

Log-on



January 2007

Mifflin County School District Technology Department

Issue 25

Technology News

▶ Computer Training for Teachers

Computer Training classes are being held regularly at each school. Log on the MCSKD Curriculum Links to see the list of all training sessions. Sessions are open to everyone at any school. For more information, contact Karen Galbraith (717-248-6480, gkg26@mcsdk12.org) or any member of the committee.

http://www.mcsdk12.org/curr/Computer_Classes.htm

Peggy Fisher, Nicole Singer	IVHS
Karin Getz, Michael Gerhart	LAHS
Edna Snook, Steve White	IVMS
Bret Monsell, Chris Bowers	LMS
Lani Reese, Kelley Dixon, Stephanie Moon	SMMS, SMES
Nancy Ressler	Union, Armagh, Brown, EDerry
Nancy Machmer	HPAE
Suzanne LaMarca	Buchanan, LES

▶ Blocked Sites

As many of you have noticed, numerous websites are being blocked by Websense. If you find a site that you need to use for your class, please submit a track-it with the address of the site. We will attempt to unblock that site as soon as possible.



Access Track-It! by going to the Intranet and clicking on the Track-It! button. Then click **add a new Work Order**, fill in the information and Submit. You can also use Track-It! to submit repair requests.

▶ Regional Computer Fair

The second Regional High School Computer Fair will be held at the Tuscarora Intermediate Unit 11 on Friday, March 30, 2007. This is a competitive event and participation is open to any student enrolled in grades 9 – 12.

<http://www.pacomputerfair.org/>

The first Regional Computer Fair was held last year at the TIU on Monday, April 10, 2006. Students from Indian Valley High School took part in the competition. Ben Loht, an Indian Valley 2006 senior, won first place in the Logo competition. Nicole Harshbarger, Derek Kepner and Trevor Shoemaker won first place in the Web Design competition. Mike Plank and Todge Aumiller won second place in Web Design. Their advisors were Margaret Fisher and Richard Pennepacker. The two first place teams traveled to Dickenson College on May 23 to compete in the State High School Computer Fair.

Plans are underway to participate in this year's regional computer fair. If you would like to participate, contact Peggy Fisher at IVHS or Karen Galbraith at 248-6480.

▶ netTrekker News



netTrekker d. i. has added an exciting new Read Aloud feature that automatically reads text back to students with just a click of a button. Click on the open **Read Aloud Button** at the top right of the screen before you link to any resource. The Read Aloud bar appears at the bottom of the screen. Highlight the text to be read, give the program a minute to process and then sit back and listen!

netTrekker is a search engine that is safe, fast and easy to use for students, parents, and teachers, delivering more than 180,000 educator-selected online resources. Each resource has been pre-screened for its readability level, curriculum relevance and quality. The database also includes safe images for use in school projects.

<http://www.mcsdk12.org/curr/netTrekker/nettrekker.htm>

Email Etiquette



- ▶ In today's world, whether we like it or not, email is a fact of life. We spend a great deal of time reading, responding to, initiating and managing email messages in our personal and professional life. It is amazingly easy to dash off an email, hit send and POOF! your message is gone. It reaches its destination in a few short seconds and if you change your mind or make a mistake, it is too late to get it back.

As we use email messages more and more, these tips and guidelines will help to ensure that your messages are successful and professional.

- **Use an appropriate subject line.** Subject lines should contain your topic and purpose. This will ensure that it is not confused with spam and deleted by the recipient. Always include a subject line.
- **Double check the "To:" field.** Make sure you are sending the email to the correct recipient. Make sure you didn't click "Reply to All" by mistake.
- **Proofread.** Be straightforward, concise and accurate. Use correct grammar, spelling and punctuation. Don't depend on spell checker to find all of misspellings. If the message contains a "conversation thread", either delete the old messages or make sure they do not contain any inappropriate information.
- **Keep it short.** Focus on the first three sentences. If the message takes longer than two paragraphs, consider a phone call.
- **Keep in mind the limitations of email.** Email messages are usually taken literally so sarcasm, certain kinds of humor, irony, etc. do not translate well in an email message and may backfire.
- **Use the forward command carefully.** Don't send or forward jokes, poems and other things unless the recipient has agreed to accept them. These are simply annoying and waste people's time. Don't forward messages that the sender intended just for you. Also, check the body of the message for other recipients email addresses and delete them before forwarding the message.
- **Never consider your email private.** Don't write anything that couldn't be placed on the hallway bulletin board. In the case of school email, the school district owns the email and it may be monitored. Inappropriate sexual, racial, religious or ethnic jokes, negative comments about students, colleagues or administrators could all be legally actionable.
- **Never write when you are angry.** Give yourself some time to think about the problem or have someone else edit your email. Don't use all uppercase letters. It is hard to read and the email *equivalent* of yelling.
- **Use more than one email address.** Have one email address for home or private email and one for work.
- **Don't click "Send" too fast.** Reread each message before you send it keeping these email tips in mind. The few extra minutes you spend may be invaluable to you. Once you click send, you can't get it back!

Additional information can be found at <http://www.microsoft.com>

Lewistown High School Goes Wireless

“Wireless laptops are providing us with a different avenue to reach our students’ academic needs,” comments principal, Vance Varner.

Computers are not just for labs anymore. As you walk through Lewistown Area High School, you may see students and teachers using laptops in the library, in classrooms, and even in the hallways or the gym. With the recent enhancement of wireless technology, computer workspace is limitless. “Wireless laptops are providing us with a different avenue to reach our students’ academic needs,” comments principal, Vance Varner.

In the past few years, the need for technology in additional areas of LAHS has grown. Computer labs were constantly full and teachers and students were eager for more computer time. The solution was to install a wireless network throughout the school and invest in laptops that could be moved all over the building, allowing all teachers to have access to a “classroom” of computers in every area of the school.

The system was put in place early this year, and LAHS was equipped with 19 wireless access points throughout the building, including the gym and auditorium. Two carts of 15 laptop computers were purchased. Each cart contains slots for the computers to plug into, and then the cart is plugged into the wall, recharging all of the laptops at the same time. The laptops will hold a charge for approximately five full periods but are often recharged between periods. The carts are housed in the library and teachers can sign out any number of computers to suit their needs. The carts and computers can be moved to the classrooms or teachers can bring their classes to the library.

Michelle Schaaf, LAHS librarian, and Mike Gerhart, Social Studies teacher, are responsible for managing the laptops and training the teachers. They held training sessions at the beginning of the year and they are available at various times during the day to assist teachers. Marc Terry, MCSD Systems Support Analyst, set up the network and troubleshoots as needed.

The teachers have adapted quickly to the changes that these resources can make to their curriculum. With the easy availability of the technology, they can use Internet resources and teaching techniques that were not previously available. A class can meet in the library, equipped with laptops, and set out on a webquest or research project. Teachers can take a laptop to the auditorium or gym for demonstrations, oral reports and speeches or take one to their classroom and combined with an LCD projector use Internet or network resources to improve their lessons. Interactivity and group work are enhanced and students are more attentive with more time spent on task.

The laptop configuration also expands the computer availability in the entire school. Many teachers sign out just 5 or 10 computers and their students work in groups or use them for small classes that only need small numbers of laptops. Teachers can take them to areas of the school that previously did not have computer access, such as the gym and auditorium. “When you have a set of 30 wireless laptops, four or more different classrooms can benefit at the same time,” stated Varner.

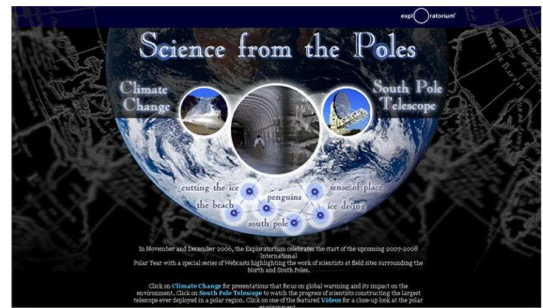


The Exploratorium is a museum of science, art, and human perception located in San Francisco, California. It hosts an amazing web site with more than 18,000 web pages with sound and video files exploring hundreds of topics and online activities.

The Exploratorium's Digital Library includes media and museum materials related to interactive exhibits and scientific phenomena, including images and educational activities. You may search, select and download digital files for individual, educational use.

The webcasting and podcasting resources are incredible. Exploratorium broadcasts live video and/or audio directly from the museum or from satellite feeds in the field onto the Internet. Webcasts provide access to events, scientists, artists, educators, and other museum resources. Video and audio provide the ability to hear or view interviews with scientists, "meet" interesting people, or tour unusual locations, from factories to rainforests.

Check out the Science from the Poles exhibit. It includes online videos on climate change, location, penguins, ice diving, and more. <http://www.exploratorium.edu/>



WebTraining Classes

The following web training classes will be held in January and February. Contact Nancy Machmer to sign up. mcm12@mcsdk12.org

Web Development for Educators

Description: Developing a basic 2 or 3 page web site Microsoft FrontPage to augment your classroom activities or communicate with parents. Instruction includes creating web pages from scratch, linking pages, inserting images, using tables for page layout and more. Web sites are hosted on the MCS D www2 web server.

Lewistown Area High School LAHS Library Lab 3:30 - 5:30
 Monday, January 22, Thursday, January 25, Monday, January 29, Thursday, February 1, 2007

Indian Valley High School
 Monday, February 5, Wednesday, February 7, Wednesday February 14, and Wednesday, February 21, 2007

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 gkg26@mcsdk12.org**