

Tech Talk

Brunswick School
Department

December, 2014

News from the Main Office

Survey

I recently sent out a technology survey to the entire district asking 3 questions:

- Please state the technology that you are using and provide examples of how technology has extended student learning in your classroom.
- Please state the technology that you are using and provide examples of how the technology has allowed for differentiation of curriculum.
- If there is technology that you would like to have but do not have please provide the type of technology you would like to have and explain why, and how you think it will help you meet the needs of your students.

The purpose of this survey was to gather information to present to the school board. I received 84 responses. On November 19th I presented the school board the following information.

- An Intro to the Technology Department
- Results of the Technology Survey
- How do we meet the needs of diverse student learners and staff? What do they need to know?
- Technology and Assessment
- Next Step

The technology department and the district technology committee will be working on updating the K-8 technology benchmarks that the board is interested in learning more about.

Sue

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Technology Department Staff

District

Sue Woodhams –Director of Technology Integration
Matt Engstrom System Administrator

Jeff Hathaway Network Administrator

Mike Hedger Technology Support Specialist (the floater)

Sharon Kennett Data Person

Brunswick High School

Mike Nelson

Mike Hedger

Brunswick Junior High School

Jeff Hathaway - Windows

Jerry Cross - Macs

Dan Dearing – Integration

Elementary School

Coffin

Jeff Hathaway

HBS

Bill Congdon

Gwen Christman – Elementary Integrator

December 2014

Webmail tip

Outlook Web Access (webmail) does not have full functionality in any browser other than Internet Explorer. Since the release of Internet Explorer 11, however, webmail only functions in “light” mode in IE. This disables some functions, including access to the Public Folders (Calendars). There is no current fix for our version of Exchange, but that will be remedied when we migrate to Exchange 2013 within the next few months. Thankfully, there is a workaround that will allow you to use the full functionality of Outlook Web Access. To enable full usage of webmail in Internet Explorer, you need to add the ‘k12.me.us’ domain to the IE compatibility view settings. To do this, go to the webmail site (<https://email.brunswick.k12.me.us/owa>) and then click on the settings icon in the top-right corner of the window (it looks like a gear wheel). From the settings menu, click on ‘Compatibility View Settings’. At the next screen, ensure that ‘k12.me.us’ (without the quotes) is in the ‘Add this website’ entry box, and then click on the ‘Add’ button. If it does not have the website in the entry box, type it in exactly as: **k12.me.us** and then click the ‘Add’ button. Click on the ‘Close’ button and then close Internet Explorer. Open Internet Explorer again, go to the webmail address, log in, and you will now have full webmail functionality. More detailed instructions on this process, with screenshots, are located here: <http://www.msoutlook.info/question/821> Just scroll down to the ‘Compatibility Mode’ section about halfway down the page.

Matt

ID BADGE ID BADGE ID BADGE

I am continuing to make ID badges for all faculty and staff in the district. If you don't have an ID badge (by chance), please get in touch with me ASAP as you will need to have your ID badge to gain access to your school. You also to make sure you have a current picture done by Lifetouch for Schoolmaster and for the badging system.

Sharon



Hi all – its budget time again. I can tell because as Sue has been meeting with most department heads and principals it appears that everyone is still thinking about Christmas. As I contact Vendors new and old about pricing for the next year I can only say that I sure wish we started this process in January when folks were thinking about paying bills instead of dreaming of gifts.

Still here we are with projectors and document cameras on the budget hoping to find ways to be funded. Also we the electronically oriented (more politically correct than geeky) are investigating the possibility of jumping to chrome books at the high school and junior high to increase boot speeds, productivity, and numbers of equipment that could be purchased and supported. For the record – saying supported is truly meant loosely – we still reserve the right to place an SEP (Somebody Else’s Problem) field around certain service requests.

We are also trying to come up with funds for the additional costs of shifting the 5th grade to the Junior High. If you happen to see the entire Tech Staff ringing bells outside the schools over the holidays or holding bake sales before the February and April breaks any donations would be appreciated. If you thought teaching fifth graders to use a laptop was tough, try teaching teachers to use an abacus!

Mike Hedger

News from the High School



Fall Newsletters

This fall I have found one of the biggest challenges we all face with the technology at BHS is our individual “expectations”; something we frequently bring with us from home. I, too, bring expectations about technology performance to work from home, but I’ve developed patience at work because I understand that home performance cannot be expected in a work environment. For instance, at home I only occasionally compete with my wife for wireless connections while in a classroom it’s not unexpected to have more than 20 students competing for the wireless signal at the same time. There are many factors impacting computers in an enterprise environment that are absent from a private environment, but there are some things that can be done to minimize the impact.

Laptop Labs.

- Start the laptops up in the morning before the students actually need to use them so that a student doesn't have to wait for the computer to boot.
- Assign each student a laptop so that they use the same laptop each time. When a person logs in on a computer for the first time the operating system builds a profile for that user to store personal settings. Once the profile has been built subsequent logins are faster since the profile doesn't have to be built again.
- If the laptops are to be used during a later class period in the same day, have students logoff rather than shutdown. If there is a significant break between use on the same day, have the student close the lid and return the laptop to the charging station (cart or shelf) and plug them in to keep them charged for the next student. Students at the end of a day should shutdown the laptop rather than simply logging off.
- System Updates frequently get installed in the background and require the computer to be restarted. The restart can be delayed until after school but the updates should be allowed to complete before they're shutdown for the day. The laptop should be plugged in and open until updates are completed. This allows them to be started the next day without having to lose time doing updates.
- Remember, laptop carts are shared resources and should always be left ready for use by the next person rather than left in a mess for the next person.
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Students can't access the internet.

This is usually because they haven't authenticated with the content filter, Rocket. The modern browsers have been re-designed to allow searches to be done from the URL address line. Because of this design, the browsers are not configured to go to the internet first and many are configured to open a generic local page when they start and don't actually connect until enter is pressed (or "Go" or an arrow is selected). If the browser attempts to do a search without having authenticated it may look like the student is on the internet but they are still blocked. To verify internet access the student should manually type an address on the URL line. I usually use "www.brunswick.k12.me.us/bhs". If the Rocket authentication screen comes up then they will know to authenticate, if it doesn't they have already authenticated and can perform searches as desired.

Google Drive (formerly Google Docs).

At this point most students and teachers are familiar with using the Google apps for creating and sharing documents, but I have found that some people experience problems that seems to be primarily tied to the web browser being used. We all have a favorite browser whether it's Internet Explorer in

Windows or Safari on a Mac, or the Open-source Firefox or Google's Chrome, but I've discovered that the best browser to use for Google's apps is (of course) Google's Chrome. Call me cynical but I suspect that Google has developed their applications to perform best on their own browser. I suspect Microsoft and Apple have done the same thing. Printing from Google Docs on any other browser seems to actually generate a PDF file that is treated like a download. If you or your students persist in not using Chrome for Google Docs then simply watch for the message that appears when you print asking if you'd like to open or save the file. Unless there is a need to save it, simply open the file (Adobe Reader will be launched) and then print the file from the application rather than the web browser.

Printing to the Black Lab.

In the past I was collecting and recycling boxes of print jobs that were being left at the Black Lab printer. This represented a significant consumption of paper and toner, so this summer I installed a print release station on the Black Lab printer. Now print jobs are held in the queue until the person who sent the print releases the job by logging in on the computer sitting next to the printer, and then selecting the "Print" link corresponding to the job to be released. All un-released print jobs are deleted after a day. I have been educating students as I see them staring at the printer and most now know how to release their print jobs. I have also had feedback from staff that they like the feature because they can send a confidential document to the Black Lab printer and they don't have to worry about someone else picking it up before they get there.

Mike Nelson



Over the last few months, Google Classroom has become one of the favorite applications for teachers. Four new features have just been added as the program continues to develop with the input from teachers from around the country.

Students Can Now Turn In Assignments without an Attachment

A major concern from teachers has been that students could only turn in their Assignments if a file was attached. Students now can click “Turn In” once the required task is complete.

Manage Students

From the “Students” tab, there are several actions you can take to interact with student accounts. You can manage permissions giving students the ability to “post and comment”, “only comment”, or only have the Teacher be the only one to “post and comment”.

Sort Students by Name

In the Students view click “Students” drop down - Choose Sort by First Name or Sort by Last Name

Reveal Deleted Items in the Stream

One concern that many teachers had with the Classroom Stream was that students could create and then delete posts and comments without the teacher ever knowing that it happened. Click “Show Deleted Items” to reveal all deleted items, they will appear in grey.

Tech Tip: Free Web Application!

“Editor” by Pixlr is a great image editing application which is very similar to Photoshop Elements. Pixlr has many of the same filters, layers and tools. To take a look at Editor go to: <http://apps.pixlr.com/editor/>

Tutorials can be found at: <https://support.pixlr.com/hc/en-us/categories/200202740-Tutorials-and-Templates>

I’m looking forward to working with teachers and students this fall. Please let me know of any questions or ideas you may have to enhance your technology skills.

Dan

A yellow line starts at a dot on the left, goes up and to the right, then down and to the right, ending at another dot.

Single App Use for iPads

Many of us use iPads everyday in school or at home. They're so fun and useful but sometimes it would be nice to limit them to specific activities. Kids learn to use any app and even remove apps maybe when we don't want them to! But iPads include a feature to address this. And it works with any iPad running iOS 6 or greater.

Guided Access

Guided Access can limit users to a single app or block areas of the screen. Once Guided Access is set up, you simply triple tap the home button to turn it on. It works with any app on the device.

Here's how to set it up:

Open **Settings**.

Tap on **General**, then scroll down to **Accessibility**.

Tap on **Guided Access**.

On the Guided Access screen toggle the switch to **On**.

Set a Passcode. Preferably one that a child isn't likely to guess. Make a note of this passcode, since you'll need it to exit the restricted mode.

That's the setup. Now you can use the feature any time. Open the app that you want to use, then quickly **triple tap the home button**. You might need to practice this! From here tap **Start**, or activate specific options, then tap start.

If you forget the passcode or can't triple-click the home button fast enough, hold the home button while restarting the iPad. This will force quit Guided Access and give you full access to the iPad again.

FMI: <http://support.apple.com/en-us/HT202612>

Jerry

A blue line starts at a dot on the right, goes up and to the left, then down and to the left, ending at another dot.

As we have seen by past snow storms and power outages, we are dependent upon other parts of the state system for our internet. Last month when there was a storm in the Bangor area, it affected our internet because we are reliant upon the Maine State Library Network (MSLN) for our internet gateway and that runs through the University of Maine in Orono.

As much as we maintain and upgrade our internal network, we will always be part of a nationwide grid connecting to servers all over the world. An outage either north or south of us can greatly affect what we are able to connect to as far as web pages and sites are concerned. Many web sites are located in far flung areas of this country or even the world, so be aware that although we do all we can, there are times that connections are out of our control.

~Jeff

HBS New Information on Bill Congdon



The school year is going fast and lots of Technology related things are always happening at HBS!

Of note we recently got a high speed color copier at HBS. What an awesome resource to be able to add color to enhance documents for student learning! Just as a reminder, we are still having some issues with print jobs not being picked up at printers and copiers. To assist this matter, I recently sent out information on configuring your HBS-ColorCopier preferences to send your print jobs to your copier storage box. If you have not yet done this for your computer or for your students when logged in at the computer lab/laptop carts, please do so soonest as we have to pay per page of usage even if it goes into the trash. If you need any assistance with this matter, please submit a SchoolDude and I will stop by and assist.

I have received some reports of slow computers at startup and shut down. This mainly occurs due to the automatic installation of critical system updates to our Windows computers. System updates are automatically downloaded and partially installed in the background while you are using your computers throughout the workday. This is done to minimize disruption to your computer usage, the downside is, these updates have to finish installing on computer shutdown and startup. Once those update processes are happening you must not disrupt them by turning off the computer or closing the lid before they finish or you will later get startup problems from incomplete software installation. If you do not turn off your computer for several days, the partially installed updates will build up to higher levels and shutdown and startup will take a lot longer to complete. Some have ran into this problem before and are choosing to not shut down their computers to avoid the long shutdown and startup times and are compounding the problem. To

minimize the issue of long shutdown and startup times, it is recommended to shut down your computer on a regular basis. Completing a logoff or restart only does not always finish the installation of updates and a full shutdown is required.

Technology tip for this newsletter is to remember to clean up your Outlook email. We do have capacity limits on our email server and a lot of us need to do our part to help keep this critical communication resource working by doing some periodic house cleaning. If you reach your assigned limit, you no longer can send and receive email until capacity is reduced. I have had to assist a few HBS staff with this issue recently. To see where you are at with respect to your email limits >> From within Outlook select the File Tab and then Info to see a bar graph of the usage of your allotted capacity, select Home tab to get back to your mailbox. I have assisted several people with cleanup and or archiving email and am always available if you need assistance with this. Remember to delete the email from your “Deleted Items” folder as your system usage level is not reduced from your account until you delete the deleted email.

I have batteries! If you need replacement batteries for your IWB Pen, projector remote control, or rechargeable classroom microphones, please stop by the Technology Office in Room 1 and get a replacement. If you submit a SchoolDude you will get a bonus as I will bring the replacement battery to your room ☺.

Bill Congdon



Substitute Elementary Integrator

My name is Julia Campbell and I’ve been helping out as the Elementary Technology Integrator at both Harriet Beecher Stowe and Coffin Schools. I have been learning about all the programs that are available to staff and students. I’m getting on the job training and I’m so grateful to all the staff and students for their support.

In Kindergarten students have been busy learning how to log onto the computer, and accessing the **Cool Links** on the Coffin Website. They are especially happy with learning how to use **Starfall.com** which is a great site for emergent readers. They have also been working in the Program **Pixie**. In Pixie they have created Classroom Books. Students were assigned a letter and they had to draw out a picture that went with the letter using the **Paint tools**. They learned how to use the **Undo button, save their work, retrieve their work**, and also had the satisfaction of creating a classroom book that they all had a part in creating. They became little authors, illustrators, and techies all in one lesson! With that program they also learned how to **insert text, change the size of the font, move the text**, and of course use the **keyboard**. They have learned

the **CTRL+ ALT + Delete (the V fingers)**, **spacebar**, **tab**, **enter**, **Caps Lock (the two green lights)**, **Shift key** and the **Backspace key**.

Some first grade classes are using **Raz Kids**, **IXL Math** and **Pixie**. One multi-age class of Gr. 1-2 students made a four page mini book in **Pixie** on what they are thankful .They all love attending their lab time.

Second Graders at HBS have been busy learning about maps in Social Studies, and making mini four page books in **Pixie** showing what they've learned about maps. They have learned inserting text, enlarging text, moving text. They used the **search** feature in **stamps**, **inserted stamps**, **used the drawing tools**, and **learned how to re-size graphics**. The books have been a great way to assess their knowledge about what they have learned about maps.

Some of the third grade classes have used the **laptop carts and the lab** to access websites on the U.S. states. One activity that they really enjoyed was in **Funbrain.com** called "Where Is That?" It is a great interactive site that teaches them their U.S. geography, state spellings, capital spellings, and it is FUN! Another third grade took the states project to the next level, and had students create a four page mini book in **Pixie** on a specific state. Students accessed **50states.com** and found information on their state, and made a book using the facts they researched.

Fourth grade classes have been getting an introduction to **PowerPoint**, and will use what they have learned to create a PowerPoint .Fifth grade has also been busy using **PowerPoints** to create slide shows on Explorers. Some classes learned how to organize their research notes in **Word** by creating columns and Rows. They learned how to search **Google Images** for pictures, and created a collage in a Word Document with text boxes to label the pictures.

Things that I'd like to use with students are the **Frames program**, **part of the Tech4learning software** and **Microsoft's Photo Story 3** to make Book Trailers. Here are some links to see what these programs can do

<http://www.booktrailersforreaders.com/PhotoStory+Video>

http://www.youtube.com/attribution_link?a=IfBJ19zXMY&u=/user/julcampb1%3Ffeature%3Dem-share_video_user