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Speaking Up With Web Based Technology

In a world of borderless technologies, social websites and video networks the individual's ability to represent themselves and speak out has increased exponentially. Advertisers, polltakers, policy makers and the likes have moved online in order to cater to the fast paced, outspoken communities using available tools of knowledge and identity creation. Animoto, a simple web based technology, is one such tool that enables users world wide to create visually interesting stories and slide shows. Students of anthropology and other social sciences are learning the importance of using local level representation and knowledge available on the Internet as a means to conduct ethnographic research. The ability to use personal images and music with interesting transitions in Animoto bridges the styles of raw documentary and artistic imagery to create visual representations of life history events, community/personal depiction and informative educational shorts. When used in the field of applied anthropology, Animoto acts as a vehicle for community based representation. Community based representation is a valuable method of collaboration used by researchers, students and communities when attempting to create awareness for and/or resolution to particular issues. Using three short examples entitled Reflexivity, Our Connection to Water and Feminism this exploratory project shows how this simple and accessible technology can visually communicate, theory, personal/community representation and current events. I assert that educators and researchers may be situated to strengthen their voice in policy discussions by mapping and/or creating these pieces of local level experience to communicate underrepresented interests.