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



TIPS - The Technology Feed Vol 8, #9 (May 2009)

...maintained by Jeffrey L. Jones, Site Admin, last updated 5/4/2009

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



Monday, May 04, 2009 11:52 AM: If "virtual" means "not real," why does anyone care about it?

A look at the word "virtual" (and the dozens of events, technologies, and activities it now represents) will require, first, a look at the word "real." It would be well within my interests (as many of you know!) to spend the entirety of this space engrossed in an academic discussion of the meaning of reality...but I'll spare you that. (*Whew!* 😊) But we should be at least sure about what that word implies before we wander off.

Dictionary.com's third definition for real — "...being an actual thing; having objective existence; not imaginary..." — gives us two important ideas:

1. "Real" means you can experience it directly with your senses, and
2. The opposite of "real" is "imaginary."

Of course, all "virtual" experiences involve the senses in some way, but not usually the senses normally in play. For instance, a desk in [Second Life](#) (a very well-know immersive virtual environment) can't be touched by the hand or smelled.

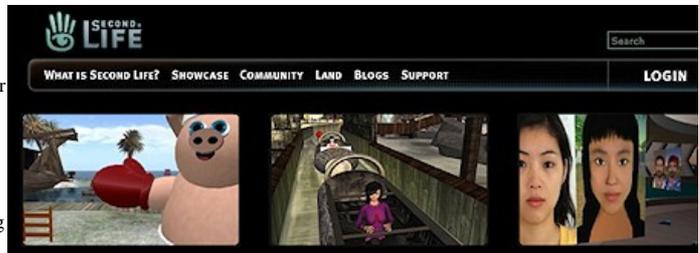
But back to #2. It's interesting that last month's blog entry referenced [Webopedia](#), which defines "virtual" exactly as the opposite of "real." But since even that limited-value academic resource wouldn't be so bold as to work that the other direction (defining "real" as the opposite of "virtual"), we know we have more to do. In fact, the shifting role of your senses in experiencing a virtual world can even have some advantages, making very real! But I digress...

This month's edition of TIPS provides a bunch of wonderful examples of experiences which we'd describe as virtual...

- **Maxwell Elementary's connection to Bogotá, Columbia.** Featured in the "Video-Linked Classroom" blog, this event allowed students to transcend space and talk to native speakers thousands of miles away. Could they smell the subtropical air, and shake the Columbian students' hands? No. But this virtual connection provided an experience neither classroom could otherwise have!
- **Virtual TEC.** This isn't important to Fayette County teachers (who won't view a drive to Edythe J. Hayes Middle School as a hardship for this June 12 conference), but it's very important to folks in Pike County, or Muhlenberg County, or Elizabethtown. They'll be able to talk and interact with several of our presenters! (By the way, see this month's Announcements blog - registration is now open for teacher registration for TEC!)
- **Virtual Social/Learning Communities.** Several new ones have recently begun using Fayette's iSchool. The bad news is, the discussions and work taking place there will not have the luxury of seeing facial expressions, body posture, or the dynamics of a "real" meeting experience. The good news is, no one has to travel, you can work at your own pace and time, and the work and discussion online provides its own "notes" and structure. But also (and this is VERY important!), all discussions will be much more thoughtful and on task, since the written word implies a more formal workflow. Discussions online may be "virtual," but they're often more in-depth and effective than their "real" counterparts!

In this sense, "virtual" not only is *not* the opposite of "real," it represents a parallel track of human behavior with its own distinct advantages. Our students, so-called "digital natives," have no problem working in both the "real" and "virtual" worlds. But public schools have been slow in leveraging these advantages, in no small part because teachers and educational leaders still are engrossed in this idea that "virtual" and "real" are opposites. Tell that to the 4th graders at Maxwell Elementary!

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



Announcements

Technology News

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



Sunday, May 03, 2009 5:43 PM: TEC Conference 2009 - Registration Open

Registration Open!

Conference: June 12, 2009



Location: Edythe J. Hayes Middle School

Registration deadline: May 26, 2009 or when available slots are taken

Join teachers from schools all across Kentucky and 3 states for our sixth annual Technology Enhanced Classroom (TEC) Conference. As in the past, it's FREE and attendees may receive PD/EILA credit for attending. The PD

credit would count for the 09/10 school year.

Some of this year's offerings include:

- 50 face-to-face sessions
- 12 sessions offered via video conference
- KDE, state, and national presenters
- Podcasting, vodcasting, and radio broadcasting
- Online instructional techniques
- Robotics and programming
- Video news, video editing, and green screen
- The intelligent classroom
- A Google trained educator

[Click here to register.](#)

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

Robotics

(Personal blog)

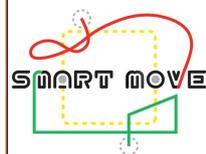


...from the desk
of Leanna
Prater

Monday, May 04, 2009 11:08 AM: FIRST LEGO League- 2009-2010 Season Registration Opens

FIRST LEGO League's (FLL) registration for the 2009-2010 season opens May 4th! Registration will remain open until all slots are filled, so early registration is encouraged. If you are not familiar with FLL, students work as teams to research a topic associated with the yearly theme, as well as build and program a robot to compete in a field competition where tasks are worth points. Teams meet to compete in all four areas: Research, Teamwork, Technical and Game (the field tasks).

Information about this season's theme:



Transforming Transportation (from the FLL website)

Can FIRST LEGO League teams transform the way we look at transportation? The key to the 2009 "Smart Move" Challenge is accessing people, places, goods and services in the safest, most efficient way possible. In this journey, teams will consider many modes of transportation beyond their daily routine and streamline their options by making smart moves!

If you currently have a LEGO Robotics team or your school has a LEGO Mindstorm NXT set, registration will run around \$200 per team. Field set up kits, including all LEGOs to construct field pieces run around \$65. If your school does not currently have a team, but you are interested in starting one, you'll need to budget around \$400 for a robot.

Registration Link: <https://gofll.usfirst.org/>

Pricing Information: https://gofll.usfirst.org/pages/product_description_and_pricing

We will also have several sessions on LEGO Robotics at this year's TEC Conference, June 12th at EJ Hayes. PD credit will be offered. <https://edtech.fcps.net/tec>

...for more, visit this blog at <https://edtech.fcps.net/blog/blogs.aspx?blogid=40708>

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, May 03, 2009 6:34 PM: LEGO Robotics Regional Winners

LEGO Robotics and Programming Regional Winners Invited to State Competition

Fayette County takes 3 of the top 5 positions at the regional LEGO Robotics Competition. These schools have been invited to compete at the state competition at Rupp Arena on May 21, 2009.

Elementary Division

James Lane Allen

2nd Place



Middle School Division



Jessie Clark Middle School

1st Place



Middle School Division

Tates Creek Middle School

2nd Place



If you are reading this in TIPS, click the link below to reach the original blog location so you can see the comments that have been added and post your own.

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

The Video-Linked Classroom

Videoconferencing, Live Streaming, and Internet 2 in Fayette County
...from the desk of Jeffrey L. Jones, Site Admin

Monday, May 04, 2009 10:07 AM: Maxwell Elementary connects to Bogotá!

It all started when Isidro Gutierrez, 4th grade teacher in the Escuela de Inmersión en Español (Spanish Immersion school), in collaboration with Lisa Stacy and Carlos Morales, began to explore the possibility of discussing coffee as a content hook in his class. Mrs. Stacy volunteered that her husband knew someone in Columbia, and when the dust had settled, they had managed to find a connection in Bogotá for more than just a discussion of coffee - a chance for students to practice their Spanish in conversation with native speakers their own age, thousands of miles away!



The [Gimnasio del Norte](#) is an English Immersion school in Bogotá, Columbia. Principal Ricardo Perez was contacted, and it was discovered that the Gimnasio had the ability to support



videoconference connections over the Internet. With Gimnasio 4th grade teacher Mrs. Constanza Cubillos, the teachers involved structured a connection during which students from both classes would present information about their respective schools and lives in Spanish. At Maxwell, students volunteered to present, five were chosen, and they spent time making each presentation concise, and improving their pronunciation.

On the day of the event, Señor Perez and Maxwell principal Heather Bell added a few words, and the students from both schools did their presentations. The remainder of the time students were allowed to ask and answer questions. The videoconference took place almost entirely in Spanish, and the students and teachers at Gimnasio del Norte were very complementary of the Maxwell students' Spanish!



This is exactly the sort of authentic experience which the Video-Linked Classroom program can provide. It is the intent of these two schools to continue their collaboration, and to connect regularly. Your school can also do this! Contact our office for help in finding a collaboration, and to help with setting up a connection.



Monday, May 04, 2009 9:36 AM: Virtual TEC - Our June Conference Goes Green!

Fayette County's June event, the "Technology-Enhanced Classroom" (TEC) Conference, has gone virtual! Using hardware from the district, and with help from the Commonwealth Office of Technology's Videoconference Center, at least 12 sessions will offer remote connections through videoconference. Teachers across the state will be able to connect and attend TEC for free, saving the cost and environmental impact of driving all the way to Lexington.

Of course, Fayette County teachers can access the full range of session presentations by coming to Edythe J. Hayes Middle School June 12. But for other districts across the state who want to save money, drive time, and the environment, videoconferencing is the next best thing to being there! See our [Virtual TEC](#) page on the [TEC Conference website](#) for a description of how this works.



...for more, visit this blog at <https://edtech.fcps.net/blog/blogs.aspx?blogid=16775>

Student Technology Leadership Program

Monday, April 20, 2009 9:37 AM: STLP State Championship 2009

STLP State Championship

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



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



May 21, 2009
Open to the Public 10:00 PM - 3:00 PM
Lexington Convention Center
Awards Ceremony
6:00 PM -8:00 PM - Rupp Arena

Join more than 4,600 students and adults at the State Championship, where 92 school districts and 290 schools will be represented. Some of the best STLP projects in the state will be on display for parents and the public to view. Students will also bring digital music, video, writing and art products to the event and will compete in many areas of technology during live demonstrations, presentations and panels.

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



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