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...a service of The Point - a classroom blogspace from fcps.net



TIPS - The Technology Feed Vol 8, #7 (March 2009)

...maintained by Jeffrey L. Jones, Site Admin, last updated 3/2/2009

TIPS - the Technology Office newsletter - is a feed of ideas and instructional support for Fayette County teachers, delivered through blogs maintained by Technology Resource Teachers in the Office of Instructional Technology. See the complete list of archives in <http://teach.fcps.net/tips/>.

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TIPS - The Editor's Desk

Brief musings on the implementation of technology integration in Fayette County Schools...from the Office of Instructional Technology



...from the desk of Jeffrey L. Jones, Site Admin

Saturday, February 28, 2009 9:20 AM: Email, email, email....

It's official...everybody hates email. At a recent Fayette County leadership meeting, John Maxwell (speaking from one of his many DVDs) began his remarks about prioritizing one's professional life with "I don't do email." The entire room, filled with over 100 principals and IAKSS leadership, burst into spontaneous applause. (There was, of course, a lot more to Mr. Maxwell's remarks than that, but that's for another time.) Probably the most notable fallout from that discussion is a scheduled experiment for Fayette County IAKSS leadership and principals: "No Email Wednesday."

Of course, as I have noted in past discussions here, email is its own worst enemy, being an easy and effortless communications medium. Due to this (and the fact that it can be managed on its own schedule), it, together with texting, have become the communications methods of choice for almost every professional. For those of us whose responsibility is supporting teachers in their instructional needs - across distances, and with a schedule which conflicts with teachers' instructional responsibilities - email is not only the best communication method, it's the only one available. But we get so much of it, it often seems a curse.

I'm reminded of a one-act opera by American composer Gian-Carlo Menotti (of "Amahl and the Night Visitors" fame) called "The Telephone." A soldier, about to leave by train to be deployed, is trying to propose to his girlfriend at her apartment. He's constantly interrupted by telephone calls, each of which she takes. He curses



the telephone as an instrument of the devil. Finally, he must depart, foiled in his task. However, he finds a pay phone at the train station, calls his girl, and accomplishes the proposal from there. As she says "Yes!," he cradles the telephone handset and sings its praises. (You can watch the entire opera in three parts on YouTube...[here's the first](#). You will, of course, need to be at home, since YouTube is blocked within the District.)

I would contend that our current "hate affair" with email is, in no small part, the same as our soldier's dilemma. The problem isn't the telephone so much as the fact that his girlfriend wasn't able to prioritize its use. Even today, in the age of cell phones, our propensity to "take the call," interrupting the events unfolding directly in front of us, is a huge problem. From ordinary meetings to Rudolph Giuliani's famous speech interruption during his presidential bid, we are constantly failing to use good sense in prioritizing how cell phones are used.

So is the solution to throw away our cell phones? A much easier and less drastic measure might simply be to turn them off when doing something which would be affected by their active presence. I suspect the "Email Free Wednesdays" are an attempt to reflect that idea with email. But, like the phone, if we just pay attention to *how* we use it, we might find that *it* isn't the problem...*we* are!

The best way to deal with email abuse is, of course, to be a part of the solution - to model responsible use yourself. If you are in a leadership role, that means that you *do* as well as *lead*. Leading means encouraging others to use it responsibly as well, either directly or through a proxy such as a school tech coordinator. Excluding some of the "Netiquette" issues such as tone and emoticons, here are the high points for appropriate email use:

- **Be professional.** An email is just like a phone call in that it engages people and creates work for them. If your question is an idle one, why ask it? That doesn't mean a personal note or playful banter through email is never appropriate, but be very sparing, and be sure the person receiving it is OK with that sort of thing. (Ask!)
- **Target your audience.** Send the email only to those who have a direct interest in its contents. Don't use the "cheap trick" of sending an email to a distribution list when only a few folks need to see it. If you must use a distribution list, put your target audience in the subject line ("For Freshmen homeroom teachers only," for example).
- **Use the Subject line.** Besides the target audience (see above), an email should have a meaningful subject line. There's nothing that'll slow down email management than having to dig through the body of the text to find out what it's about. If you need a quick response, put that there as well.
- **Include all the information** your reader will need to process your email. If you leave out important information, you'll end up using 10 emails when one would have sufficed. If your communications need will require a back-and-forth, use a phone, if at all possible.
- **Use the "Importance" flag.** If your email is low priority, select it! Use high priority only if your email requires an *immediate* response - if so, put that in the subject line, and follow up with a phone call.
- **Read before you send.** This is the most important point, and subsumes all the others. Hurdly-composed emails often create more communications problems than they solve. Email is not speech, it's writing. You should be careful, thoughtful, accurate, and professional in your writing, regardless of whether your note will be hand-written, typed in Word, or sent as an email.

All of these, if attended to, could reduce email traffic drastically, and provide focus on its advantages - text-based, documented, thoughtful, and "off-peak" communications, providing a powerful way of interacting with people without having to manage phone or drop-in interruptions.

Here are some hints on how to better manage the email coming to you.

- **Use good habits yourself**, and encourage others to do so too. If someone is overusing/abusing email, tell them! (Of course, be diplomatic!) If someone gets a quick "It would help me help you better if you used the Subject line" from you, eventually they'll learn.
- **Learn and use email tools**. Create folders for emails on specific topics, and flag things that are important. Sort rules and color codes can handle some organization automatically. If you have alerts set for SharePoint, or other auto-notices, select "Digest" versions for them to slow their impact. Do not set "...read receipt" as a default for emails you send - it just generates massive amounts of returns, and it cannot be relied on anyway (your recipient can turn off returning read receipts if they choose).
- **Set aside time**. Reading and processing the written word requires time and attention, so you should allow yourself the luxury of having uninterrupted email time as a part of your professional day. Put it in your work calendar, and stick to it!
- **Distribute the work**. If a certain "face-to-face" responsibility can be shared or delegated, then the email associated with it can be too. Auto-forwards for certain key words can do so automatically.
- **Keep up to date**. There is nothing more demoralizing than an inbox with 300 unread messages. Buried in all of the chaffe could very well be an important email from a parent, and that person will not understand and sympathize with your frustration at the other 299.

That last one implies a little bit of soul searching. Do you resent getting interrupted by the telephone, regardless of who and when it is? Are you slow to attend to written correspondence? Do you dislike being stopped in the hall to answer questions? Do you prefer to work alone on issues? Are you uncomfortable at "open house" night and meetings? If your answer to several of those questions is "yes," chances are, like Menotti's soldier, your hate of the communications medium is simply a way to mask a larger problem. Remember that, as a public educator, your responsibilities include making yourself available to students, other teachers, school and district leadership, and the public. In that pursuit, email is a tool with some distinct advantages. But most importantly, its presence and place in your professional day is as important as the people who use it.

...for more, visit this blog at <https://edtech.fcps.net/blog/blogs.aspx?blogid=10067>

Student Technology Leadership Program

A discussion of STLP activities, issues, and projects in Fayette County Schools.



...from the desk of
Julie Gaskin,
District TRT

Sunday, March 01, 2009 6:19 PM: STEM Fair Invitation



Science
Technology
Engineering &
Math Fair

FCPS District-
Wide STEM Fair
Saturday, March
14, 2009
Bryan

Station High School
Public Hours: 9:00 - 11:00
Awards Ceremony: 11:30

Please join us at this year's STEM Fair which will showcase more than 70 technology projects representing 55 STLP (Student Technology Leadership Program) groups. We also have 3 student groups making presentations and variety of student-made videos, digital art creations, interactive content, and technical writings to share with you. Featured for the first time, will be a Robotics Exhibition with 17 schools represented.

Our talented students will be joined by guests from:

- Bryan Station High School IT Academy
- Commonwealth VideoConferencing Network
- Creative-image with a Smart Table
- Dell
- eInstruction
- Explorium of Lexington
- Georgetown College
- Kentucky Department of Education
- Kentucky Educational Television
- Lexmark
- Mindtriggerz
- Morehead Historical Marker Mapping Project
- Newton's Attic
- ProSys
- UK's College of Engineering

Monday, March 02, 2009 9:25 AM: STLP State Championship Deadlines

Many STLP State Championship deadlines are approaching.

March 15, 2009 the following items are due:



- Gold school PowerPoint presentations to apply to become a gold school
- Gold school email responses to Elaine Harrison to continue as a gold school
- Product registration and submission to compete in the State Championship on Thursday, May 21
- Registration to attend the State Championship on Thursday, May 21
- Registration for students to participate in live competition at the

More information about the STLP State Competition can be found in your [State Handbook](#) starting on page 34. Page 37 has more information about the live performances. Please let me know if you have any questions. Elaine Harrison is also available to answer questions and she will be at the STEM Fair on March 14 if you would like to talk with her in person.

...for more, visit this blog at <https://edtech.fcps.net/blog/blogs.aspx?blogid=16314>

The Virtual Elementary Classroom

A place to showcase virtual activities in the Elementary Classroom.



...from the desk of Jamie Burch, District TRT

Monday, February 23, 2009 2:35 PM: Lansdowne's 4th Grade Scientists

Mrs. Lee at Lansdowne Elementary wanted to provide her science students with another way to express what they know about their science content. The Office of Instructional Technology was happy to introduce her to Fayette's iSchool, our online interactive classroom environment. Since Mrs. Lee was familiar with other blogging websites, she quickly picked up the basic principals involved and went full speed



ahead with getting her students involved. She checked with her STC to ensure that the students accounts were active, she had students choose passwords for their FCPS user accounts and modeled for her students what iSchool could do. Once they were familiar with the site, they were asked to login and participate in a teacher created forum that focused on their science content. Here are some comments from Mrs. Lee after her students accessed iSchool for the first time:

- "This has been the most incredible experience as a teacher."
- "The kids LOVED Blogging...What an incredible experience."

Students will now be able to access iSchool from anywhere they have computer access. What a great way to extend learning outside the regular classroom and in a non-traditional way. If anyone else is interested in creating an online classroom, please contact us or visit the FCPS iSchool site for more information. <http://ischool.fcps.net>

...for more, visit this blog at <https://edtech.fcps.net/blog/blogs.aspx?blogid=28445>

Internet Safety

Information regarding digital citizenship in our schools.



...from the desk of Leanna Prater

Monday, March 02, 2009 8:37 AM: Mentoring in the Middle Schools

This month our mentors have been busy! Mentors from Bryan Station High School delivered important internet safety lessons to students at Bryan Station Middle School. Students at Dunbar High School spent some time sharing information about internet predators and tips to keep yourself safe through a video conference with Jessie Clark students. Our mentors are looking forward to visiting a couple more schools next month!



...for more, visit this blog at <https://edtech.fcps.net/blog/blogs.aspx?blogid=16411>

Fayette's iSchool - The blog for FCPS's Moodle Project

Watch this space for updates and announcements connected to this powerful resource!



...from the desk of Jeffrey L. Jones, Site Admin

Sunday, March 01, 2009 2:59 PM: Podcasts and Vodcasts: Student Media On Display

Do you wish to display student media work, including videos, podcasts, and others? Do you want to provide a platform for that display which automates playback and syndication? Do you want support in that celebration from the Office of Instructional Technology? Then iSchool is your platform!



PODCASTING ★ VODCASTING

The Instructions:

See the [Teachers' FAQs...](#) course in iSchool for a new how-to module, [Multimedia](#), on uploading and managing media through the Mediacyber plugin in iSchool. There's also a page on how it supports [Podcasting/Vodcasting](#).

The Delivery:

See our new iSchool [Podcasting course template](#), designed as a platform for Podcasting and Vodcasting within iSchool. Use the [How to Request a Course](#) module in [Teachers' FAQs...](#) to request one of your own.

The Celebration:

Get your student podcast/vodcast listed with our iSchool [Podcasts/Vodcasts in Fayette County](#) area!

...for more, visit this blog at <https://edtech.fcps.net/blog/blogs.aspx?blogid=15975>

Video Conferencing Events, PD's and Collaborations

Upcoming video conferencing events, PD's and collaborations from CILC, MAGPI and more.



...from the desk of
Jamie Burch,
District TRT

Monday, February 23, 2009 10:12 AM: New Offerings from CILC: 2-23-09



CILC
Center for Interactive
Learning and Collaboration

Professional Development Provider Programs

[Art and Science](#) - by [Amon Carter Museum](#)

Using artworks from the Carter's collection, explore the interrelationship between art and science. Educators will discuss artists as scientists, artists' representations of plants, artworks that show motion and balance, and artists as environmentalists. This ...

Availability: Published Date(s) and Time(s) ONLY

Audience: Education: Curriculum Director, Professional Development Director, Video Conferencing Contact, Gifted and Talented Coordinator, Principal, Teacher, Paraprofessional, Administrator

[Shaping Global Citizens in the Classroom](#) - by [Jody H Kennedy Digital Age Learning Inc](#)

Jody Kennedy has a wealth of experiences, resources and partnerships globally that will enable schools to develop exciting programs and projects specially designed to suit their needs as a school.

Availability: By Request/On Demand ONLY

Audience: Education: Superintendent, Curriculum Director, Video Conferencing Contact, Gifted and Talented Coordinator, Title One Coordinator, Principal, Teacher, Parent, College/University, Administrator, Public Library: Library Staff

[Webinar: How to Increase Minority Student Achievement with the Equity Framework](#) - by [School Improvement Network](#)

Curtis will pull some of the most important material from his award-winning book *Courageous Conversations about Race* and combine with the techniques covered in his DVD *Closing the Achievement Gap*.

Availability: Published Date(s) and Time(s) ONLY

Audience: Education: Superintendent, Curriculum Director, Professional Development Director, Technology Director, Title One Coordinator, Principal, Teacher, Paraprofessional, Parent, College/University, Media Specialist/Librarian, Administrator

["Response to Intervention: Getting started with the basics" \(1 hour session\)](#) - by [The Service Center @ Clearwater](#)

Participants will:

- Understand the basic premise of "Response to Intervention"
- Analyze their school's system for current adherence to the RtI principles.
- Focus on assessments and research-based strategies for an RtI model.

Availability: By Request/On Demand ONLY

Audience: Education: Superintendent, Curriculum Director, Principal, Teacher, Content Providers: Educator, Administrator

["Response to Intervention: Getting started with the basics" \(3 hour session\)](#) - by [The Service Center @ Clearwater](#)

Participants will:

- Understand the basic premise of "Response to Intervention"
- Analyze their school's system for current adherence to the RtI principles
- Develop a plan for enhancing the education delivery of the school according to RtI principles

Availability: By Request/On Demand ONLY

Audience: Education: Superintendent, Curriculum Director, Principal, Teacher, Administrator, Content Providers: Educator, Administrator

["Response to Intervention: Getting started with the basics" \(6 hour session\)](#) - by [The Service Center @ Clearwater](#)

Participants will:

- Review the major components of the Response to Intervention model
- Analyze their school's system for current adherence to the RtI principles
- Develop a plan for enhancing the education delivery of the school according to RtI principles

...

Availability: By Request/On Demand ONLY

Audience: Education: Superintendent, Curriculum Director, Principal, Teacher

Content Provider Programs

[Rights for Workers](#) - by [Conner Prairie](#)

This program provides the experience of meeting a mill worker who witnessed the 1886 Haymarket Riot in Chicago. Having escaped the fray, the worker speaks to the students about his experiences in the riot.

Availability: By Request/On Demand ONLY

Audience: Education: Grade(s): 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, Public Library: Library Patrons

[BigPicture World History: 4.5 Billion Years Ago to Today](#) - by [Global Education Motivators](#)

The purpose of "BigPicture World History" is to make students more aware of the large patterns that their social studies courses fit within. The ecologist Howard Odum said, "The only way to understand a system is to understand the system it fits into."

Availability: By Request/On Demand ONLY

Audience: Education: Grade(s): 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

[How Nuclear Weapons Affect Human Rights](#) - by [Global Education Motivators](#)

This program will explore how nuclear weapons endanger basic human rights. It will look at the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, how nuclear testing and experiments affect us, and what students can do about this issue.

Availability: By Request/On Demand AND Published Date(s) and Time(s)

Audience: Education: Grade(s): 10, 11, 12, University

[Nuclear Weapons and Climate Change](#) - by [Global Education Motivators](#)

Discussion of global warming and human impact on the environment can be heard in many levels of society.

Availability: Published Date(s) and Time(s) ONLY

Audience: Education: Grade(s): 10, 11, 12, University

[Nuclear Weapons: The Basics](#) - by [Global Education Motivators](#)

This program is designed to give students an overview of nuclear weapons, their history, the science of the weapons, and the political implications of nuclear weapons.

Availability: Published Date(s) and Time(s) ONLY

Audience: Education: Grade(s): 10, 11, 12, University

[Path to Zero Nuclear Weapons](#) - by [Global Education Motivators](#)

A world without nuclear weapons, however desirable, cannot be attained without profound revisions to existing policies and programs.

Availability: Published Date(s) and Time(s) ONLY

Audience: Education: Grade(s): 10, 11, 12, University

[Egg-Citing Animals and Egg-Speriments](#) - by [Muskingum Valley Educational Service Center](#)

No "yolk's" about it folks, this video conference will keep your students engaged for an entire 60 minutes! This lesson is packed full of "dozens" of egg facts, fun, experiments, and literature.

Availability: By Request/On Demand ONLY

Audience: Education: Kindergarten, Grade(s): 1, 2, 3

[Building the Glasgow Bridge--Design Process: Looking at the Math](#) - by [RoundTrips](#)

How do engineers create design plans for a new bridge? What factors impact their choices most? Go to the source. Interact with engineers to find out how they use math, physics and computer simulations in designing a bridge.

Availability: Published Date(s) and Time(s) ONLY

Audience: Education: Grade(s): 9, 10, 11, 12

[Nurturing Nature](#) - by [Stark Parks](#)

This program examines the basic needs of all living things. Students will be introduced to the needs of injured or abandoned wildlife. They will be able to identify what we need at our rehabilitation center to help animals brought to us.

Availability: By Request/On Demand ONLY

Audience: Education: Kindergarten, Grade(s): 1, 2

[Conducting Business in China](#) - by [The Service Center @ Clearwater](#)

Participants will learn rituals to be observed while doing business with Chinese people and will learn how the hierarchy in Chinese culture influence manners.

Availability: By Request/On Demand ONLY

Audience: Education: Grade(s): 9, 10, 11, 12, Businesses, Public Library: Library Patrons

[The Daily Life of a Chinese Student](#) - by [The Service Center @ Clearwater](#)

The Chinese Student's life is both busy and colorful. Participants will experience a day in the life of a typical Chinese student including listening to songs, body exercise, the educational culture of China, and the Chinese college entrance exam.

Availability: By Request/On Demand ONLY

Audience: Education: Grade(s): 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, Public Library: Library Patrons

Collaborations

[High School Creative Writing](#)

A small town high school in Wyoming would like to connect with an urban high school creative writing class to share short stories, critiques, and views of life. My classes are mostly 11th graders.

Status: Seeking Partners

Audience: Education: Grade(s): 10, 11, 12

[Outdoor Education/Science problem solving activities](#)

We have a group of dynamic teachers who would like to collaborate with other educators to develop problem solving based learning activities which combine outdoor education and science. We have our own 155 hectare nature/science centre.

Status: Seeking Partners

Audience: Education: Grade(s): 6, 7, 8, 9

[6th Grade Math Cultural Bead Exchange](#)

We are looking for an English speaking school in South America or Mexico that would be interested in a Math project with 6th grade students. We would begin the end of March and end the middle of April.

Status: Seeking Partners

Audience: Education: Grade(s): 6

[Interaction with students living in Mexico](#)

Looking for a 1st grade classroom from Mexico in which students could learn about each others culture. Students will study various aspects of Mexico such as culture, desert animals, geography, holidays, food and dance etc.

Status: Seeking Partners

Audience: Education: Grade(s): 1

[Migration Mysteries](#)

I am looking for high school Ecology (Biology?) classes who live in Argentina, New Zealand, Hawaii, Samoa, Guam, Texas, California, North Dakota, Russia, Australia China, Malaysia and Wisconsin.

Status: Seeking Partners

Audience: Education: Grade(s): 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, K-12 Educator

Class Offerings

[AP® English: Language & Composition](#) Available Class

Success in the academic and professional world requires the ability to write and communicate effectively. This course emphasizes the expository, analytical, and argumentative writing that is the basis for effective communication, and provides opportunities.

Status: Not Filled

Type: Supplementary

Audience: Education: Grade(s): 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

[Spanish III Honors](#) Available Class

Become more proficient in the Spanish language through rigorous immersion along with exposure to ever-increasing vocabulary and the intensive study of grammar structures offered by this course. Previously learned vocabulary and grammar concepts are reinforced.

Status: Not Filled

Type: Supplementary

Audience: Education: Grade(s): 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

...for more, visit this blog at <https://edtech.fcps.net/blog/blogs.aspx?blogid=33972>

Announcements

Technology News
...from the desk of Julie
Gaskin, District TRT

Monday, February 09, 2009 10:08 AM: Project-Based Learning Challenge



The 21st Century Education Enterprise Center is looking for examples of innovative use of

project-based learning. Cash prizes will be awarded directly to teachers submitting the winning projects. All submissions will be reviewed by an expert panel with winners receiving \$3,000 for first prize, \$2,000 for second, and \$1,000 for third. Entries will be accepted through April 1, 2009 with prizes awarded May 1, 2009. Read more about this contest and find the online application at:

<http://www.moreheadstate.edu/educationenterprise/index.aspx?id=41758> .

Sunday, March 01, 2009 6:07 PM: Robotics Exhibition



Robotics Exhibition

Stop by to pick up items with a robotic arm built by students at Eastside Technical Center - or see a light-seeking robot built by Paul Laurence Dunbar High School students - or visit with students from 15 elementary and middle schools who are programming LEGO robots to complete tasks for an upcoming competition. There will even be a 2-seater rover with a robotic arm that can be used to pick up objects. Practice your skills and learn more robotics at Fayette County Public Schools' upcoming **STEM Fair on March 14, 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM**, at Bryan Station High School.

Sunday, March 01, 2009 6:43 PM: Thinking Ahead Scholarship

THINKING AHEAD

High School Student Scholarship Program

Samsung Techwin America wants to know what high school students think about technology advancements and how they will change the way we learn in the future. Is it for the better? Seven \$1000 Student Scholarships will be announced May 15, 2009 for the best 500-word

essays submitted by May 1, 2009. Click here to learn more about this opportunity: <http://www.samsungscholarship.com/>

...for more, visit this blog at <https://edtech.fcps.net/blog/blogs.aspx?blogid=18376>



The contents of this website are intended for the enhancement of instruction only. "It's About Kids"