Wikis? Podcasts? What are these tools all about?

"Wiki" (wiki is originally a Hawaiian word for "fast") **(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiki)** [Accessed 28 July 2008]
A wiki is a collection of web pages designed to enable anyone who accesses it to contribute or modify content. Ward Cunningham, developer of the first wiki software, WikiWikiWeb, originally described it as "the simplest online database that could possibly work".

The best known example of a wiki is Wikipedia (**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page**), an online encyclopaedia developed by the global community. Anybody can register and edit entries and if mistakes occur, these are soon corrected by the community itself.

One of the Critical Outcomes of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) is for learners to have the ability to work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organisation and community. The Web 2.0 environment offers a platform which encourages this to happen. One of the tools one can use to work together is Wikis. A document can now be created, shared online and people can edit and add to the content. It is no longer necessary to work with different versions of a document being e-mailed from person to person. Everybody can access and work on the same document, having a more powerful product at the end.

How would one use a Wiki in a school?

There are a number of web-based wiki sites that require a password and login system. A closed environment can thus be created for teachers and learners to experience real online collaboration, working together on one document.

Wikis are great for teacher collaboration. Teachers can develop and share lesson plans, learning and teaching materials using a programme such as Peanut Butter wiki **<http://pbwiki.com>**.
Learners can write their own digital stories using the same tool, they can start a story and have others contribute to it or write a story on their own.
See **<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_story-telling>** for more information.

In the classroom, one can create a wiki on any topic and have learners access it and add entries or comments. This allows learners to critically read what has been said, think about it and then respond and contribute. Learners learn about collaboration - the ability to work effectively in a group as described in

"Imagine a world in which every single person on the planet is given free access to the sum of all human knowledge. That's what we're doing."

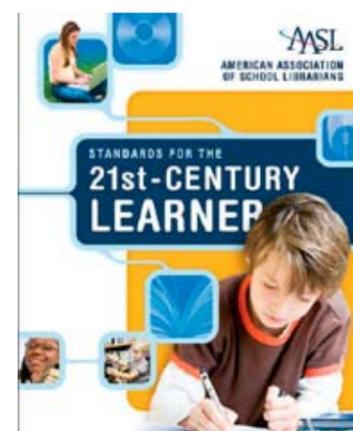**Jimmy Wales, Wikipedia founder (Wales 2004)**

Some Wiki websites

http://www.wikipedia.org
http://wikihow.com
http://www.wikispaces.com
http://www.wetpaint.com
http://www.glypho.com

the NCS Critical Outcomes. It is a wonderful opportunity for research including using primary source material.

As we describe the tools of Web 2.0 the issues around 21st Century literacies become more and more apparent. Responsible and careful use of collaborative tools requires a respect for input from

other people. Not everybody has the courage to share and their first tentative steps in the online world can be easily deterred if the response is insensitive. See Wiki Etiquette **<http://educators.pbwiki.com/Wiki+Etiquette+for+Students>**.

These responsibilities are described in the Standards for the 21st Century Learner published by the AASL **<www.ala.org/aasl/standards/>** in Section 3 i.e. "to share knowledge and participate ethically and productively as members of a democratic society" and also Section 4 i.e. "to pursue personal and aesthetic growth". Although the document was created by the American Association of School Librarians, it has quickly become a benchmark for managing online tools in the broader educational environment.

"Anyone with an Internet connection can now publish without prior review. Although this is good in terms of creating a wider body of knowledge to draw from, it obviously requires that we teach our students (learners) to become more active consumers of that information instead of passively accepting it as legitimate". – *from Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts and Other Powerful Web Tools for Classrooms. 2006 Richardson, Will*

See the article by Andrew Moore on Podcasts