



School No 735

'Honeycomb' Pilot



Honeycomb is an integrated set of online creativity and collaboration tools. It incorporates Web 2.0 functionality such as blogs and wikis, as well as a simple drag and drop webpage creation tool. Pupils' work can be shared online with a closed group, who can comment on the published work, leave virtual stickers and collaborate with the creator.

Knutsford School is a Primary School of 420 pupils, situated in Watford. The school has been awarded the ICT Mark and have a history of innovative ICT use, which has included the use of Dreamweaver to create personal web pages. However, Dreamweaver, being a professional level web authoring application, proved to be too complicated for many of the children to use. Therefore this trial was of particular interest as it would give the pupils the opportunity to continue their website creation work with a more basic tool. Honeycomb was trialled across the Autumn Term 2008 with Year 6 pupils.

Date:	12-12-08
Subject Coverage:	ICT, Cross Curricular
Key Stages:	2 (though applicable to 1 and 3)
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Related Documents & Links:

- <http://www.honeycombtools.com/>
- <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/learning/ict/technologies/web2.0/>
- <http://www.knutsford.herts.sch.uk>

The Pilot

Background and Planning

As web2.0 technologies such as social networks and personal online 'spaces' dominate many young people's home ICT use, many educators are now considering how such tools can aid teaching and learning. However, there are many issues surrounding these technologies as they are web based and therefore, in many cases, freely and anonymously accessible by anybody with internet access.

Honeycomb uses similar principles to these technologies, but limits shared access to a closed group (other pupils) who must be logged in to view and collaborate, so anonymous access isn't possible.

Honeycomb lends itself to the creative use of ICT in any curriculum area. The teacher leading the Honeycomb trial at Knutsford gave a lot of freedom to the pupils to plan and create a personal online space which they could share with each other. In so doing the children would gain ICT skills, Literacy skills and consider important aspects such as eSafety, creating for an audience and responsible use of the internet. Because Honeycomb can be logged in to from any internet enabled computer, the children worked on their pages at school and at home. Parents were informed of the pilot by a letter which included a link to the school's Internet Acceptable Use Policy. Planning and preparation for the children's Honeycomb use included a survey of the children's

ICT use and discussion of what is and what is not appropriate to put into a personal web page.

The Honeycomb Tools



Honeycomb features 3 main tools: a personal web page creator, a blog creator and a wiki creator. All can incorporate digital images, sound and video, as well as text and hyperlinks. Also featured are a set of 'widgets' which can be dragged onto the page, including a calendar, slideshow and chart tool.

The main focus of the trial was the web page creator. The intuitive drag and drop interface meant that the children were able to begin creating their pages quickly and easily. All the children utilised the full functionality of Honeycomb by including multimedia in their pages. They were also able to view their peers' pages and make comments, as well as leave 'virtual stickers' on the page from a bank of graphics provided within the program. The teacher can also use these facilities to 'mark' the children's work.

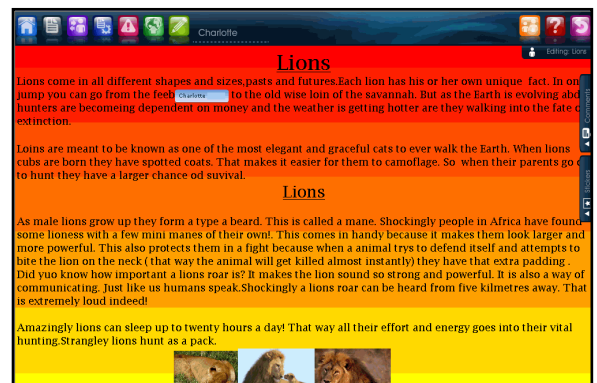


The blog tool enabled the children to create a structured page of chronological postings, which readers could comment on. The majority of blogs on the www follow a 'diary' format and some of the children used the blog facility in this way.

The wiki tool provides the user with the facility to create pages which others can edit. This collaborative use of the internet allows the children to create shared information pages, combining their knowledge to produce a resource.



A Honeycomb Blog



A Honeycomb Wiki

The children were very enthusiastic about using Honeycomb. They found it easy to use and enjoyed the fact that they could incorporate multimedia into their personal pages, share their work and comment on their friends' work. Some of the parents involved also commented that their children enjoyed using Honeycomb more than anything else they do in school. Whilst Honeycomb is an ongoing development, the teacher found it effective to work with and he achieved his aims with it.

Knutsford's trial of Honeycomb shows how motivated young people are by using education technology that echoes their use of ICT outside school, and how education tools such as this can stimulate discussion and learning about safe and appropriate use of the internet. It also shows how a simple webpage creation facility can be successful for creative use of ICT.