

# Making The News: How to

West Midlands Regional Broadband Consortium



Making the News is an Internet news station for schools that allows pupils and teachers to create news in minutes in different formats including video, text, images and audio. News can be created locally within schools and added to the Making The News regional site using simple news creation tools. The best stories are presented regionally and nationally and a facility is available for teachers to moderate stories before they are published.

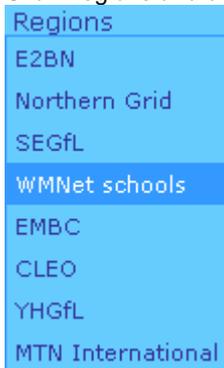
Making the News also contains a range of curriculum resources such as news feeds (web pages that display headlines and usually a brief description of the news story), copyright- free resources and activities provided by project partners, including the Open University, Channel 4, Proquest and Newspapers in Education Newsroom Newcastle.

The WMnet home page for Making The News is [http://kmi4schools.e2bn.net/wmnet\\_central/](http://kmi4schools.e2bn.net/wmnet_central/).

## How to submit stories

You can submit news stories or content and publish them online. Follow these simple steps:

1. Access the 'Making the News' website - WMnet
2. Click Regions and choose WMnet schools



3. Choose one of the project areas:
  - ◆ Climate Change
  - ◆ Beyond Pathe
  - ◆ General

Note: choose the General area if you want to submit a new story about your school



5. Click Submit

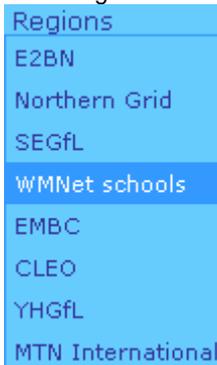
6. Click Guest Entry
7. Fill in the Submission Form
8. Save and Preview
9. re-edit or publish your story

Your news story can contain text, images, video and or sound. All the submissions will be vetted by the WMnet moderator before going live.

## How to manage stories

As an administrator (normally a teacher), you can manage the news stories. You will be notified by email that a story is ready to publish:

1. Access the 'Making the News' website - WMnet
2. Click Regions and choose WMnet schools



3. Choose one of the project areas:
  - ◆ Climate Change
  - ◆ Beyond Pathe
  - ◆ General



6. Enter email and password and login

7. Choose Manage Stories
8. Preview, Edit, Publish or Delete

All submissions must be approved by the person who has provided their email address (i.e. the nominated administrator), before going live.

NOTE: Remember to log off.

## FAQs

(<http://kmi4schools.e2bn.net/rostra/news.php?r=1&t=2&id=23>)

Here are the answers to some Frequently Asked Questions regarding ROSTRA, the content management system that operates behind the scenes of Making The News.

**IMPORTANT:** Never use your browsers Forward and Back buttons when entering stories into Making The News - you will almost certainly lose all you have typed in.

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How do I add more than one image to a story? Create your story, attach the first image and save & preview it. Then re-edit the story and select a second image. You can add as many images to a story as you like, but remember that the more images, the longer the story will take to download. You also can add any combination of images and FlashBlog movies.

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How do I record a FlashBlog movie? Begin the process of creating a new story and click the FlashBlog button. A square popup window should appear on your screen showing the output from your webcam. Please note that FlashBlog requires:

- a video camera attached to your machine
- the Flash plugin installed
- a 'hole' through your school's firewall (port 80, 443 or 1935, or tunnelling on port 80) to the region's MTN server

Macromedia have [a website where you can test your connections](#) - it will show you which ports you have open and which are closed.

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Can I record video from a camcorder instead of from a webcam?

The answer is 'sometimes'. It depends on your computer having drivers for whichever card or port your camcorder is connected through. Start a new story, click FlashBlog, then *right* click in the FlashBlog window. This will bring up the Flash control panel. Click 'Settings...', then the camera icon, then see if your camcorder connection is in the list. If not, you won't be able to record from your camcorder. If you can record from your camera into Movie Maker, it's highly likely you will be able to record a FlashBlog movie from your camera.

Another option is to pre-record your clip (interview, etc) to tape, then edit it (eg: in Movie Maker or iMovie) and export it to a QuickTime movie. These files can be attached to stories in the same way images can. But remember to keep your movies short and small - they can take a very long time to download.

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What kind of images can I add to my story? ROSTRA can handle JPG, GIF and PNG still image files, QuickTime movies (files ending .MOV) and FlashBlog movies. Remember that large images take longer to download - there is no need to upload images more than 800 pixels square.

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Can I add formatting to my story text? ROSTRA supports simple formatting of the body text using HTML tags like bold and *italic* and for bullet points. The buttons to the right of the body box can be used to insert these tags for you, but the exact way they operate depends on which browser you are using. In Internet Explorer, first highlight the words you want to effect, then click the button. Click the button once to put the start code in place, then enter the words you want formatted, then click again to end the end code.

The bullet button always inserts the bullet code at the end of the text. The HTML tags for links are also accepted, but it's actually easier to enter links in the appropriate section of the story form. Note that the tags you enter are not validated, so if you make an error, it is possible that the story will not display correctly. Disallowed tags are stripped out. Tags are not allowed in either the author name or headline fields.

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I entered a story but it hasn't appeared. Unless you logged in to post (via a teacher or administrator account) you will have posted as a guest. All guest stories have to be approved by the school's chosen administrator(s) before they will appear. When you complete your story, an email is sent to all the moderators for your particular ROSTRA. Any one of them can approve the story, but unless they check their email, they won't know there's been a new story posted.

**For more information please contact MTN Project Manager – Jeff Howson ([jhowson.e2bn@e2bn.net](mailto:jhowson.e2bn@e2bn.net)) 07765253028.**