

## Students making animated videos for contest

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Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 12/28/2008 11:49:00 AM MST

Boulder Valley students are creating online, animated videos as part of a contest designed to develop interest in technology and creativity.

The contest is sponsored by Impact on Education, a foundation that supports Boulder Valley schools. The activity supports the organization's initiative to advance science, technology and math experiences in the Boulder Valley School District, said project manager Laurie Hanson.

"It's unique, cutting-edge technology for a lot of students," she said.

Kerpoof, a Boulder-based company aimed at providing dynamic and educational activities on the Internet for kids, is hosting the contest. Its Web site, [www.kerpoof.com](http://www.kerpoof.com), allows students to create their own short stories and movies by selecting a scene, adding characters, creating actions, writing dialogue and including music.

The online project - designed to suit students of all ages - fulfills the multimedia component of the school district's technology standards, providing students with the opportunity to practice and expand computer skills, literacy and creativity, Hanson said. More than 2,000 videos have been submitted.

"Kids do spend a lot of time on the computer, and we're happy when they're doing something creative and innovative and sharing it with their families and friends," she said.

Students earn points for creating and sharing their videos. Prizes will be awarded to the schools with the highest levels of participation and viewing.

The foundation started the contest Oct. 27. It continues through Jan. 6.

Burke Taft, a computer science teacher at Centennial Middle School, said it's important to expose students to "Web 2.0" applications - which rely on users to generate and share media content - as sites such as YouTube and Craigslist continue to grow in popularity and relevance.

Taft introduced the Kerpoof site to his multimedia classes this year, and the students frequently revisit the site, he said.

"They've figured out the interface, and it's fun to make animations," Taft said. "I couldn't get them to quit, and that's the story everywhere. It's very popular."

Centennial eighth-grader Zachary Edmund spent about a week creating his animated video for the contest.

"I really like how the artwork turned out," the 13-year-old said. "The creativity is interesting ... and you can start from the basics and move on to the more advanced stuff."

Zachary said the online experience has helped him develop his creative and artistic abilities, including drawing and writing stories. He hopes to attract more viewers to his video, which incorporates a big explosion and mysterious appearances, he said.

"People will probably want to know how I did it," he said. "And I have my secrets."

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