

PRODUCT reviews

Timeliner XE

By Judy Britt and David Vawter

Timeliner software, produced by Tom Snyder Productions, is nothing new. For years teachers and students have used this classic tool to create personal timelines and to develop chronological understanding of social studies topics. Today's Timeliner XE raises the bar. When combined with Adobe AIR, it is a powerful tool for constructing knowledge across the curriculum.

Adobe AIR enables Timeliner to embed a browser that deploys to the desktop and runs across operating systems, allowing teachers and students to conduct research within the Timeliner XE software. Then they can seamlessly construct a timeline using the same tool. Students can use Timeliner XE to organize all kinds of social studies information—from historical events and biographies to scientific processes and language arts concepts.

Using Timeliner XE

Getting started is easy with two powerful features: project templates and the built-in Web browser. The project templates provide an infrastructure for investigation.

The opening screen offers three options: Create a New Project, Choose an Activity, and Open a Project. Choosing a new project opens a blank timeline. Students need only to give their project a title, name the events, and label the categories to start building a timeline. Users can conduct Internet research at any time to add graphics and multimedia to the timeline.

Constructing Classroom Projects

Teachers can engage younger students with a simple chronological-thinking activity such as a holiday timeline.

For older students, Timeliner XE offers much more challenging activi-

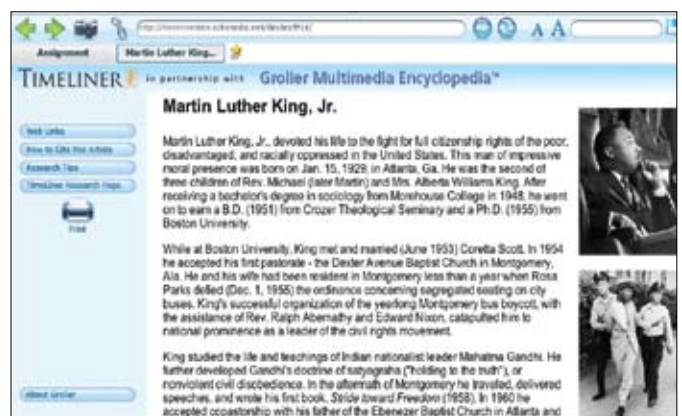
ties. Using an inquiry approach and Timeliner XE, we investigated the Civil Rights Movement and Martin Luther King Jr.'s contributions to history. Timeliner XE includes a set of media libraries with more than 1,000 images, video, and sound files. We added Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech to bolster the timeline with a multimedia component. It's easy to do by double-clicking on the user-friendly palette.

Students can use the main menu to choose an activity. For upper elementary students, selecting a research activity provides students with the tools and a task to create a civil rights timeline.

With a seamless connection to the browser, Timeliner XE helps students develop a deep understanding of history while building 21st-century skills. Students can access information for



Creating a timeline is easy with Timeliner XE.



Students can use Timeliner XE to access information for a report and add pictures.

reports and capture pictures and text to supplement their writing.

The program reminds students to credit their sources, and it embeds citations instantly in the research report. Students are able to add information, graphics, and video to their timelines without getting bogged down in how to correctly reference the material.

Timeliner XE provides older students with the tools to examine topics more critically and across disciplines. It also enhances differentiated instruction and aids English language learners. Middle school teachers who teach multiple subjects or who are members of a team working on interdisciplinary themes will find many features to facilitate learning. As students begin to understand that events in history are influenced by events in other disciplines, they can merge multiple timelines and examine cause and effect.

Using the Make a Slideshow feature, Timeliner XE allows students to turn their ideas and arguments into a presentation to practice their speaking and persuasion skills. An exploration of race in the McCain/Obama U.S. presidential race would be a good way to finish this unit.

Timelines are useful tools for constructing chronological understanding. Going beyond classroom displays, Timeliner XE provides students and teachers with a powerful tool for constructing history. When teaching historical strands, teachers can use this tool to develop an understanding of time. From simple timelines that include multimedia in the early grades to Internet research for upper elementary students, Timeliner XE is a knowledge-construction tool. In addition to social studies, Timeliner XE is useful across the curriculum for

writing and research projects. With Timeliner XE, students and teachers get the skills necessary to turn information into knowledge.

Timeliner XE

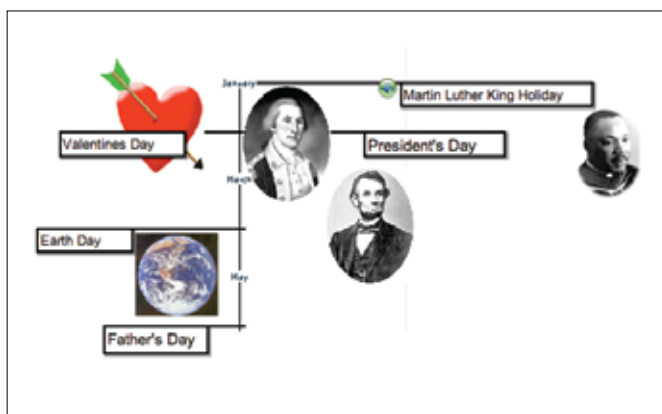
\$99 for one computer;
\$2,600 for an unlimited site license
Tom Snyder Productions
www.tomsnyder.com/timelinerxe/index.asp



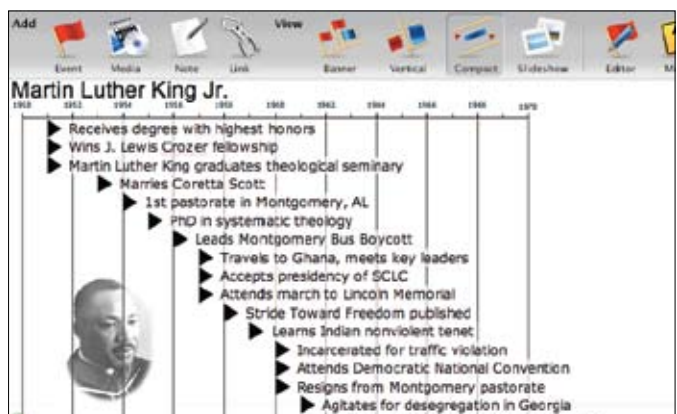
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Younger students can use Timeliner XE to construct a simple timeline about U.S. holidays.



Students need only to give their project a title, name the events, and label the categories to start creating a timeline.