IN THE MIDDLE

MOUSE CLICKS

As mentioned in last month's Mouse Clicks, the Middle School's **Intranet** can be accessed by entering 172.16.12.253 into the address field of your browser. These projects and resources (now a few years old) were created using a variety of resources: Adobe PageMill, Claris HomePage...

Today, this potentially powerful technology can be tapped by creating Web Pages using Macromedia **Dreamweaver** or **Site Central**. In addition, it is now possible to save work created in a variety of software programs as **HTML** or **PDF** files (allowing it to be posted on our Intranet). And while we say this with more than a little nervousness, **PowerPoint** presentations can be saved for the Internet.

Last week we distributed our **brochure** including a list of software organized by software type, as well as important instructions for saving and printing files, downloading/copying from the Internet, and bringing work in from home. The brochure will also be available on the Middle School Intranet. Let us know if you would like extra copies for your classroom.

The following middle school teachers have identified educational technology as playing an important part in the work for which they received an **STI Mini-Grant**:

Sue Goldman, for an activity in which students write, design, and publish original Playbills about works read in English class. Popham Six (**Linda Dixon, Janie Fitzgerald, Meghan Good and Bob Saya**), for an interdisciplinary exploration of the Middle Ages. **Ken Holvig**, for the development and support of MIDI technology designed to supplement music teachers' teaching of theory, composition, and performance. **Doug Rose**, for his work applying standards-based assessment to a catalog of computer activities.

Remember our struggles last Fall with **insufficient storage space** for student work? We now find ourselves in the same situation with our Teacher Server. While we are planning a comparable upgrade here as well, you can help by deleting unnecessary files from your documents folder. Give us a call if we can help by burning a CD of important work.

The Next Wave

Recently, we featured the exciting work being done by students in two veteran teachers' classrooms. This month we look at how our more recent colleagues are using educational technology in their classes *(note: they're not just downloading MP3's)*.

The sophomore class has quickly established itself as a model for the student-centered, project-based integration of technology into the curriculum. For example, Julie Gerstenblatt's Fountain Seven English students combined careful writing about literature with **Photoshop** graphics to create fabulous *original* READ Posters.

Julie's English colleague Janie Fitzgerald (Popham Six) has worked closely with her Social Studies counterpart, Meghan Good, on an impressive list of interdisciplinary activities. Recent collaborations include a series of Mesopotamian newspapers (using **PageMaker**) and a research project (Internet Research, **Inspiration**). Together, Meghan and social studies teachers Eric Brand, Adam Nichols, and Meghan Sullivan have compiled an impressive inventory of Internet activities, including Webquests, simulations, and a variety of research projects.

Larry Chatzinoff (Butler Six) is using **iBooks** for investment research in a sixth grade version of the popular math department stock market project, and science teachers Laurie Ciccone, Tammy Marchini, and Ken Raff have implemented important curriculum goals through activities where the computer plays an essential role.

Project Miscellany^{Science}

The Middle School Science department's use of educational technology is not only regular – it demonstrates variety and creativity, as well. For example, while Ken Raff's Cooper Seven students are hardly alone in using **PowerPoint**, a clever use of the application's *hyperlink* capabilities allows students to create interactive dichotomous keys. Similarly, in the Fall, Tammy Marchini's students (Butler Seven) used **Excel**'s graphing features to illustrate whether a lab subject demonstrated the requisite life science principles to be considered alive.

In our last issue, we saw how important the research process was to much of the work undertaken in the Social Studies department. Science students are finding Webquests and other **Internet-based research** activities central to their studies, as well. Laurie Ciccone, Linda Dixon, Sandy McQuade, and Mary Jane Motl have either brought their classes to the Computer Center or used iBooks in the classroom more than once to explore topics such as volcanoes and earthquakes, ecology, energy use, optical illusions, and natural history.

Fountain Seven students are about half way through a year long science research project. To date, the project has provided Jennifer Gilbert with a vehicle for instruction (in the library) about research skills, library and Internet use, and note-taking. More recently, Jennifer's students used **Inspiration** to enter their notes into an outline to organize their research.
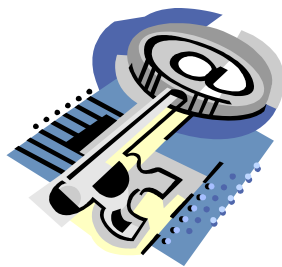
All eighth grade students will soon begin an ambitious **independent research project**. Mike Katz, Harvey Flisser, Jay Gandelsman, and Christine Gilliland will be guiding their students through work in which technology supports research, publication, and assessment goals.

NETS Project Key to "Digital Hub"

Apple describes its new iMac as "the perfect foundation for your digital lifestyle." With all due respect to our friends at Apple, we would like to suggest that the Middle School's Computer Center and Library can be seen as our digital hub.

National Educational Technology Standards for Students are providing perspective on what technology skills can be woven into the fabric of the curriculum and – through performance indicators – when and how these skills might be taught. Consistent with the philosophy of the digital hub, the Technology Foundation Standards for Students and related performance indicators can also suggest how technology supports new curriculum standards.

Teachers – in all subject areas, using a variety of software applications – are saying that approximately half of the projects in the database support one or both of the following performance indicators:

- *Use content-specific tools, software and simulations to support learning and research.*
- *Select and use appropriate tools and technology resources to accomplish a variety of tasks and solve problems.*
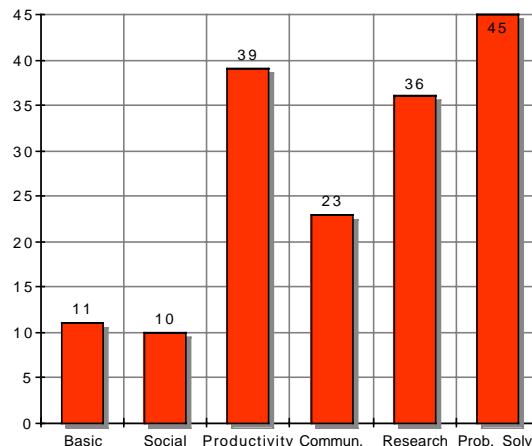
These performance indicators, in turn, point to TFSS standards related to enhancing student productivity, improving research skills, and supporting problem-solving and decision-making, long the basis of outstanding teaching in The Middle School. National Educational Technology Standards promote:

Our NETS Database (cataloging 67 activities) shows how technology reinforces traditional academic values.

Productivity – *Students use technology tools to enhance learning, increase productivity, and promote creativity. Students use productivity tools to collaborate in constructing technology-enhanced models, prepare publications, and produce other creative works.*

Research – *Students use technology to locate, evaluate, and collect information from a variety of sources. Students use technology tools to process data and report results.*

Problem-Solving/Decision-Making – *Students evaluate and select new information resources and technological innovations based on the appropriateness for specific tasks. Students use technology resources for solving problems and making informed decisions. Students employ technology in the development of strategies for solving problems in the real world.*

BiblioBytes

Liz Waltzman and Sharon Waskow

Need a book recommendation? Come see the KIDS' PIX display in the library. This display of posters features enthusiastic student-written reviews, color pictures of the students and the book jackets. Speaking of posters (and book recommendations), have you seen the original *READ Posters* created by Ms. Gerstenblatt's Fountain Seven students? While on the subject of library displays, selected "original" *Immigrant Postcards* created by Ms. Wixted's Fountain Eight students can also be seen in the library.

Check out the library's web site for resources you may be able to use for your own class projects. Our links are frequently updated and improved. Also, note the special feature on the library's homepage that says "Attention All 8th Grade Students" for information on our visiting author, Ellen Levine.

Current electronic library research projects:
- Mr. Chatzinoff and Mr. Saya's stock market investment project.
- Ms. Ciccone's Volcano and Earthquake project.