Classroom Connection: Develop a Siftr Project for Your Classroom

The following tips will help you develop a Siftr of your own. Anyone who generates a user account can build a unique Siftr project and distribute it to students in a particular course. Typically, the key components of authoring a Siftr include:

1. Identifying the focus of the Siftr, such as an overarching theme, research question, or area of inquiry.
2. Writing an overview or instructions that users can read to learn more about the Siftr. This is often used to provide background information or guidance for getting started and helping users know what to document or pay attention to.
3. Developing categories. While Siftrs do not have to contain a category, they are typically used to help users focus and organize their observations.

Authors also have the ability to do the following:

1. Create a unique URL for the Siftr. When first created, each Siftr is assigned a random URL (e.g., siftr.org/1234). Authors can replace the random characters at the end of this string with their own text. In an earlier iteration of the Snow Challenge assignment, for instance, Tom DuBois named his Siftr Snowchallenge (https://siftr.org/snowchallenge). Ruth Olson has named her annual Siftr Folklore Rules (https://siftr.org/folklorerules).
2. Specify the components of each observation. These include the following categories: photographs, select-one from a list, select-multiple from a list, single-line text, and multiline text responses.
3. Determine whether the Siftr is public or private. A public Siftr project can be found using the search feature on the Siftr.org website and it may appear under promoted, recent, and popular categories. A private Siftr is not searchable and does not show up on any feeds associated with the Siftr.org homepage, but anyone who knows the unique URL can view it.
4. Determine whether the Siftr requires moderation. If the moderation settings of a particular Siftr are set to "moderate," then any contribution must first be released by an author before the content becomes visible on the Siftr. This means that the instructor for the course (or teaching assistants if the course is particularly large) must approve each image before it becomes visible on the site. If the moderation settings are set to "no moderation," then the content is immediately displayed on the site. Regardless of the moderation setting, editors have rights to delete uploads and comments made by users.
5. Select the color scheme and map styles.
6. Add additional authors, who by default can serve as moderators.

A few other Siftr settings can be chosen, but the above lists allow you to plan your first Siftr and see how you like the platform. The development team continues to make adjustments and improvements to Siftr, in part in response to the ways that instructors use the platform in their courses.