

Log-on



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Mifflin County School District Technology Department

Issue 14

Technology Update

by Kirk McMinn
Director of Information Systems

We are using the Internet more and more every year. Teachers are finding great educational sites and many students use the Internet as their primary research tool. We have increased the Internet phone lines to full T1 lines. This means that information travels at about 1.5 million bits per second. If you have a modem connected at home, it connects at about 56,000 bits per second.

Internet Use is Monitored

Despite the increased T1 lines, the District uses our maximum amount of allotted bandwidth each day. At some point every day, students and staff are having difficulty accessing internet sites and district management systems.

Because of the increased Internet use, the Technology Department has been monitoring Internet usage very closely over the past few months. It has become evident that over 75% of the traffic has nothing to do with education.

Students and faculty downloading movies and music and shopping online use much of bandwidth. This is now a problem because the data traffic needed for students and staff using the internet for class work and entering payroll, work orders,

attendance and other management information is being disrupted by the high volume of Internet traffic. As users start to discover the rich Internet sites available, Internet traffic will increase even more. We need to keep the bandwidth open for valid educational uses.



At this time, our only recourse is to block as much of the non-educational traffic as possible by monitoring users. We are still amazed that users do not understand that all Internet traffic is being monitored and that we can see every site a user visits and the length of time spent at that site.

Violations will be Reported

In the past, we have sent letters to student users who have violated the Internet Policy and principals have determined an appropriate student punishment, usually a month without Internet access for the first offense. Staff violations have been handled several different ways. From this point on, all staff violations will be reported to the administrative supervisors.

This summer the district will increase the Internet bandwidth and speed to at least 10 Megs per second. This should help eliminate the bottlenecks we are encountering now, but users should still be aware that all activity on the Internet is monitored at all times.

File Storage Limitations

The Technology Department will start to enforce file storage limitations this month. The servers at the high schools have about 50 GB of storage space to be shared by almost 1000 students and 60 teachers. Upon inspecting the folder, we found that many of the same files were saved in multiple places. This isn't necessary! Your personal folder is backed up every night by the server. If you feel you need to backup your files, do it to a disk.

The first limits will be set at 500 MB for staff and 35 MB for students. If your personal folder is over the limit, clean it up promptly. If it exceeds the 500 MB limit, files will be frozen and you will not be permitted to save any documents into your folder until it is below the quota. If you run into problems with storage and need the extra space, please give the Tech Dept. a call.





How Do I ???

Use Mail Merge in Microsoft Word

by Barbara Brouse
System Support Operator II

Mail Merge is a process that can save time in printing form letters, envelopes, labels, certificates, awards, and more for each student in your classroom, building or district.

To begin this process, you must understand two fundamentals. **First**, you will need a Main Document. This document contains text that stays consistent. For instance, assume you are typing a letter to send to a group of students or parents. The only change in the letter will be the address and salutation. Therefore, the only change in each letter is the individual information.

The **second** fundamental is the Data Source. A Data Source is another name for a database. This source file contains fields that can be inserted and merged into your main document. Your data can be of a table in a Word document, an Access database, an Outlook address book, or an Excel worksheet. I recommend an Excel worksheet. The Tech Department can create this file for you from the Student Records System, attach it to an email and send it to you. Then, you can save the attachment to your user folder located on **H:\faculty**. (To request an Excel file from the Student Records Systems, simply log on to the Intranet, scroll to the bottom and click the link for a **Student Data Database** and complete the request.)

The Mail Merge Wizard guides you through creating a Main Document, selecting a Data Source, and merging the information. To create a main document, choose the type of document to create (form letter, labels, envelopes). You are prompted to choose the active window or a new document. If you've already opened the document you want to use, click Active Window; otherwise, click New Main Document.

Open an existing data source. (In this article, we will use an Excel worksheet as the data source.) Select

the location in which your file has been saved. Change the file type to Excel (*.xls). Double click to open the file. Select the entire worksheet that contains your data; first row reserved for headings. Notice that on the Mail Merge toolbar there is an icon or text indicating "Insert Merge Field". This will be used to insert fields into your main document.

Begin typing the document. Use the "Insert Merge Field" icon in the area of the address, salutation, and other places you would like to insert information. Once the document is complete, click save.

Now run the merge. Click the Mail Merge button on the Mail Merge toolbar to display the Merge dialog box. Here you must decide where to merge your document. Again, I recommend a New Document. You can select all records, a range of records, or query for a particular condition. When you have everything completed, click Merge.

Saving the merged document is not necessary. The merge process can be done over and over again, by simply opening the main document that you saved and clicking Merge from the Mail Merge toolbar. Remember that you need both the Main Document and Data Source to run a merge. If you have questions, call the Technology Department (248-0148 x7) or email us at mcsdnet@mcsdk12.org.

Our Goals

Our goals are to provide staff with up-to-date information regarding all areas of technology, share helpful hints and ideas, showcase teachers and students and communicate staff development plans. Any questions or suggestions can be directed to **Karen Galbraith * 248-6480**



Cool Sites!

2003 Curriculum Web Site Awards

District Administration, a magazine that targets K-12 education, curriculum and technology, announces the web site awards for 2003.

▶ **American Memory**

memory.loc.gov

American Memory, maintained by the Library of Congress, is an online gateway to materials relating to the history and culture of the United States.

▶ **Artsonia** www.artsonia.com

This is an online art museum where students can display their work electronically for the world to see.

▶ **Bartleby.com**

www.bartleby.com

Bartleby is a large, up-to-date, full-text, free public reference library that attracts 40 million users a year.

▶ **BrainPOP**

www.brainpop.com

BrainPOP is a subscription based site of animated K-12 movies that explain concepts in English, math, science, health and technology.

▶ **Crayola Creativity Central**

www.crayola.com

This site maintains multimedia art resources appropriate for every school curriculum area.

▶ **Education World**

www.educationworld.com

This is one of the most comprehensive sources of curriculum materials on the Web, with more than 500,000 resources, with original content not available elsewhere.

▶ **eNature.com**

www.enature.com

Sponsored by the National Wildlife Federation, this comprehensive site offers illustrated field guides to more than 4,800 plants and animals.

▶ **ENC Online** www.enc.org

The Eisenhower National Clearinghouse contains one of the best selections of K-12 math, science and technology resources.

▶ **Grade Level Gold**

www.gradelevelgold.com

This site is a full of teacher-selected curriculum sites and materials targeted for K-12 grade levels and subject areas.

▶ **KidsHealth**

www.kidshealth.org

KidsHealth provides accurate, doctor-approved, information about children from birth through adolescence.

▶ **Music Education Online**

www.childrensmusicworkshop.com

Music Education Online is a comprehensive collection of music-related resources.

▶ **The Math Forum**

mathforum.org

The Math Forum maintains the best in-depth online resources for any math topic from K-12 through college and advanced math.

▶ **The New York Times Learning Network**

www.nytimes.com/learning

This is a news-centered education site with up-to-date features that change daily.

▶ **The WebQuest Page**

edweb.sdsu.edu/webquest

The WebQuest model, developed by Bernie Dodge with Tom March at San Diego State University, is an inquiry-centered learning investigation where most or all information is drawn from the Web.



Dealing with SPAM

by Hunter French
Network Administrator

Have you ever received an email advertisement from someone you did not know? You are not alone. Millions of unsolicited emails, called spam, are received each day by Internet users.

Scott Mueller, operator of an anti-spam website, defines **Spam** as “flooding the Internet with many copies of the same message, in an attempt to force the message on people who would not otherwise choose to receive it.” The majority of Spam is advertising; often for suspect products, adult websites, get-rich-quick schemes, or legal services. Spam costs the Spammer (the person sending the Spam) very little to send, as most of the costs (such as slower network response time and overflowing email Inboxes) are paid for by the recipient or their organization rather than by the sender.



One of the most effective ways of dealing with Spam is to block it before it gets to its intended recipient. Recently, we implemented a procedure to block Spam for users of the MCSD email system. Should you receive a message that you believe to be Spam, simply forward the message to nospam@mcsdk12.org. Periodically, members of the Technology Department will examine these emails and will configure our email server to discard any future messages from the Spammer. While we hope to block a large quantity of Spam from reaching our users, this procedure is not perfect. Spammers consistently find new and creative ways to circumvent email blocking each day such as constantly changing email addresses or using false email addresses.

So, the next time you receive an advertisement for “an easy way to make a million dollars,” just take a moment and forward it to nospam@mcsdk12.org. You will be doing yourself, and many others, a big favor.



Quick Tips

Q: Why am I now having trouble getting my MCSD email and the Intranet at home?

A: In the past month, the email server and Intranet server were made secure sites. The new addresses now start with ‘https://’. The ‘s’ after http indicates a secure site. This encrypts the information being sent between your computer and the district’s computer.

If you have the web mail and intranet addresses saved in your Favorites at home, you might have saved the old sites. Delete these from your Favorites. Then open the MCSD homepage and go to the Intranet and web mail. The new addresses should begin with ‘https’. Now add the new addresses to your Favorites.