

IN THE MIDDLE

MOUSE CLICKS



It has been a while since we have talked about the Middle School's **Intranet**. To get to our Intranet, enter 172.16.12.253 into the address field of your browser. Take a look; you will find a variety of projects and resources (now a few years old) that have been made available to the school community. Stop by if you would like to talk about how you and your classes can tap this potentially powerful technology.



We are pleased to have been able to add considerable storage capacity to our **network** through this month's upgrade. As we wrote in our memo before the upgrade, the new RAID drive has more than doubled our storage space for student work. *Take your best shot PowerPointers.*



We are putting together our **software order** for next year. As you know, most of what we spend every year on software goes to the purchase and upgrade of high quality applications that teachers can apply across the curriculum. Approximately 85% of this budget is spent annually for the purchase of site licenses allowing us to install professional-quality applications from companies like Microsoft and Adobe on computers throughout the school.

At the same time, we make an effort to provide teachers and students with more specialized applications to enhance teacher productivity and student learning. Let us know if you have come across software for your subject area that we should be taking a look at. In addition Apple Computer's Learning Series provides us with preview copies of outstanding software in most subject areas.



We have put together a **brochure** addressing several issues we deal with regularly. The brochure includes 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.



As many of you know, you can borrow a variety of **resources** from the Computer Center. You can sign out cameras, scanners, floppy and zip drives, and projectors. *Please let us know when you borrow these resources, so that we can better help the next person.*



Mr. C's Social Studies Class

Joe Cesarano's social studies classes were among the first to make extensive use of computers. (Remember the IIs in Popham 12?) This year's Popham 8 social studies classes continue to learn in an environment using *just in time* educational technology. The Computer Center has been able to supplement existing computers in Joe's room with older machines to support this self-contained program.

As much as several times a week, Joe's students are able to work on rigorous projects which have been benchmarked to the Social Studies standards. To date, Joe's students have completed an introduction to PowerPoint through a project on the Reconstruction. They are beginning a second project in which they research amendments to the Constitution. All projects are evaluated using rubrics.

Joe has identified this work as an important area of professional development. It is the basis of his own Option "A" project this year, and in January he will be teaching an STI class on using technology in the social studies classroom for his middle school colleagues (see page 2).



Project Miscellany^{Social Studies}

To date, approximately 40% of the projects using educational technology – projects scheduled in the Computer Center, in a classroom using iBooks, or in the Library using the Internet for research – are social studies activities. The majority of this work involves some form of Internet research.

In several social studies classes, students are undertaking what might be called *directed research*. While this kind of research is seen regularly in the library, teachers employing computer-based research strategies such as Webquests and hotlists are finding ways to guide students to high-quality Internet content. Carol Duncan (Butler 6) and Meghan Good (Fountain 6) used Webquests to introduce students to the field of archaeology. Saving AppleWorks word processing files with links to Web sites as templates in their students' *group shared folder* allowed Eric Brand (Fountain 7) and Emma Wixted (Fountain 8) to create online instructional materials.

Social studies teachers are also finding research applications for Internet sites which provide students with a more interactive experience, with the Internet providing the software application. Emma's students' study of Rockefeller included a simulation of the Industrial Revolution found on the PBS site (www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/rockefellers/index.html). Susan Taylor's CHOICE students used a database found on the New York Times site (www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/) to research important events and historical figures coinciding with their birthday.

Finally, Cooper 7 students were actually given the opportunity to develop content for the Internet. With the help of the library, Steve Goodman's students' research on the thirteen original colonies culminated in traditional papers as well as for Web sites created using SiteCentral for an online colonial fair.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

1/4 STI #2465 Using Technology in the Social Studies Classroom, Joe Cesarano

"Each [social studies] department member will be introduced to PowerPoint through examples created by the instructor. They will then create their own presentation based on their grade-level curriculum."

1/4 STI #2468 Advanced iMovie, Ken Holvig, Andy Verboys

"Participants will review the iMovie program for digital video editing. New programs and techniques will be introduced to enhance the editing process."

1/8 iTunes & the iPod: U2 Can Do Music Early Bird Technology Workshop

1/29 Buttons, Bells & Whistles: HyperStudio in Half an Hour Early Bird Technology Workshop

2/1 STI #2470 Broadcast Journalism for Middle School Teachers, Ken Holvig, Andy Verboys

"This course will provide teachers with the tools to involve their students in the creation and production of weekly news shows which will be broadcast to the school and to the community."

2/8 STI #2460 Tools 2001, Ken Holvig, Andy Verboys

"This course gives [teachers] the knowledge of the inner workings of the computer. Tools From Past to Present is a very unique combination of old industrial arts and new technology."

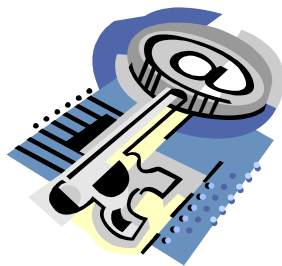
2/12 Go Ahead, Make My Database: FileMaker Pro Early Bird Technology Workshop

3/5 Photoshop for Novices Early Bird Technology Workshop

3/19 Surfing and Searching: Finding It on the Web Early Bird Technology Workshop

Scarsdale Teachers Institute

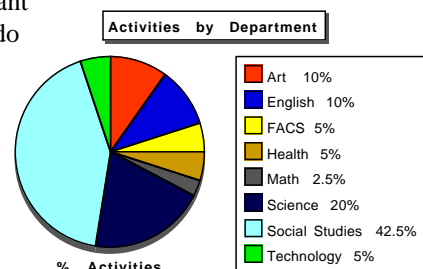
<http://www.scarsdaleschools.org/sti>



ActivityLog Database Maps Technology Use

In some classes, the use of educational technology is an essential – even daily – part of the curriculum. For example, last month we looked at Andy Verboys' Technology class, where several activities account for a significant percentage of his program. The Computer Center's standards database project is beginning to allow us to analyze educational technology use in classes where computer use is more occasional. We understand that our catalog of over 40 activities to date may not be representative of what we will see when we look back later in the year; still, it probably does help us understand the current student perspective of Middle School computer use.

Last month we reported that a significant percentage of the work students were asked to do using the computer fell into the category of Internet research. This remains the case. In just over half of the activities in the database (21 of 41), Internet Explorer is the primary software application used. Perhaps consistent with this emphasis, social studies activities comprise the greatest percentage of computer-based activities to date.



Students in no one grade are any more or less likely to use educational technology. There is also a rough balance between students whose classes use computers in the Computer Center and those whose classes are using technology in the Library or with carts in the classroom. Again, recognizing the limits of our current sample size as well as the impact of variables such as which students have already taken which specials, Fountain students have seen a slightly higher use of technology through the first three and a half of months of the school year.



BiblioBytes

The work of the Library and the work of the Computer Center often overlap. Indeed, our ActivityLog database tells us that for at least a third of the Middle School's technology-based activities some time is spent in the Library. Well over half of the activities in our database involve some kind of Internet research and are, therefore, consistent with the Library's mission. For this reason we have decided to feature a regular column written by the librarians in the newsletter.

Are you tired of searching the Internet and coming up empty handed? Are you looking for a way to freshen up a lesson? Do you want to gain more friends and influence people? Help is just a click away.

The SMS library's *new and improved* web page may be your answer. Check out our redesigned home page with its delectable palette of choices. To highlight a few: under **Class Projects** you can find links we have put together to support individual teacher's projects. Have a research project in mind or want to brainstorm one with us? Just come in and talk to us. **Teacher Resources** provides a list of professional sites as well as curriculum links. **Helpful Sites** is meant for ready reference for both teachers and kids, and **Subscriptions** offers information, periodical, poetry and image databases. Finally, check out **Books** for lists of recommended titles for each grade level and links to author websites.

All this and more is available to you 24/7 on the SMS web page from school or at home (www.scarsdaleschools.k12.ny.us/mslib/index.html). Enjoy!

Liz Waltzman and Sharon Waskow