In this present climate of limited budgets and resources, using Photo Story 3 can be an invaluable tool for making your own digital stories, books or book reports.

The first step in creating a story is to choose your topic. My first choice was to choose a theme revolving around my grandson and to capture him participating in his busy, everyday activities. To support this theme, I had to choose photos that were stored in my picture file on the computer. I selected 6 photos and sequenced them according to how I wanted them to be shown. If a student were using Photo Story to complete a book report, they would have to use whatever search engine their school allows and select photos or images that correspond to the report they are making. Once selected, sequencing the photos helps develop the story in succession without revealing the ending. Photo Story can be used similar to a movie trailer, in that it gives the reader a basic idea of the plot, yet peaks the readers' interest in reading the book themselves.

The next step involves adding captions to your selected images. This is a simple process and the program allows you to place the captions in different spaces on the image for the best readable result. It can be justified left, right and center or be placed in the upper or lower portion of your photo. A student completing a book report could highlight the conflicts, actions, and partial resolution of the story without giving away the ending. Many online book sellers are using digital book trailers as a means of sparking interest in a book.

Finally, when using Photo Story to complete a book report project, the student would have to select music to accompany the slides. The music should be related to the genre of the book. Photo Story 3 has its own music to choose from, or you can choose music from other sources and import it. There are countless possibilities on ways to use Photo Story 3. You can use it for "show-n-tell," to create slideshows, to bring photos to life using special effects and to share your stories with others. Small file sizes are easy to send in an email. You can watch your photo stories on your TV, a computer, or a Windows Mobile-based portable device. Photo stories help bridge the gap between visits to a grandparent, sibling or spouse. They are easy to access and to create. For special needs children or handicapped adults, photo stories provide visual and auditory supports to teach concepts, to reinforce a desired behavior, and to help them recall the order of their day. They can be used to simplify a reading story so that a more limited reader could follow the story plot along with his/her peers, without struggling to decode words that are too difficult.

For more information, visit
http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/digitalphotography/PhotoStory/default.mspx
Online Tutorial
http://ttac.odu.edu/photostory.swf

FotoMix

FotoMix is an intuitive photo-editing tool that allows users to create dual-layer images, making it possible to add, remove, and combine elements. Although it doesn't begin to compare to full-featured software like Photoshop, it's not a bad choice for non-professional users who need something that's quick and easy to use.

http://download.cnet.com/FotoMix/3000-2192_4-10912864.html?tag=mncol;lst

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BoardMaker Plus

BoardMaker software has finally reached to higher levels. It can no longer be described for simply creating communication boards. BoardMaker Plus can now integrate voice, animation, and video along with the interactivity of hyperlinks. Imagine a digital book with a science standard. Sink or float can be demonstrated with embedded video of the actual science experiment. Students can relive the opportunity to predict the outcome and then see the results as many times as they need.

Adapted books are easy to develop in Board-Maker Plus and can include assessment for comprehension. Develop the book with 5-6 pages, and then on the last page, include a multiple choice question for assessment for comprehension. The choices can be graphics rather than text.

Using BoardMaker Backgrounds with finger puppets (or small cut out figures), you can design the graphics for your own stories.

You can download a 30 day trial of BoardMaker Plus from:
http://www.mayer-johnson.com/products/boardmaker-plus/

FotoMorph

FotoMorph is a photo animation tool with a friendly user interface. Amaze your friends and family with unbelievable transformations. Morphing is an animation technique in which one image is gradually turned into another. FotoMorph lets you make incredible morphs in minutes. You've seen them in the movies and on TV, and now you can create them yourself. Turn a friend into a tiger. Watch your child grow into an adult. Unleash your imagination with the power of FotoMorph. FotoMorph is designed to create animations in real time. The rendering engine takes advantage of hardware acceleration, and the rendering speed easily goes up to several hundred FPS.

http://download.cnet.com/Foto-Morph/3000-2186_4-10845768.html?tag=mncol;lst

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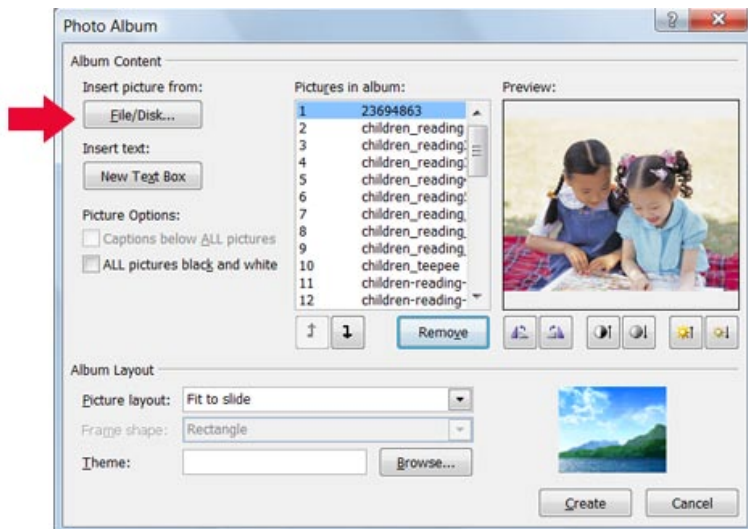Old Dominion University (TTAC/ODU)

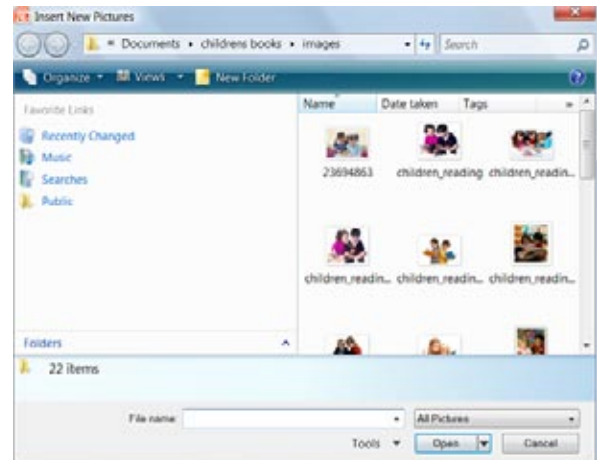4

Microsoft PowerPoint Photo Album

Need something quick? Try a Microsoft PowerPoint Photo Album. You can add graphics and slides with one or two clicks of the mouse button. Select the photo album option before you get started.
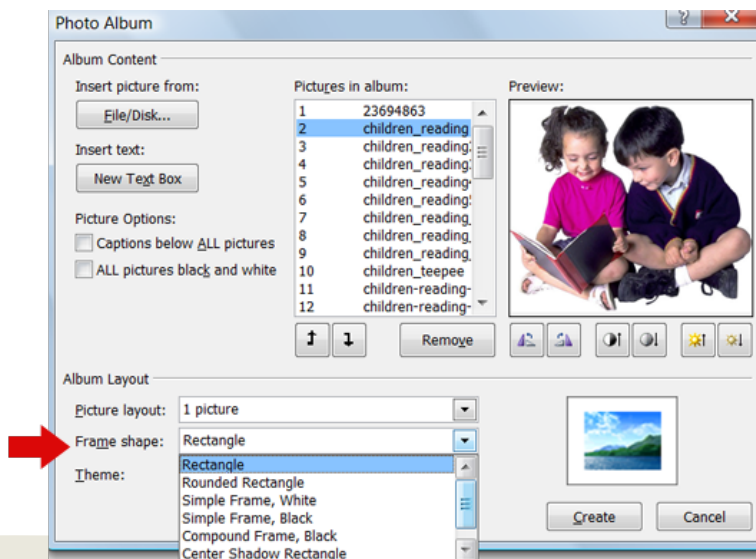
The photo album option is available on the Insert Ribbon in Microsoft PowerPoint 2007. After making the selection New Photo Album, you will get a dialog box. Select the File/Disk button...

And a new box will appear. Highlight all of the pictures that you want to include.

There are other options you can consider for example, Frame Shape and Themes. Once you have made your choices, select Create and Viola!

If you're feeling ambitious, you can add a text box that will allow students to type in their own dialog when the photo album is playing. On the toolbar, select the Developer tab, and Text Box. Then draw a text box on the slide.

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SwitchIt Maker

Switch It! Maker is a commercial product that is designed specifically to create simple cause and effect activities. It is extremely easy to use because it takes the user through a series of steps to create activities. Simple stories can be created where the student presses a switch or clicks a mouse to move through a story. Each page of the story can include images, words, sentences, animations and/or recorded sounds. Other activities can include:

- Sequence of photos showing the order of activities through the day
- Demonstration of how to make popcorn using photos and sound
- Journal of a class field trip
- Comparison of big and little
- Journal of plant growth
- and much, much more

SwitchIt Maker Quick Guide
http://www.callscotland.org.uk/Resources/Publications/Quick-Guides/Assets/Downloads/SwitchIt-Maker-Quick-Guide.pdf

Free SwitchIt Player
http://www.switchitmaker2.com/shareactivities/shareactivitiesplayer.htm