

# IN THE MIDDLE

## MOUSE CLICKS



The District has been awarded the Lower Hudson Regional Information Center's Pioneer Award for integration of digital video into the Middle School technology program and other academic areas. Ken Holvig and Andy Verboys were cited for the high quality of this work as well their support of others regionally and nationally who are, likewise, committed to enhancing education through the integration of educational technology. Dr. McGill accepted the award at the annual LHRIC conference at the Tarrytown Hilton. The conference featured internationally-known authors Dr. Christine Finn (*The Archaeology of Silicon Valley*) and Alan November (*Empowering Students with Technology*) and, of course, an amazing presentation by Ken and Andy (featuring the work of many SMS teachers and students).



Recent visitors to SMS include independent production companies producing stories on behalf of Nickelodeon and PBS. The Nickelodeon crew is preparing a story on school computer use to be shown on Nick News with Linda Ellerbee. While at the Middle School, they shot film in Andy Verboys' Technology class, as well as a segment with Jennifer Gilbert's students talking with Sharon Waskow about appropriate Internet use.

A team from VisionLink is producing fifteen modules for PBS Teacherline, an online teacher inservice initiative supported with a grant from the Department of Education. The program's content is developed from NETS Teacher Standards and leads to what is referred to as Capstone Certification: *The Capstone Modules emphasize the collection and arrangement of evidence of proficiency in technology and the integration of technology skills to support more effective teaching and learning.*



Just a reminder... we have purchased a site license for an amazing library of software tutorials, Atomic Learning Library. You may access [www.atomiclearning.com](http://www.atomiclearning.com) from school or home. Click "Login" (The User ID: [scarsdalems](http://scarsdalems); the Password: [openbook](http://openbook))



We have scheduled a year-end meeting for this year's class of laptop users for May 22, 2:45 in the C.A.M.P. Room.



## Independent Science Research Project *FileMaker® Web Companion Puts Project on Internet*

This spring, the Middle School's eighth grade science teachers (and their students) are piloting an exciting independent research project. Created to assess a student's ability

to design and implement original scientific research, this project uses a FileMaker Pro database to create an Internet research portal.

Students publish their research anonymously by adding content to their password-protected record in the database from home via the Internet. Teachers will be able to monitor their students' work through read-only access to all student records in the database. During a peer-review phase of the project, students will also be given read-only access to other students' work and asked to complete an online rubric. Each author will then be given the opportunity to incorporate the recommendations from this preliminary evaluation into the final revision. Teachers will complete their assessment of student work through a series of online rubrics.

Teachers are excited about how the project allows them to assess their students' progress relative to an important strand of state standards. They are also pleased with the way the database allows teachers, students and parents to take part in a discussion about a student's progress towards these goals. The Computer Center sees this project as an exciting pilot of interactive web-based educational technology.



## Project Miscellany<sup>English</sup>

SMS English teachers' use of educational technology balances the support for traditional goals with the exciting activities computers open up for their students.

For Lisa Bryan, Julie Gerstenblatt, and Margie Ross's students, a focus on editing and other writing skills transformed the Computer Center into a writing lab. For Janie Fitzgerald's students, technology supported the planning stage in the writing process as they used Inspiration's outliner to organize notes for an interdisciplinary research paper. Both Julie Gerstenblatt and Judy Grosz have brought classes to the Computer Center to publish poetry. Judy's students have used desktop publishing strategies with AppleWorks to create class anthologies of student poetry.

Just as Julie Gerstenblatt supplemented her students' word processing experiences with original READ posters created in Photoshop, Margie Ross's students have balanced their written work with additions to the database of artifacts introduced earlier in the year by Emma Wixted. Margie's students have now added original book jackets to the Postcards they created in the Fall. Recently, discussions among Emma, Margie and Linda Fisher have brought Fountain Eight an exciting new interdisciplinary project, the creation of original commemorative stamps.

For David Wixted's students, PowerPoint presentations downloaded from the Internet, made available on a cart of laptops in the classroom, provided insight into *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Sue Goldman and her students continue their work with L.E.R.F.'s, CHOICE's successful online self-assessment program. Each marking period students, then teachers, evaluate a student's progress using a FileMaker database.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

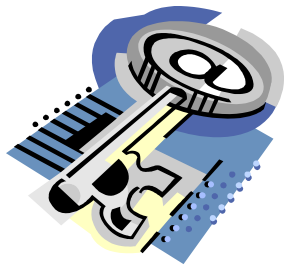
The District is ready to roll out its new e-mail system. The computer teachers have received their training, and the required two hour workshops for the rest of the staff have been scheduled.

All three workshops will provide an overview of the new system, Novell's GroupWise® 6, including basic e-mail skills as well as the system's more advanced features. Also on the workshop agenda will be a discussion of policies and guidelines for using District e-mail.

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.

- 4/25 e-mail Training  
Computer Staff  
2:45-4:45
- 4/26,27 Broadcast Journalism for  
Middle School Teachers  
Ken Holvig, Andy Verboys  
STI #2533
- 4/30, 5/7 e-mail Training  
Computer Staff  
7:15-8:15 AM
- 5/10,11 Do You Hear What I Hear?  
Making Digital Music  
Jerry Crisci, Ken Holvig  
STI #2544
- 5/14 e-mail Training  
Computer Staff  
2:45-4:45
- 7/8,9 Introduction to  
FileMaker Pro®  
Doug Rose  
STI #2528
- 7/10,11 Intermediate/Advanced  
FileMaker Pro®  
Doug Rose  
STI #2547
- 7/30,31 Summer Technology  
Leadership Summit  
Jerry Crisci  
STI #2549
- 8/1,2 The Assessment of  
Computer-Based Projects  
Doug Rose  
STI #2534

Scarsdale Teachers Institute  
<http://www.scarsdaleschools.org/sti>



# NETS Project Raises Compelling Questions

Recent NETS discussions have focussed on how our assessment database identifies Internet research as the most prevalent use of educational technology within the school. At the same time, we are reading about award-winning historians accused of plagiarism (see *History Is an Art, Not a Toaster*, New York Times, February 28, 2002) and a Kansas town torn apart by what the *Times* refers to as the "latest [Internet age] plagiarism revelation afflicting American schools." (Jodi Wilgoren, *School Cheating Scandal Tests a Town's Values*, New York Times, February 14, 2002).

In this context, it is interesting to consider two NETS middle-level performance indicators identified by relatively small numbers of teachers as being an important consideration in the planning of educational technology activities. While approximately 50% of activities cataloged in our project use Internet technology – the overwhelming majority of them for research of some kind – in only about 10% of the database's activities are the following performance indicators cited:

- #3. Exhibit legal and ethical behaviors when using information and technology and discuss consequences of misuse.  
#10. Research and evaluate the accuracy, relevance, appropriateness, comprehensiveness, and bias of electronic information sources concerning real-world problems.

Interestingly, less than 20% of the research activities cite these performance indicators.

As with any educational activity, activities using educational technology address a variety of goals – some clearly articulated, some less explicit. We are confident that concerns about plagiarism and what might be called *media literacy* are taken seriously by teachers. At the same time, a carefully considered collaboration among Computer Center staff, The Library, and the classroom teacher can enhance this kind of instruction.

**Few students, in my experience, plagiarize intentionally. Most do so out of carelessness or lack of understanding. (There are exceptions, of course, like the student who last semester handed in a science paper which concluded with "Return to home page.")**

Diane Boehm, TechLearning.Com, April 1997



## BiblioBytes

Liz Waltzman and Sharon Waskow

A revolution is brewing! Everyday we promote the **RADICAL** notion that students actually read and think about the information they find on the Internet. The glut of information available on the Web has altered how students do research. The temptation to cut and paste text has given rise to fresh concerns about plagiarism. This challenges teachers to think of new ways for students to process and synthesize their research.

Jamie McKenzie, in an article entitled, *The New Plagiarism: Seven Antidotes to Prevent Highway Robbery in an Electronic Age*, offers the following suggestions:

- Require original thinking in addition to fact gathering.
- Have students find the facts and construct new meanings.
- Emphasize essential questions.
- Require and enable students to make their own answers.
- Teach notetaking – including extracting, paraphrasing and summarizing – and require students to cite their sources.
- Stress "Green Ink" (*black* for other's ideas, *green* for fresh thinking) and Citation Ethics.
- Assess progress throughout the entire research process.

To read the full text of this article, the May 1998 issue of *From Now On* can be found at [fno.org](http://fno.org). To brainstorm project ideas to help avoid plagiarism, please visit us in the library.