

IN THE MIDDLE

MOUSE CLICKS



If you would like to upgrade your laptop to Jaguar, the new Mac OS, stop by and make an appointment with Kathy Basso (our resident cloning expert).



Approximately 20 people joined us for our most recent Early Bird Technology Workshop on using iTunes 3 (and the iPod), Apple's premier application for managing and listening to your digital music collection. For those of you who slept in that morning, we thought we would share three web sites to help you pull off some music magic:

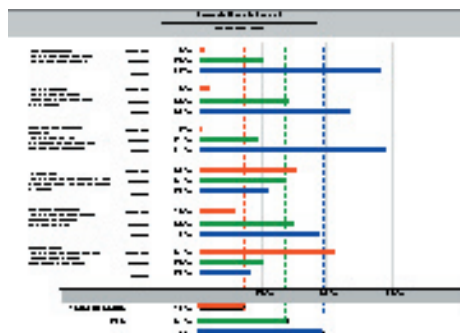
<http://www.apple.com/applescript/itunes/> a download for an AppleScript allowing you to be more productive managing your music, including creating a CD jewel case.
<http://www.apple.com/downloads/macosx/audio/igoom.html> a very cool visual effects generator for iTunes.
<http://www.audible.com/mac/offer/> listen to your favorite novel or magazine in iTunes (and on your iPod).



We are upgrading the computers in our faculty work areas. We are setting up new flatscreen iMacs in both the Popham Teachers Workroom and the back of the C.A.M.P. Room. For those of you who work on PC's outside of school and may have occasional need for PC access, we will soon be setting up a new high end Dell Dimension with Windows XP in the C.A.M.P. room.



The math department has recently purchased a site license for EXAMgen, a database which can be used to generate questions and problems for tests, homework, reviews... The license allows us to install the database on any computer. EXAMgen (www.examgen.com) has similar products for Science and Social Studies.



Survey Helps with Assessment of Student Skills

Last Spring, as a part of an internal evaluation of the District Technology Plan, approximately 200 members of the current eighth grade class assessed their own technology skills. Students identified their

level of proficiency in eleven areas, selecting *need help*, *adequate*, or *excellent* (with "excellent" defined as being able to assist another student with the task). The skills selected were chosen both to parallel a similar assessment given to juniors at The High School and to reflect the Middle School's computer curriculum:

File Management	Library Catalog	Internet/Database Research
Use of Peripherals	Wireless Technology	Digital Video
Word Processing	Spreadsheets	MultiMedia
Web Design		Course Software

At the end of seventh grade, these students described their skills as excellent approximately one half of the time. They identified their skills as adequate 34% of the time and suggested they would need help to complete a task for 17% of the questions. The areas with the greatest

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Project Miscellany^{Language}

This Fall, the Computer Center is taking on a more international flavor. To date, we have worked with the students of four different language teachers in the lab and supported work which uses technology in the classrooms of one or two others. These activities tend to use technology in two ways: as a source of information about a country, its people and culture and for the presentation or publication of this information. These activities also illustrate a productive model for a teacher's collaboration with the Library and Computer Center. (see BiblioBytes)

Students from a number of seventh grade Foreign Language classes have worked closely with the Library staff and in the Computer Center, as Carole Mirville writes in a Computer Center Catalog record, to *gather information using various sources in order to gain exposure and understand the daily life of people in an Hispanic [or French] country*. Liz Waltzman and Sharon Waskow modelled a research strategy for students and introduced them to available print and online resources, including an extensive number of project links provided on the Library's web site. Carole, Melanie Canes, and Karen O'Brien brought their classes to the Computer Center to continue their research and begin work on class presentations.

This seventh grade project provides students with a valuable introduction to an activity we'll see later in the year, the eighth grade Madrid and Paris Trip projects. Students use the Library and computer resources to design an imaginary trip to Madrid or Paris. They research hotels, restaurants, cafes, principal monuments and other sights and choose a project (PowerPoint presentation, brochure, etc.) for presenting their itinerary to the class.

Melanie Millard's Language and Culture students will soon complete a similar project, PowerPoint presentations summarizing basic travel information about two Spanish-speaking countries. In addition, Melanie's eighth grade students – and also the students of Jose Toscano – exposure to the diversity of Spanish culture is taking a culinary turn as they research Spanish cuisine. Here, too, the recipe for successful final projects – in this case class cookbooks (not to mention banquets) – is using print and Internet resources made available in the Library.

Professional Development

You can find information about the following technology courses, as well as other STI programs, at the STI's web site. Online registration is available.

- 12/13,14 *Broadcast Journalism for Middle School Teachers*
Ken Holvig, Andy Verboys
STI #2645
- 12/17 *Picture This: Kodak Moments with iPhoto*
Ken Holvig, Doug Rose
Early Bird Tech. Workshop
7:15 a.m.
- 1/10/11 *Using PowerPoint in the Classroom*
Joe Cesarano
STI #2639
- 1/10/11 *Inspiration in a Weekend*
Jennifer Gilbert, Doug Rose
STI #2642
- 1/10/11 *Advanced iMovie*
Ken Holvig, Andy Verboys
STI #2662
- 1/14 *Go Ahead, Make My Database*
Ken Holvig, Doug Rose
Early Bird Tech. Workshop
7:15 a.m.
- 1/24,25 *Using Technology in the Social Studies Classroom*
Joe Cesarano
STI #2647
- 1/24,25 *Introduction to FileMaker Pro*
Doug Rose
STI #2635
- 1/31,2/1 *What's in the Attic?*
Phyllis DiBianco
STI #2649
- 1/31,2/1 *Customizing Video Presentations with Avid Cinema*
Joe Cesarano
STI #2640
- 1/31,2/1 *Tools 2003*
Ken Holvig, Andy Verboys
STI #2644

Before our next issue is published, we plan to bring online our updated Scarsdale Middle School *Intranet*. This site will address a number of professional development matters, including an overview of Computer Center resources, useful Internet links, and highlights and links to our assessment database.

Scarsdale Teachers Institute



A Content-Area Analysis of our Computer Center Catalog

At the heart of Grant Wiggins' *Understanding by Design* work is his recommendation that teachers contribute to a peer-reviewed database exemplary units of instruction. We believe that the Middle School's Computer Center Catalog has the potential to be just such a tool. While we have chosen to focus on basic demographic data and the NETs perspective as a way to understand our students' experience with instructional computing, an examination of the subject-area standards teachers identify most often show how this work addresses the *essential questions* of each course's curriculum.

Teachers in several departments tend to describe their use of technology as related to their discipline's content. Social Studies teachers have most frequently identified their instructional computing activities as being consistent with their discipline's call for *experiences that provide for the study of people, places and environments*. Similarly, Foreign Language teachers cite a standard emphasizing a student's *understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied*. Family and Consumer Science teachers cite *integrat[ing] multiple life roles and responsibilities in family, career, and community roles and responsibilities* more often than any other standard.

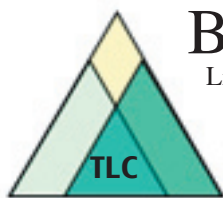
Teachers in Math, Science, Art and English have been more likely to suggest through their identification of content-area standards that an activity's being included in the catalog is based less on *what* students learn than on *how* the activity affects student learning. Math teachers most often reference *programs should focus on solving problems as part of understanding mathematics*. Along similar lines, the *Science as Inquiry* theme is regularly identified by Science teachers. Teachers of Art and English consistently cite standards which suggest that technology is a medium of expression and communication: *students... understand and apply media, techniques, and processes related to the visual arts*, and (in English) *students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences*.

Student Self-Assessment

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number of students describing their skills as excellent were Word Processing (84%), Internet and Database Research (74%), File Management (72%), and use of the Library Catalog (59%). The areas with the highest incidence of responses indicating the need for support were Digital Video (54%) (only as eighth graders are these students *now* using iMovie), the use of Peripherals like scanners (39%), and Web Design (34%).

The online survey was created in FileMaker Pro. The multi-user database not only tabulated the survey results, but also generated bar graphs dynamically. Future plans include asking all seventh graders to complete the survey later this year and looking for the right opportunity to engage the faculty in a discussion of the data. For example, should we be looking for additional opportunities for students to gain experience with designing web pages as a kind of class project, or might we be increasing curriculum applications of iMovie for sixth and seventh graders? In addition, is the favorable data concerning research skills and even word processing consistent with what we understand about students' actual level of proficiency in these areas?



BiblioBytes

Liz Waltzman and Sharon Waskow

We have been working with Doug and Ken to find a way to coordinate the efforts of classroom teachers, librarians, and computer teachers. We are in the process of developing an exciting, new and seamless paradigm for research projects known as T(teacher) L(librarian) C(computer teacher). With this model, you will not only continue to receive *Tender Loving Care* from us, but also a clear way to understand how the content, research and technology components fit together. Stay tuned...

On another note, we have developed an easy to use and thorough checklist for web site evaluation that we are encouraging teachers to use with their students. Stop by the library if you would like a copy.

Also of note, we have been selected to participate in a federal grant from the LSTA (Library System Technology Act). We will be working as a team with Steve Goodman on a U.S. Government project and with Tammy Marchini on a History of Medicine unit. These will be Internet-based, and we will be receiving training on web-based inquiry and web site design.