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Subject: Updates from Lisa
Date: 7 November, 2014 11:03:46 PM PST
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2 Attachments, 295 KB

Hello again dear teachers! What a wild week! I hope you are all able to enjoy this update on fully-restored electricity, cable and Internet connections. Especially the Internet connections, because I want to talk to you about Web 2.0.

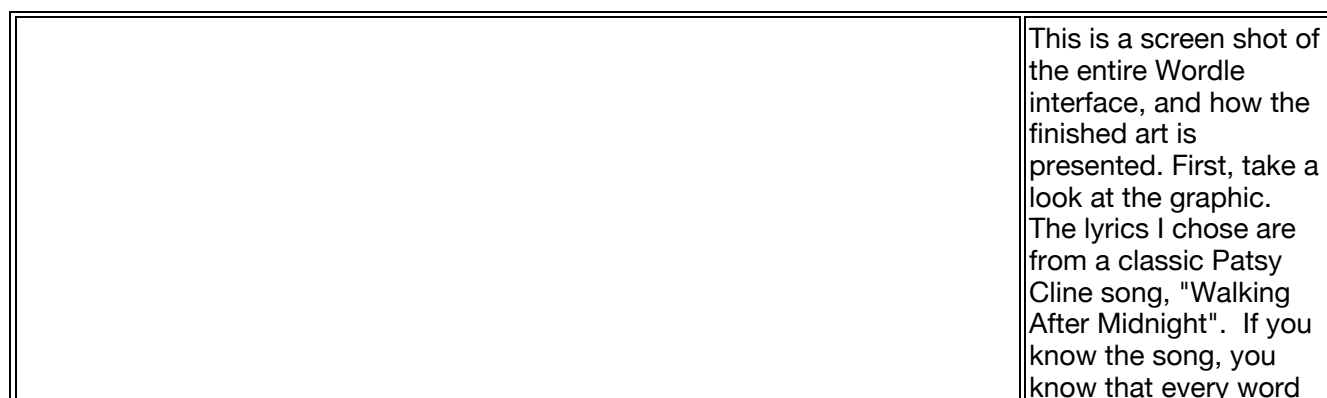
On Thursday afternoon, before we got sent home, I was sitting in a (dark) meeting with the Techs and Glen. I was reflecting on how important it is to remember how much I don't know. They were mapping out a plan for continued improvements to networks, connectivity, switches...DNS....servers...towers....stacks...zywalls.....To be honest (or, TBH as the kids say) I was pretty lost. All of that (imagine me gesturing in a vague and circular way) is all still (and may always be) beyond my ken. I was a late adopter, in fact, to technology, and while I could see why people liked carrying around shoeboxes filled with punch cards that would run a program in a computer larger than a smart car, it just really wasn't my thing.

Until the Internet. Oh.... THEN I got it....

So today I'd like to share with you something *magical* from the Internet, specifically around Web 2.0 tools. Now, TBH (again) the term Web 2.0 has been bandied about for a few years now, and in fact isn't really something people talk about anymore, they just, well, live it. In short, a 2.0 site is any one that let's you (or even encourages you) to interact with it. So that includes any online multi-player games (Hello you night elves of WoW!), Social Media, and some really great educational apps. A nod today to Tom Geoghegan at Quamichan Campus who was sharing one of my favourite sites with his grade 8's. Lots of you may know [Wordle](#), but I'd like to (re)share it today, because I think there is so much that it can be used for.

You have all seen these sort of "word cloud" or "word art" examples before. In fact, I'd even begrudgingly admit they've become a LITTLE too common in the past few years. But Wordles are so much more than just fast and easy word art.

Based on the principle of "tagging", wordles generate attractive clouds based on text that you enter. For example, Tom was having his learners copy and paste the lyrics of their favourite song into the app, and then illustrating the Wordle with a variety of images. A nice, simple activity that results in a really attractive and personalized project. Let me show you an example.



Wordle™ Home Create Gallery Credits News Forum FAQ Advanced

Edit Language Font Layout Color

Open in Window Print... Randomize Save to public gallery...

is not present in the cloud, but all of the important words are there. And they are all different sizes. And this is the principle of "tagging", used to search and sort all manner of texts found on the Internet-- the words that are most frequent are the biggest, lesser used words are smaller. You can also adjust for the inclusion or exclusion of "common" words ("if", "and" "but" "the"etc...are removed by default. And their counterparts in over 2 dozen other languages, as well), or you can chose to include them. The "Randomize" button will give you endless new versions, in a myriad of colour palettes. You can also customize the colour, the layout, the font style and word inclusion in any way you like, just by using the "Language", "Font", "Layout" and "Color" tabs.

"Well", you might be thinking, "making word clouds out of corny old lyrics really isn't my thing, Lisa". Here is the beauty of Wordle. Remember, it tags (or, as I like to say, embiggens) the most frequently used words. Here are some suggestions:

- run through a few political speeches. What are the most prominent 3 words for each candidate? "Family?" "Restraint?" "Economic Stimulus?" Can you hear a subliminal message?
- wordle the text of fairy tale or short story. Can your learners guess the theme/plot/setting from the word cloud?
- you can also enter a web address and Wordle will create a word cloud based on that page.

Here's one from SD79's home page:



Neat, hey?

Check out this great site for over 100 more ideas for using Wordle in your classroom. [21st Century Ed Tech.](#)

It offers suggestions across all curricula

A couple of notes: You will need to update your Java plugin. **DON'T DO THIS ON THE MACHINE YOU ACCESS BCeSIS WITH!!!!** (If you are still using it). And if your flash is out of date, you may need to upgrade it too. Try a different browser if Safari isn't working for you on a Mac. Wordle isn't available on iPads, but here is an equivalent: [Word Collage](#). Also, if Wordle isn't your thing, but you would like to look at a few other Word Cloud generators, here is a list of 9 [others!](#)

It's a great little device, useful and illustrative in a bunch of different settings, and easy enough for any learner who can Copy / Paste to use.

Thanks for reading, please continue to share your questions and queries with me, and thank you Tom for inspiring this update.

Until next time, I remain:

Virtually yours,

Lisa

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Lisa Read

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