

What Makes a Digital Business Successful?

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OVERVIEW: Students will compare five digital businesses and then create a business plan of their own.

TIME: This activity can be completed in 2–5 class periods (approximately 50 minutes long).

CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS: English, Social Studies, Career & Tech Ed, Information & Communications Technology

GRADE LEVEL: 7th to 12th grade

PREREQUISITE SKILLS AND BACKGROUND: Students should have some previous experience writing, doing research, and/or taking notes from digital sources. Students should have experience working in collaborative groups.

DIFFERENTIATION: Students can participate in activities independently, in small groups, or as a class discussion, depending on ability levels. This applies to all phases of this lesson. Students who need more support can be paired with independent learners as necessary. The lesson stretches over several days of instruction. The presentation worksheet and multimedia presentation are optional. The lesson is sufficiently robust without them. These are extension activities. If included, the presentations can take several instructional periods.

MATERIALS:

- Rosen Digital's [Digital Literacy](#) database
 - Articles: [Developing Your Digital Business Idea](#), [Launching Your Digital Business](#), [Marketing Your Digital Business](#), [Growing Your Digital Business](#), [Designing and Building Web Sites](#), [Internet Biographies](#)
 - Interactive Activity: [Create a Digital Business Plan](#)
- Computers
- Smart Board, iPad, or other computer projection presentation device (optional if Teacher/Librarian wants to demonstrate worksheets and/or have one group worksheet)
- Appropriate Assistive Technology for students with special needs (if applicable)
- Supplement 1 - Video of Darshan Somashekar and Neal Taparia, founders of EasyBib.com
- Supplement 2 - *Vocabulary and Comparing Digital Businesses* interactive digital lesson
- Supplement 3 - Vocabulary Activity, Comparing Digital Businesses Packet
- Supplement 4 - Brainstorming Guide
- Supplement 5 - Presentation Worksheet
- Supplement 6 - Presentation Rubric

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS:	ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Emerging technologies have increased the number of opportunities for digital entrepreneurship. ▪ It does not require a lot of money to launch a digital business. ▪ Customers can participate in the growth of a business. ▪ Starting a digital business requires a great deal of planning and organization. ▪ Collaborative work is most effective when responsibilities are clearly delineated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What makes a digital business successful? ▪ How can digital businesses make money? ▪ Does the customer have a say in digital business? ▪ What's the point of a business plan? ▪ Do I have what it takes to launch a digital business? ▪ What makes group work effective?

STANDARDS:

AASL 1 – Inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge.

1.1 Follow an inquiry-based process in seeking knowledge in curricular subjects, and make the real-world connection for using this process in own life.

1.1.2 Use prior knowledge as context for new learning.

1.1.3 Develop and refine a range of questions to frame the search for new understanding.

1.1.9 Collaborate with others to broaden and deepen understanding.

1.4.3 Use interaction with, and feedback from teachers and peers to guide own inquiry process.

AASL 2 – Draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new situations, and create new knowledge.

2.1.1 Continue an inquiry-based research process by applying critical thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, valuation, organization) to information and knowledge in order to construct new understandings, draw conclusions, and create new knowledge.

2.1.3 Use strategies to draw conclusions from information and apply knowledge to curricular areas, real world situations, and further investigations.

2.1.5 Collaborate with others to exchange ideas, develop new understandings, make decisions, and solve problems.

2.2.3 Employ critical stance and drawing conclusions by demonstrating that the pattern of evidence leads to a decision or conclusion.

2.3.1 Connect understanding to the real world.

2.4.4 Develop directions for future investigations.



AASL 3 – Share knowledge and participate ethically and productively as members of our democratic society.

- 3.1.1 Conclude an inquiry-based research process by sharing new understandings and reflecting on the learning.
- 3.1.3 Use writing and speaking skills to communicate new understandings effectively.
- 3.1.5 Connect learning to community issues.
- 3.2.2 Show social responsibility by participating actively with others in learning situations and by contributing questions and ideas during group discussions.
- 3.3.4 Create products that apply to authentic, real-world contexts.

AASL 4 – Pursue personal and aesthetic growth.

- 4.1.5 Connect ideas to own interests and previous knowledge and experience.
- 4.2.1 Display curiosity by pursuing interests through multiple resources.
- 4.2.2 Demonstrate motivation but seeking information to answer personal questions and interest, trying a variety of formats and genres, and displaying a willingness to go beyond academic requirements.
- 4.2.3 Maintain openness to new ideas but considering divergent opinions, changing opinions or conclusions once evidence supports the change, and seeking information about new ideas encountered through academic or personal experiences.
- 4.4.1 Identify own areas of interest.
- 4.4.2 Recognize the limits of own personal knowledge.
- 4.4.4 Interpret new information based on cultural and social context.

LESSON OBJECTIVES:	
<p>STUDENTS WILL KNOW THAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Successful new digital businesses fill a niche or a need in a market. ▪ There are several ways for businesses to generate revenue. ▪ With emerging technology, customers can participate in growing a digital business. ▪ The standard measures of a business' success are not always as effective in digital enterprise. 	<p>STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students will be able to: ▪ Define selected terms. ▪ Compare several business and assess their profitability. ▪ Independently brainstorm to draw correlation between personal and global interests and needs. ▪ Collaborate with classmates to achieve a common learning objective. ▪ Complete the interactive Create a Digital Business Plan checklist. ▪ Complete presentation worksheet (optional). ▪ Present business plan (optional).

ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE:

PERFORMANCE TASK:	OTHER EVIDENCE:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a digital business plan, and present it to the class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vocabulary Activity, Comparing Digital Businesses Packet (Supplement 3) ▪ Group work to practice evaluating a business ▪ Brainstorming Guide (Supplement 4) ▪ Complete the interactive Create a Digital Business Plan checklist ▪ Presentation Worksheet (Supplement 5) (optional) ▪ Business plan presentation (optional)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS:

1. Business plan: A statement of business goals and ways to achieve them.
2. Competition: Sellers competing for same customers or market.
3. Customer base: The customers to whom a business sells products and services and on whom it focuses most of its efforts.
4. Entrepreneur: A person who organizes and runs his or her own business.
5. Expense: Money spent on something in a business' efforts to generate revenue.
6. Market: A place where buyers and sellers exchange goods and services for money or barter.
7. Metrics: Data gathered about a digital product and its users.
8. Net income: The total revenue in an accounting period, minus all of the expenses during the same period.
9. Niche: The particular area of demand for a product.
10. Revenue: The income generated from selling goods or services, before any costs or expenses are subtracted.

PROCEDURE:

Initiation:

Show video interview with Neal Taparia and Darshan Somashekar, founders of EasyBib.com. Ask students, "Do you think EasyBib is a successful company? Why?"

Content:

1. Begin *Vocabulary and Comparing Digital Businesses* interactive digital lesson (Supplement 2).
2. Working independently, students complete Vocabulary and compute expenses on Comparing Digital Business table (Supplement 3). Review answers.
3. As a class, read the five descriptions in Comparing Digital Businesses (Supplement 3).
4. Assign groups and responsibilities as delineated in Comparing Featured Businesses (Supplement 3). Working in groups, students respond to questions in the table cells on their class packet (Supplement 3).

Roles:

- Time manager: Ensures that the group spends approximately the same amount of time on each question for each business

Create a Digital Business Plan

- Reporter: Synthesizes the group's discussion into chart below
- Facilitator: Keeps the conversation on track, and fluid
- Orator: Presents the group's findings to the rest of the class, when prompted

Check for understanding:

How can we know if a business is successful?

Modeling:

Review the Brainstorming Guide (Supplement 4) with students:

- About what am I curious?
- What experiences are unique to me?
- What do I do well?
- What are my favorite activities? What would improve them?
- What are my least favorite activities? What would make them more appealing?
- Thinking about niche in relation to my responses on the previous questions, "I wish it was possible to..."
- Ideas to get you thinking: consider developing...
 - smarter ways to do old jobs
 - energy-saving ways to provide new services
 - new ways to attract old customers
 - new ways to combine existing technologies.
- About what products and services are people excited?

Guided Practice:

"Now it is your turn. Independently complete the Brainstorming Guide to develop an idea for a business plan."

Independent Practice (Homework):

Using your completed Brainstorming Guide, complete the [Create a Digital Business Plan](#) interactive activity on the Digital Literacy database.

Closure:

What great business ideas did you hear about today? What was great about them?

Follow-up Activities:

Using articles in the Digital Literacy database, students complete Presentation Worksheet (Supplement 5) and prepare business plan presentation.

Students present business plan as a multimedia presentation, and are evaluated based upon the Presentation Rubric (Supplement 6).