Digital Culture Network Resources: Creating inspirational content for families

Introduction

This resource gives you information and suggestions around some of the tools available for providing educational support and inspiration to families at home with their children and young people during the Covid-19 crisis.

The work of most cultural organisations falls outside of the National Curriculum's remit, and there's no reason this should change now. Schools up and down the country have been handing out learning packs and supporting their pupils with online learning, and with other pressures mounting, it's important not to overwhelm audiences with extra educational content.

However, given the passion, expertise and storytelling skills in our sector, there are ways that you or your team could still support children and young people and their families digitally over the coming weeks and months.

Top tips before you begin

Make it discoverable

Before you start, research where those with school and pre-school age children are congregating online, or looking for support, and consider how you might reach them with your offer. Facebook is a very community-friendly channel and there are already family-focused groups emerging, such as Temporary Home Education Families. These groups might offer inspiration or make a good place to test ideas and eventually share your content.

Keep an eye on hashtags like #CreateToConnect, #CreativityAtHome, #HomeschoolingUK or broader ones like #TogetherAtHome to judge what people are sharing and how your own content might fit.

If you're looking to appeal directly to young people (rather than their parents and carers), consider the advantages of choosing social channels like Instagram or TikTok over Twitter and Facebook, which traditionally have an older audience.

Don't try to do too much, too fast

At a time when many people are overwhelmed with information, don't feel pressured to create new content immediately – it's OK to take a step back and consider how you can add real value. Consider your skills or those of your team, think about your current audience and what they might want or need, take stock of what equipment and capacity you have and then put a plan together.

Remember your core offering

Think about what makes you different from other cultural organisations and make sure your educational resources reflect this. It can be tempting to put out resources so that you're simply seen to be doing something, but they'll have more value if they relate to the specific reasons people would interact with your organisation.

Digital rights

Make sure you have clear rights to publish your content online. If you're using works that already exist, do you have the permission to use them in the way you want to? There are exemptions to copyright for the purposes of education but these are very specific, so tread carefully.

If you're creating new material designed for education, consider whether you can release it under a Creative Commons BY license to allow others to adapt and share it. If not, think about what kind of license will work for you and your business. If the world of copyright is

new to you, look at [The Space's Digital Rights Toolkit](#) or have a read through the [Copyright User website](#).

Accessibility

Consider how you can make your content accessible to its audience. Or, if the content is going on your own website, look at web accessibility guidelines too:

- [Disability Arts Online](#)
- [Web Accessibility Initiative](#)

Here are some things to consider:

- Provide text alternatives ('alt text') for non-text content
- Provide captions for video
- Use text colours that show up clearly against the background colour
- Use CamelCase in hashtags – From [Vocal Eyes Twitter thread](#): "Write accessible hashtags. Capitalize Each Word, such as #ClapForOurCarers and #WhenAllThisIsOver. Screen readers then read each word individually rather than as a long and incoherent string."
- Video audio-description – if the audio of your video doesn't describe what is happening visually, you should consider adding a description of what happens in the video either as a follow-up post, or as part of the caption.

Safeguarding

If you're communicating directly with children and young people, it's vital you consider safeguarding to keep yourself and the people you work with safe. If this applies to you, look at our [Online Safeguarding Resource](#) and [watch a recording of our recent webinar](#).

Examples of different approaches for creative educational content

Creative challenges

[Royal Academy daily drawing challenges on Twitter](#)
[Create to Connect project by 64 Million Artists](#)
[John Boyne short story competition for 6-18 year olds](#)
[Reel Rapid writer monologue and acting daily challenge](#)
[Scottee – Art for weird kids and weirder adults task sheet on Google Drive](#)

Supporting reading

[BorrowBox – free to sign up if already a library user](#)
[Audible free kids' audio books offer](#)
[BCP Libraries regular Book chat on Twitter](#)
[Bristol Libraries Online Storytime on Facebook Live](#)
[Oliver Jeffer's Stay at Home Storytime on Instagram Live](#)
[Elevenses with David Walliams – free audio stories](#)

Reflective and wellbeing activities

[Arts Emergency Creative resources](#) – positive journaling, finding joy etc

Q+A with experts

[#AskaCurator on Twitter](#)
[Kids meet…. Series – i.e. Kids meet an opera singer](#)

Bite-sized content as lesson inspiration

[#MuseumatHome on Twitter](#)
[Tate Kids site – quizzes, art inspired craft ideas, introduction to artists](#)

How-to's

[Draw with Rob Biddulph on YouTube (children's illustrator)](#)

Live streaming – shows

[RSC and Marquee TV Watch-a-long Twelfth Night](#)
[National Theatre at home – free online shows every Thursday](#)

Live streaming – classes and workshops

[DramEd early-years sessions on Facebook Live](#)
[Club-Tastic Art Club craft sessions - access via Patreon](#)
[Arnolfini online workshop for families – Make with Meg on YouTube](#)
[Gareth Malone's Great British Home Chorus YouTube tutorials and website downloads](#)

Online channels for educational content

Your own website

If you already have a mobile-optimised website which can host downloadable material or embed video and audio neatly, using your own website can be a good option. Remember that if you are a currently closed venue your website traffic is likely to be lower than usual, so you'll need to think carefully about how to promote your content. It could be that audiences aren't searching for you as much during lockdown, so other methods such as your social channels may become as important as search engines.

Facebook groups

Facebook is a popular channel for parents, and [Facebook Groups](#) are a functionality that many local communities use to communicate. If you are a cultural organisation with an offer for parents, carers and their families, have a look at the local and national groups where your target audience might congregate and, if appropriate, reach out to them.

Instagram Live

Instagram is a popular channel for young people as well as their parents and carers. Instagram Live is a feature that allows you to stream video directly to your followers, who can interact with you in real time. It could be used for a range of uses such as talks and Q&As, live classes and virtual tours. A recording of your live stream will be

available for 24 hours, and you can also share it to IGTV (Instagram TV) if you want it to be available for longer.

Twitter threads

Twitter is a popular channel for parents. Although your character limit is restricted for each tweet, you can create a thread to say more. This might be a useful channel for setting tasks for your followers: they can use replies and hashtags so you can track their engagement with what you're offering. You can also reshare people's responses on your feed to create a sense of community.

YouTube

If you're putting together new video content, YouTube is a good hosting option. You can also embed the videos on your own website and link to them through your other marketing channels. If you're launching lots of content with specific themes or targeted at certain audiences (by age range, for example), you could group them by themes or create video playlists.

Further reading and links

Individuals, organisations and networks have been busy compiling lists of educational or cultural content. A few examples here:

[MCN: The ultimate guide to virtual museum resources, e-learning and online collections](#)

[List of cultural digital streams - a website collated by Chris Unitt](#)

Further Support:

The Digital Culture Network is here to support you and your organisation. If you work for an arts and cultural organisation which is eligible for Arts Council England funding, and need help or would like to chat with us about any of the advice we have covered above, please get in touch by emailing digitalnetwork@artscouncil.org.uk with some background about you, your location and the challenges you're facing,

and we will connect you with one of our nine Tech Champions for 1-2-1 support.

Sign up to [DCN newsletter](#) and follow us on Twitter [@ace_dcn](#) for the latest updates.