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Adobe Spark

Media Creation Tool

<https://spark.adobe.com>

What is it?

Adobe Spark is a tool that you can use to create three different types of media: a 'Post', a 'Page' or a 'Video' using Adobe templates. A Spark Post combines text and image to create a graphic, that can be reused across the web on other platforms; a Spark Page is a webpage that sits on the Adobe Spark platform; and Spark Video is a video creation tool.

You can sign up for an account for free, and all three tools are then available to you. I'm going to take a closer look at Adobe Spark Video, which has a selection of templates and themes with which you can create videos, using a simple interface, that are slick and visually eye-catching.

What can it do?

When you choose to create a new Spark Video, you are initially presented with steps that offer the choice of a story template based on your theme/topic, such as 'Teach a Lesson' or 'Hero's Journey'. Choosing one of these will set you up with some existing elements in place to structure your creation, but you can also choose to just start from scratch.



Elements of 'Teach a lesson' story

The videos that you create are made up of individual frames or slides, a little bit like other sites such as Animoto, each of which you customise using the options available.

If you have started from scratch you can begin to customise your video from the right-side of the screen where you can choose your Theme, which will determine the colours, text fonts and transitions for your frames. From here you can also access the Music menu, and this has a choice of soundtrack for your video, sorted by mood such as happy, playful, thoughtful and more. There is also an option to upload your own sound/music file as the soundtrack to your video. These options will help create a particular mood for your video, so you can choose those that best fit with your message, topic or purpose.

You have the frame that you are working on and editing in the middle of the page, with a space at the bottom of the page that displays the frames that you have created for the current video, and a 'plus' icon to add your next frame to the project. From here you can add new frames, as well as reorder, duplicate or delete them. At any point you can play the full video using the button here, in the bottom-left of the page, as well as playing the individual frame that you are working on using the play button on that frame.

Frames and Content

When creating each slide of your video you get a choice of one of the four layout options available, from the Layout menu on the right of the screen. Once you have set your layout, you can then add content to this frame in the form of text, an icon, a video or an image.

With icons you are limited to those on the Spark platform, of which there are plenty to search from and find. Adding an image allows you to search the image library which automatically brings results from two free image sources (Unsplash and Pixabay), but you can also upload your own either from your device, Dropbox or Google Photos. The text option is fairly locked-down in terms of customisation, and you are restricted to the specific font style, colour and size, but there is the option to be able to place it in particular places on



the frame. Finally, you are able to add your own video content to a slide too. This option only allows video that you have already saved locally, to your device, and you cannot import your own files from another platform such as Dropbox or pre-existing content from YouTube.

For each frame of your Spark Video you can record your own voiceover, which is a useful feature for more bespoke content. Finally, you can set the particular time for each frame within the final video too. This ranges from 1 to 10 seconds, allowing you play with the length of time that you want specific sections to display.



Elements of the frame creation screen

You can preview the project at any time within the process and, once you are happy with what you have created, you can download the video as an mp4 file or choose to publish it to the Spark platform. Once published you can share to social media, as well as grab an embed code to reuse within your own website, blog, VLE/learning platform etc.

You should be aware that you can only re-share and embed videos that have been published, and are therefore public, but you can create and download videos without publishing them. This is particularly useful if privacy is an issue, and you are creating videos that you do not want to be publicly available. This way, you can still create a Spark Video, download it, and use the file however you wish to.



Publish and Share

What could I use it for?

I would use Spark Video for a number of things in libraries and schools, in particular for promotional content and guides. You could easily create a video that promoted a new resource, for example, or a new club or service that you want to tell students and staff about. These could be played at assemblies, on screens around the school, or embedded on your intranet/VLE or website.

Alternatively, a Spark Video that introduced you and your Library would be a great promotional tool to be included on the school website, shown to new students and their parents on transition days, or at parents' or open evenings.

As a teaching tool, you could have students create their own videos in response to a task. All the usual options apply here, such as creating book trailers about their favourite book, a video about a character from the class reader, or summarising their learning on a topic.

Summary

I think that Adobe Spark is a competent, stylish video-creation tool. It has the high level of design that you would expect from an Adobe product, and although this comes at the expense of some customisation restrictions, it means that you can work within a functional, reliable interface that can create professional-looking content.

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