




Connection Reflection

These are a Few of OUR Favorite Things

 "Raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens, bright copper kettles and warm woolen mittens . . ."

No, No, No! Not **those** favorite things—favorite technology "things," which is the theme for this issue of the *Connection Reflection*. Dr. Henry Thiele, Judy Okazaki and Alice Schmitz each selected their favorite technology tool and are sharing some information about the tool with you. We hope you'll enjoy reading about the "picks" and will take some time to try one or more of the tools knowing it could become one of your favorites as well!

Google Gets the Nod from Dr. Thiele

By: **Dr. Henry Thiele**
President

My favorite tool for anything online is Google. I am not talking about Google Documents, Calendar, Tasks, Maps, Sites, Blogger, Moderator, Sketch-Up, iGoogle pages, or any of the other applications they offer (FOR FREE!!!). I am referring to the good old Google search—you know—www.google.com.



Dr. Henry Thiele

several pages put together to help you better use this powerful tool. Here are some you might want to

visit and some highlights associated with each:

Basic Search Tips: <http://www.google.com/intl/en/help/features.html>

- To see the weather for many U.S. and worldwide cities, type "weather" followed by the city and state, U.S. ZIP code, or city and country.

- To see current market data for a given company or fund, type the ticker symbol into the search box.
- To see the time in many cities around the world, type in "time" and the name of the city.

Advanced Search Tips: <http://www.google.com/help/operators.html>

- Phrase search ("") By inserting double quotes around a set of words, you are telling Google to consider the exact words in that exact order without any change.
- Search within a specific website (site:) Google allows you to specify that your search results must come from a given website.
- Terms you want to exclude (-) Attaching a minus sign immediately before a word



(Continued on page 4)

Inside this issue:

| | |
|--|---|
| Google Always Delivers | 1 |
| Diigo—Collaborate, Communicate, Research, and More | 2 |
| Jott for Those Needing Reminders | 3 |
| Ten Ideas to Keep You from Boredom This Summer | 4 |

Special points of interest:

- Google Tips are available for your students.
- Diigo makes sharing research an easy task.
- Pick one or more items from our list of ideas to fight summer boredom.

Diigo Tops Okazaki's List . . .

A Great Organization and Communication Tool

By: **Judy Okazaki**
Executive Director



Judy Okazaki

My No. 1 is DIIGO. It can be valuable to anyone who regularly uses the Internet. Diigo is a multifaceted tool with lots of powerful functionality. It can be labeled as a tool for bookmarking, organization, research, social networking, and/or communication. However, because it is so powerful, its usefulness might not be initially apparent. The many purposes and features can be overwhelming; yet, it is easy to use. When I started to use Diigo, I thought it would have been helpful to know what it can be used for and a little bit about how to use it. Finally, I needed some reassurance that the learning curve was worth the effort. Hopefully, this article will help you as well.

If you were new to an office suite of software such as Microsoft Office and someone told you about all of the capabilities, it might be intimidating. However, when you start to break it down into the individual applications and then learn some of the features available, it gets easier. For example, with Microsoft Office you might initially need only the spreadsheet or only the word processor. Let's say the word processor. You may not need to print labels or do a mail merge, but you may need to know how to do an outline, insert pictures or just write a letter. As time goes on you will expand to use other features—maybe the capability to print labels. Then, later on you expand your

knowledge to the spreadsheet or the presentation software (in this case, Microsoft PowerPoint). While Diigo is not as comprehensive a package as Microsoft Office, it is multipurpose, multifunctional and feature rich. So let's break down some of the most valuable uses.

First of all if you are taking the time to bookmark sites, you are doing so for easy access in the future. That information can be used in different ways, so why not use a service that gives you lots of flexibility. In Diigo you can save bookmarks by tags.

In case you are unfamiliar with "tags," know that they are a way to label pages for future recall. This method is different from the traditional system of placing bookmarks in folders and later having to try to remember which folder you used. To start tagging simply save a page by listing a few keywords which categorize the page. For recall simply do a search on any keyword that you may have used for tagging.

Diigo goes beyond basic bookmarking capabilities. One aspect I really like is Diigo's ability to markup a page or add notes to a page. As you read a web page you can select and highlight text with a color or the colors of your choice. Whenever that web page is accessed in the future, the highlighting will be present. You can also make notes. Notes can be general notes about

the page or article or you can post "sticky" notes to mark and respond to information at a specific point or location.

You can then decide whether you wish to share pages or keep them private. When you share, you can do so with the general public, groups of people you have selected, or individuals of your choosing. The sharing aspect, along with markup and notation capabilities, makes Diigo an excellent tool for research. Further an option is available when saving to write a short note which is forwarded by email to whomever you have chosen when sharing the article.

To start using Diigo, you can import bookmarks from your current browser or just use it for a few weeks adding new bookmarks. One reason for not importing bookmarks is to use it as a means of cleaning up your bookmark collection. You can then add previously saved bookmarks as needed.

Feedback I've received on Diigo is that for the first few weeks there is a feeling of discomfort and questions about how useful it really is. Soon, however, it becomes a valuable tool used on a regular basis. Further, after a short time, advanced features and new uses will be discovered. My suggestion is that you and a friend or colleague work together to learn to use Diigo. That way you can experiment with the features and Diigo's sharing capabilities.

I would be interested to hear any feedback you might have about Diigo. I can be contacted at JOkazaki@SETConnections.org.



SET Connections Wishes You a Wonderful Summer

Schmitz Selects Jott—A Way to Receive Reminders

By: **Alice Schmitz**
Director of Education and
Professional Development

Ever forget something you had to do? Ever think of something to remember but didn't have a piece of paper around? I find myself relying more and more on lists of "things to do." Some may say it is an age thing—but I really think it is that we all have more to store in our brain! Whenever I have a little down time—when I'm driving somewhere, getting ready in the morning, or lying in bed at night reviewing the day's activities—I seem to remember something that needs to be done in the future. I never seem to have a pencil and paper available at these crucial times, and I'm certainly not at a computer . . . then I forget them.

Just about a year ago, I read an article by technology writer David Pogue of the *New York Times* (<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/05/technology/personaltech/05pogue.html>) outlining some excellent cell phone services. Jott was one of those services. I tried it and became a huge fan. Jott has become MY personal reminder service—above and beyond the calendar and tasks in Outlook, the paper lists that adorn our refrigerator, and the human reminder systems I have in my home, i.e. a husband and a son!

Now, when I think of something I want to remember, I call Jott at 866-JOTT123. Actually, it is a speed dial on my cell phone.

Jott is marketed as a personal transcription service. You call Jott, speak your message/reminder, and it transcribes it. A conversation might go like this:

Jott: "Who do you want to Jott?"

Me: "Myself."

Jott: "Record your Note."

You: "Great idea for SET Newsletter! Ask President Hank Thiele to write an article about his top ten technology complaints!"

Jott: "Got It. Want a Reminder?"

Me: "Yes"

Jott: "What day?"

Me: "Tuesday"

Jott: "What Time?"

Me: "1"

Jott: "AM or PM?"

Me: "PM"

Jott: "Setting reminder for Tuesday, June 9 at 1 PM. Is this correct?"

Me: "Yes"

Jott: "Got it!"

A few minutes later, the transcribed, typed message appears in my e-mail in-



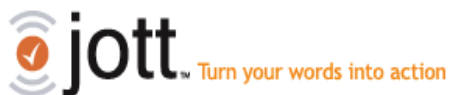
Alice Schmitz

box, complete with an audio attachment of the recording — and, if I choose, also on my phone as a text message. The reminder I asked for above will arrive on my cell phone on the specified Tuesday.

Since the time of David Pogue's article, Jott has made quite a few improvements. It now interfaces with Outlook or

Google calendars so you can set appointments, tasks, capture notes, or use the address book. Yes, I can even send "tasks" to my husband and son—they're on my list! You can text or email list items if you don't want to do the voice additions. You can update your web posts. Update your Twitter status with a quick call or post a blog update. It has also gone from a free service to charging a monthly fee. Depending on planned usage, a variety of plans, allow you to keep this fee to a minimum.

So, check it out (<http://www.jott.com>). There's a free trial option. And, if Jott doesn't fit your needs and you're a listmaker like I am, try Remember the Milk (<http://www.rememberthemilk.com>). Though a little different, it does allow you to make and manage lists anywhere you are connected to the Web, and it is available for web-enabled cell phones or iPod/iTouch devices. You can send reminders to your cell phone. Add tasks through Twitter. Remember the Milk is a free application.



Practical Technology for Special Education Presented at IASBO

SET Connections was represented at the Illinois Association of School Business Officers conference from May 13 through 15, 2009, at Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, Illinois. A presentation, **Practical Technology for**

Special Education, was made by **Dr. Henry Thiele, Judy Okazaki and Alice Schmitz**. Members of their session were introduced to tools for administrative tasks such as Diigo and Jott; communication tools such as

Twitter and Linked In; and educational/professional development tools such as RSS feeds, and mash-ups (like iGoogle, Net Vibes), and You Tube. Applications were cited for personal as well as classroom use.

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Ten Things To Do When You Get Bored This Summer!

1. *Clean up your computer*—make folders and organize documents, purge old documents.
2. *Try a new software tool*—practice making a screencast or a video to be uploaded to You Tube.
3. *Have fun using one social networking site* such as Facebook or Linked In.
4. *"Skype" a friend.* (<http://www.skype.com>). You'll need a headset.
5. *"Lurk" on Twitter* (if you're not already a user). See what is being discussed and how others are using it. By fall you'll be an expert ready to contribute!
6. *"Jazz up" five classroom handouts/assignments.* Ask yourself: What can I do to make this handout/assignment more fun for my students yet worthwhile? Try Snag-It (www.TechSmith.com/Snagit) for screen captures.
7. *Back-up your computer(s).*
8. *Organize your Digital Photos*—Try making a main folder for each year with individual monthly folders. You may want to check out products to help organize photos (Picasa, iPhoto, Photoshop Elements, etc.) Tag your photos to make them easier to find for future projects.
9. *Check out Read Please* (<http://www.readplease.com>), *Shoshiku* (<http://www.shoshiku.com>) or *Flashcard Exchange* (<http://www.flashcardexchange.com>). Could these help one or more of your students?
10. *Research an up and coming lesson planning tool.* Created by a teacher, Planbook is available for either Windows or Mac and looks like it has potential. (Only \$30 at <http://www.hellmansoft.com/windows/index.html>)

"Google" the Answer Instead of the Question

(Continued from page 1)

indicates that you do not want pages that contain this word to appear in your results.

Other Cool Google Search Tools:

- Type a calculation into the search box. $2+2=$ will come back with a result of 4.
- Type in a conversion. "Convert 1 inch to cm" will bring back a result of 1 inch = 2.54 cm.
- To see the geographical location for any U.S. telephone area code, just type the three-digit area code into

the Google search box and hit the Enter key or click the Google Search button.

There is also a great handout of tips that you can post for your students to use available at <http://tinyurl.com/nt6zzm>.

Here is the best tip that hardly anyone knows about Google searches: Type in the answer instead of the question.

Example:
You want to know how tall Mt. Everest is.

Don't type in "How tall is Mt. Everest?"
Do Type "Mt. Everest is * tall"

The "*" acts as a wildcard and Google looks for the missing information.

Here are some other great resources on Google to check out:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PxfYd15ALsw>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GDihutbnqIM>