

AAIM JOURNAL

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AAIM Journal

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Submissions: Articles should be mailed or emailed to the editor at the above address. Submissions should be in Microsoft Word format. If an article is mailed, both a hard copy and a disk should be mailed. Pictures are preferred in Jpeg format and labeled appropriately. Advertising should be mailed to the editor in camera ready format.

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Invasion of the Podcasters

Anita Fletcher

My journey into the world of podcasting has been challenging, rewarding and uplifting. Beginning my 30th year in education as a Library Media Specialist at Bentonville High school has proven to be an exciting time in my career. I was honored to be given the opportunity this year to be a Library Media Specialist at a wonderful school with a fabulous library. Having been an elementary LMS for the previous five years, I knew that I faced the challenge of relating to 9 -- 12 grade students. This made me brainstorm ideas for hooking the students into books and the library. Last school year, we had a guest speaker from our local newspaper at our regional librarians' meeting who gave us an overview of podcasting and blogging. I filed away the information somewhere in my brain for the future. This fall is when I had a light bulb moment involving books and technology. How could I combine the two? Ah-ha! Podcasting book reviews. I loved the idea and the possibilities. How hard could it be to learn how to podcast? Not hard at all if you have nothing else to do and are fairly adept with technology. In spite of those obstacles, I proceeded to try to teach myself while starting a new LMS position at a school with almost 3000 students and almost 300 faculty members. Although this project took me about four months to come to fruition, I wouldn't have done it differently because I have made some new friends along the way and boosted my self-confidence.

I began my learning process with a Google search for how to podcast. Immediately, I concluded that the Audacity program was the software of choice <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/download/>. It was free and highly recommended. I managed to download and install Audacity, but then discovered that I also needed Lame Encoder in order to export the audiofiles as MP3s. This made my head swim a little because this meant that I would have to do multiple tasks instead of just downloading and installing one program.

I called on a friend, who happens to be an Associate Professor of computer Science at Missouri State University, and asked him if he knew much about podcasting. He admitted that he didn't, but by the next day I was bombarded with detailed emails with instructions on podcasting. I think he took this as a challenge to try to change Eliza Doolittle, aka Anita Fletcher, into a techie person. This led to his walking and talking me through the process of what kind of headphone/microphone to buy, how to record, and how to adjust the sound variables. We recorded and emailed each other sample messages in our quest for clarity. Then the process hit a roadblock because the sound level was inconsistent. I was feeling inadequate and threatened by technology.

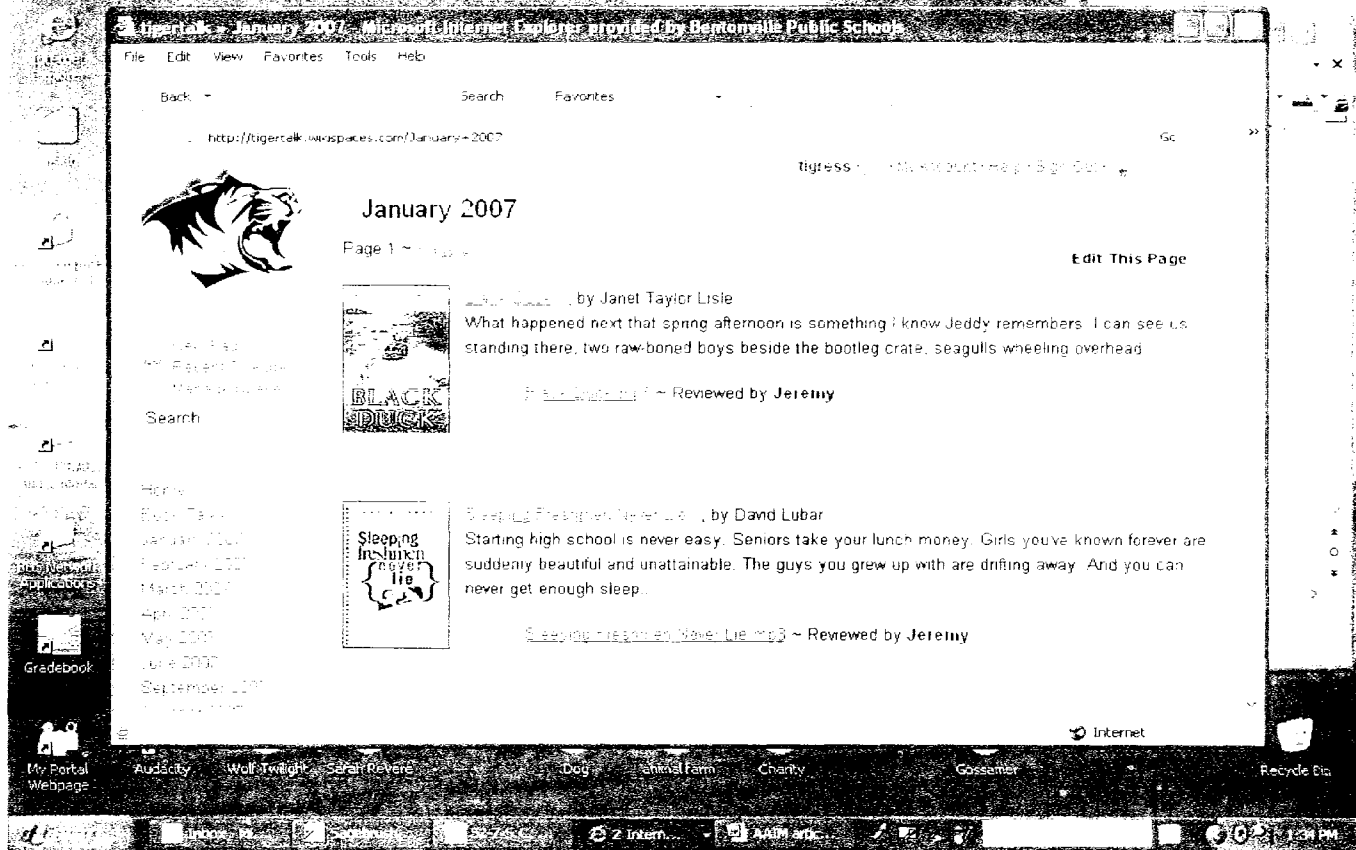
Lucky for me, it was at this time that I picked up the November issue of School Library Journal. Browsing through, I noticed an article on podcasting that turned out to be the pot of gold at the end of my rainbow. I made another great friend who lives in New York. I sent the author an email complimenting her on her website and told her my goals and problems. She immediately suggested a desk mic which solved the problem of sound clarity.

So, I decided to keep asking questions, thinking that eventually she would tell me that enough was enough. My mentor is Sarah Chauncey, LMS at Grandview Elementary School in Monsey, New York. www.grandviewlibrary.org She has so much patience and endless knowledge. We talked almost daily and with her help, I learned about Wikispaces and how to navigate the web pages. Wikispaces offers free online service to educators. Wikis are ideal tools for writing projects, sharing links and other resources. The signup process is very simple and quick. The end result was a Tigertalk website for podcasts. <http://tigertalk.wikispaces.com/>



I was amazed at how knowledgeable Sara was and started feeling inadequate myself. Finally, she admitted that she had 25 years experience in technology before becoming an LMS That made me feel much better. I have extended an invitation to her to come to Arkansas for some turnip greens and cornbread and she said she would love it.

Once I felt comfortable with my website and podcasts, I promoted the project through emails, announcements and individual classes. The students who have volunteered to do podcasts have been eager and enthusiastic. I invited our superintendent and principal and a school board member to do a booktalk. In my opinion, you have to promote your library program whenever possible.



This podcasting venture has invigorated me as a LMS. Let me encourage you to reach out to your colleagues and use their knowledge to find your passion and make it your own. We are such a strong group when we bond together to help one another. I have always said that my friends are my greatest asset and this project has not proved me wrong. It is never too late to try something new and different.

AAIM LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

**-ArLA conference
Embassy Suites
Hot Springs
AR
Sep 9th to Sep 11th 2007**

**September 14, 2007
Crowne Plaza Hotel
Little Rock, AR
Registration fee - \$15
Includes buffet dinner Friday evening**

Arkansas Library Association Annual Conference

Leadership planning for committee chairs and committee members

AAIM Leadership Conference