

Newsday

<http://www.curriculumsupport.nsw.edu.au/learningtechnologies/newsday/>

Newsday is an Internet project which turns your classroom into a newspaper office. Newsday is a nationwide project accessible through the Internet, which allows schools to participate in making a news product.

Newsday involves students in creating a newspaper or broadcast. It is best undertaken when integrated into a unit exploring news reporting and news production. When developing stories for a newspaper or broadcast, the *Newsday* bulletin board is used as one source of stories. Each term, *Newsday* has a different theme. Editorial comments and letters to the editor can focus on this theme.

Articles or stories are posted to *Newsday* by participating schools in the weeks before the actual “day”. They can then be accessed by other schools and incorporated into a class news product. Copies of the newspaper or audio tape of the broadcast are sent to any school whose stories were used from the bulletin board.

Newsday operates on the same principle as international news “wire services”, such as AAP and Reuters, that provide news stories from around the world every day. Commercial media take stories from these telecommunications services and use them in newspapers, for radio news and on television.

Refer to *Science & Technology K-6 Units of Works, Part 2* (Spreading the Word & News Service) for more information on constructing news products for specific media.

Newsday: Creating a newspaper

At a large outer suburban school, each of the three Year 4 classes participated in Newsday as part of a grade-wide unit on news. While most students had several years’ experience in word processing and layout of their own story writing, the news unit required them to examine writing and layout conventions used in print.

The unit was used to make strong links between Science & Technology and English activities. Outcomes were also achieved in selected areas of PDHPE, HSIE or other KLAS as topical issues were examined in current newspapers. Ideas about sport, representations of different people and environmental issues are always popular.

Each class worked independently to produce a newspaper on *Newsday*. Students worked in groups to produce the different sections of the newspaper.

After investigating how newspaper reports are written, each pair of students wrote stories appropriate to their section of the paper. Subjects included local happenings or issues of interest to other participating schools. Being involved in *Newsday* helped students see the importance of writing stories with this broader appeal.

Once they were edited, stories were posted to the bulletin board. This happened progressively during the week preceding the actual *Newsday*.

Excitement grew as the *Newsday* approached and the deadline for stories loomed. When the day arrived, the whole class assumed their roles – writers, editors, layout people. They were fascinated by the stories coming from other schools and quickly identified ones that might be useful in their paper.

Using a word processor, writers refined and reshaped stories downloaded from the bulletin board. These were then submitted to the editors. The editors had to decide which items to include and where to place them.

The layout students already had pages set up, using desktop publishing software. The advertisements were in position and stories, photos and graphics were placed in each page, following the editors’ instructions. Sometimes scanned images were used and sometimes spaces were left for photocopied pictures to be glued in later.

The teachers acted as troubleshooters throughout the day. The groups worked to a deadline so that the newspaper was ready to go to print by the end of lunchtime.

Each class's finished newspaper was run off on the photocopier. Time was spent in the afternoon debriefing. The papers produced by the three classes were compared. Groups looked first at the sections and noted differences in content and order and the importance given to different items. They talked about why they included some items and not others. These questions were much easier for students to think about when they could compare the different newspapers.

Class discussion also revolved around the stories which each group selected from the bulletin board. They talked about which ones were interesting and why. Students' comments included: "no real reasons; just liked it; was about similar things to our story..."

In the following weeks other papers started arriving from schools which had used our items from the bulletin board. The students got a real thrill from this. They were able to see how other students had altered their stories.

Newsday is a great way for students to understand how commercial news services operate and to experience the processes of selection and editing that take place in the creation of a finished product.

***Newsday*: On television**

A rural school uses *Newsday* as a regular part of preparing the school newsletter. Year 6 was doing a unit on television and decided to produce a video news bulletin instead of the regular paper-based one.

As they were familiar with the processes of downloading stories and including them in their newsletters, it seemed a simple step to translate this into creating items for television news. The *Newsday* was used to put together a 30-minute news broadcast with all class members taking on the various roles of lighting operator, sound recording operator, reporter, news reader, editor and director.

In preparation for the day, the class recorded news items from television and discussed various aspects of the broadcast. They timed them, noted when live footage was used, counted the number of items between advertisement breaks and compared different channels.

They learned how to use the video cameras, and each group of five students shot a short item for possible inclusion in the final broadcast. Some were interviews, some were "acted" scenes of imaginary or real events. These stories were written up and posted to the *Newsday* bulletin board.

On *Newsday* further stories were downloaded and printed from the computer. These were edited to make them suitable for a television version and suitable graphics were prepared. The students used a range of techniques to maximise each item's effectiveness on the video broadcast.

All the students had a description of their role and knew what they had to do to prepare for the broadcast. The whole crew came together to put the program "to air", videoing the newsreaders and "cutting" to the prerecorded footage as required.

Later all the footage was edited to make the broadcast tape to be sent to other schools.