

Is your email box currently full? Do you feel as though you have a case of "information overload?"

You will most definitely want to read [Digital Tools for Organizing](#) below for some help!

Classroom Visits I have met and talked with many of you, but have not really seen where and how the real work is done. In order to understand how best to support everyone as teachers I would like to take a peek inside your classrooms. This week I will be out popping into rooms at random just to see the great things going on. I will try my best to be unobtrusive. Just so everyone knows, I am not an administrator and I am not an evaluator. I'm a teacher, just like you, whose responsibility is to support and encourage the use of meaningful, technology-rich instruction and collaboration. In order to do that I need to see what's going on, so I can know how to help. I also want to be able to share out some of the great things I see with regard to technology integration. I look forward to seeing, and being inspired by, some of your great teaching over the course of the next week!

eLearnGumula MyBigCampus Group

I have been thinking a great deal about modeling and sharing information lately and want to create something where we can interact. To this end I have created a group in MyBigCampus where I will post the material I share and also create discussions where you can ask questions and share your own ideas. I will also investigate the possibility of providing PD points for participating - I'll share more on that soon. For now, if you'd like to check out the group visit <http://www.mybigcampus.com/groups/elearngumula---451971> and use the auto-subscribe code 1yaby63m when asked. I am still building and will be adding more and more, but there are two discussions started and wiring for your input. Check it out!

Modeling Digital Citizenship

As teachers it is our job to not only teach digital citizenship, but to also model it. In the rush to get that flip chart together it is easy to just grab any photo you can and drop it in. To upload a PDF of that worksheet that I copied out of a sample book we never purchased. To quickly copy someone else's words and thoughts and use them as our own. Technology makes all of this so easy! That is why it is important for all of us, myself included, to step back and ask ourselves, "Am I being a good model of digital citizenship?" As with anything else it is a learning process, and we're the experts at that!

Digital Tools for Organizing

If you're like me you are inundated with information each and every day. We feel like we are in "information overload." This chart ([source](#)) helps to justify our belief:

We see an exponential growth in the amount of digital information created, captured and replicated, and we feel as though we feel buried under all of the information both coming directly at us, and available for consumption on the Internet and elsewhere.

[Clay Shirky presents a very interesting philosophy](#) that this is actually a problem that originated with the printing press as, for the first time in history, an average, literate human being could have access to more books than they could read in a lifetime. What was also created, however, was a model whereby the publishers who owned the technology filtered what would be created by asking the question "What will sell?" It was important to recoup the high cost of printing and thus information was filtered before it arrived at the consumer. This same model held as we added radio, television, and physical media such as CD's, DVD's and their precursors. Where the model breaks is with the advent of the Internet, where no longer is there a restriction on what is published. Almost anyone can create and publish, for very little monetary investment, and thus these creations vary widely in quality but are abundant in nature and lead to our feeling of "information overload."

Mr. Shirky states that we are actually mislabeling "information overload," and that this phenomena is something else entirely, namely "filter failure." In this time of "Post-Gutenberg Economics" the filter has been pushed downstream to the consumer - you and I. I would add "information management" to this idea of "filter failure." Not only is material no longer filtered for us, it is also no longer in a physical medium we can easily store and reference. This adds to our frustration as we work to find that favorite video or article that we used last year. Given both of these challenges, here are some ideas and tools for storing, referencing and filtering the information we come across on a daily basis.

- [Create an archive folder in Outlook 2007](#)
 - The straightforward, simple process outlined in the iCATS document will help move old emails from the server to an archive

folder on your computer, helping you get rid of that pesky "your mailbox is almost full" warning that keeps popping up.

- [Evernote](#) - The ultimate digital notebook - on your computer, portable devices and in the cloud!
 - Evernote allows you to capture information from almost any source and organize it into easily retrievable, searchable notebooks. Watch [this overview video](#) if you're new to Evernote. Then check out this [Getting Started Guide](#) to get going!
 - Send important emails to Evernote for storage so you can find them later. From within Evernote click the "Usage" button and look for the "Email notes to" information. Send/Forward an email to that address and a note will be created in your default notebook containing that email. Want to send the note to a specific notebook? Add @notebookname to the subject line!
 - Install the [Evernote Web Clipper](#) app for your browser. Whenever you come across a webpage you want to archive for later click the Evernote icon in your browser and the page will be added to the notebook you specify. The great thing...even if that website disappears from the web, the content remains archived in your notebook.
 - Drag and drop PDF's, Word documents and other files into an Evernote note and that file is stored within your notebook for easy retrieval later. Watch your upload limit though if you add too much to notebooks synced with the cloud.
 - Install [Evernote Clearly](#), the absolute best way to read websites online. When you come across a site you want to read without all the clutter and distraction click the Clearly icon and watch everything but the text disappear. Decide you want to keep the information? Use the clipping feature built-in!
 - Teachers: Create a folder for every course you teach. Drop everything you use in the course into that notebook for archiving. Add PDF's of worksheets, send important emails, clip useful webpages, and keep everything together in a sortable, searchable format.
- [Pocket](#) - The best way to read on portable devices.
 - When you save an article to Pocket you will get just the important parts - text and pictures - that will sync between portable devices and the Pocket website. Since the portable versions download articles you can read away from an Internet connection!
- Remember that not everything that is available is useful or of quality. When you begin to venture into social media and RSS feeds and other

tools for sharing information, a great stream of information will flow by you at any minute. Don't be afraid to delete what doesn't pertain to you, to skip what does not resonate with your needs, beliefs or values. And don't worry about it. A lot will go by and that is okay. What matters is that you continue to cast your net and pull in things that do, and that you use all of this information to grow in ways you have determined you need to grow.

- Consider adopting the [Email Charter](#) - 10 Rules to Reverse the Email Spiral. Some of the rules include "Respect Recipients' Time," "Short or Slow is not Rude," and "Quash Open-Ended Questions."
 - Insert a link to the contract in your signature to spread the idea!
- Consider the following flow chart for handling information from "[Getting Things Done](#)" by David Allen.

Final Thought:

"If you have the same problem for a long time, maybe it's not a problem. Maybe it's a fact." -Yitzhak Rabin

Bill Gumula, M.Ed.

eLearning Coach

Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation (EVSC)

To request coaching visit: <http://bit.ly/gumula-elearn>

Email: bill.gumula@evsc.k12.in.us

Twitter: [@elearngumula](https://twitter.com/elearngumula)

Phone: (812) 266-0191

Blog: <http://ed-evolution.blogspot.com>

Save our in-boxes! <http://emailcharter.org>

“You cannot predict the outcome of human development. All you can do is like a farmer create the conditions under which it will begin to flourish.” - Sir Ken Robinson