

ICT know-how

ICT & literacy

ICT

Complement your literacy activities with simple and accessible ICT software

Apple® computers have for a long time been supplied with some exciting and innovative software. One of these, *Comic Life*, is now available for Windows®-based PCs. It's very easy to use and allows children to create colourful and effective comic strips. Digital images can be imported and resized into any one of a number of page templates. Speech, text and thought bubbles are equally easy to add. *Comic Life* offers a lot of potential for creating storyboards, for encouraging creative writing or as a great way to record class activities and trips. And, if you fear that your own worksheets and lesson materials look a little drab, *Comic Life* could be useful for teachers, too. Find out more at <http://plasq.com>

Supporting literacy on a budget

Budget is always a thorny issue, but there are several sites offering free resources to support English and literacy. Previously hosted at Crick Primary School, www.crickweb.co.uk is a relatively new site that offers several games to support specific skills or to engage children in higher-order thinking (see *Junior Ed PLUS*, Nov '07 for more information on Crick Web). The annotation activity in 'Street Scene Labels' could be used to explore settings, dialogue and action in stories. Several of the activities also have accompanying lesson

outlines. Be a bit cautious of the Spelling Rule Tester. When I visited the site, I spotted some errors.

ICT & the National Year of Reading

2008 is designated as the National Year of Reading www.yearofreading.org.uk Why not run a 'My Favourite Read' event, where teachers and children talk about their favourite book of all time and use ICT to capture and promote it? There are many ways of recording this, but perhaps the simplest is to use Microsoft's free *PhotoStory*. Invite children to design, scan and then import their own book covers. Children and staff can then record their opinions about these images. Finally, the recording can be saved as a video file for sharing in school. Alternatively, children can discuss their favourite reads via video sharing sites, such as www.teachertube.com Using ICT in this way can be a simple and effective way of promoting reading.

Andy Hutt, www.andyhutt.co.uk

ICT expert, Andy Hutt, provides some clever tips for you and your class. This month: **Microsoft® Word**



top tips

Taking a shortcut

Keyboard shortcuts save time. Instead of using the mouse to perform a task, shortcuts usually involve holding down the CTRL key (find it at the bottom left of the keyboard) and then tapping an additional key. Here's a starter: CTRL + X (cuts highlighted text), CTRL + V (pastes text from the pasteboard), CTRL + P (prints), CTRL + S (saves), CTRL + Z (undoes the last action – brilliant!). Find out more at <http://tinyurl.com/a4t7f>

It's a style thing

If you find that reformatting text is taking you a long time, then why not consider using Styles? You can use the pre-set Styles in *Microsoft® Word* or define your own. Your document can make use of any number of styles. If you subsequently change your mind, simply modify and update the style and, *voilà*, the changes are made to all text that has that style applied. Microsoft® has an excellent 'Style tutorial' at <http://tinyurl.com/37bvfg>

What a drag

To move text in *Microsoft® Word*, you usually cut and paste it, but it can be easier to drag the text, especially if you don't have to move it too far. Here's how: highlight the text you want to move. Next, release the left-mouse button and click on the selected text, this time keeping the left mouse-button held down. Move the cursor to where you want the text and then release the button. It may take practice, but if you do make a mistake – just press CTRL + Z to undo it!