Mac Link article for Mr. Crete's secondary 4 Histoire / Digital Citizenship class

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Mr. Crete's 10th grade History class has begun to integrate technology into their daily education. Our goal is to create a positive digital identity for ourselves. We have been using technology for blogging about historical and ethical events. We use Google often in our classroom discussions and it is rare that you would not see our devices in hand.

Our first assignment this year was to create a blog. Each individual student from Mr. Crete's tenth class was tasked with creating their own blog. We were given free range on titles and content so long as we respected the fact that our teacher and anyone else could read these articles. Our class then chose titles and entries suitable for all ages to read. Choosing topics for blog articles is often a difficult task, therefore every fortnight (give or take a few days due to ped. days and/or holidays), Mr. Crete would give us a new topic and assign a due date. However, many students went beyond the simple assignment and began to blog for themselves. They come up with their own article ideas, often posting the week our class's blogs are not due, and detail their opinions on current events. All of the students' blogs are online and open for anyone to view.

Our class has been using Google applications for class work throughout the term. We have used our Google Drives to share folders, projects, and documents amongst our classmates and with our teacher. Students are often given the option to write notes on Google documents while Mr. Crete is speaking. On the board the document will be open and students can see each other's notes as they are written. This helps because when Mr. Crete or any of the students are speaking, we have the capability to ask questions on the Google document without interrupting the discussion. After the speaker has finished we can review the document as a class answering any questions that students had had along the way. Another one of our tools is Twitter. At the beginning of the year each student created a Twitter account. Most students followed each other and Mr. Crete upon creating their Twitter. We have both created a 'hashtag' and 'backchanneled' during an online school board videoconference that we watched from home. It is an interesting way of staying connected. Surely people suspect that 'tweeting' and typing during class would quickly send the students off topic, but many students have admitted that it helps them focus more on the subject at hand, helping them to stay connected to the group.

Digital identity is a term our class often encounters. Our blog articles, 'tweets', and Facebook statuses are just the beginning of a teen's digital identity. In our Digital Citizenship course (the Ethics component of our History course) we are setting up the building blocks for our positive online identity. In five years or sooner students will be applying for jobs and one of the first things your boss will do is 'google' you. You are more likely to get the job if you have likes and favorites with a positive attitude that are linked to you.