

TECH TALK

by Sharon Kubica



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TECHNOLOGY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

With the expected increase costs for electricity, it behooves all of us to be more conscientious about energy consumption. Your help is needed if we are to conserve energy whenever possible as we use technology in the district.

Please remember to:

- ◆ Turn off your **computer** when you leave for the day. Your monitor will go into “sleep mode” which requires minimal power.
- ◆ Turn off your **computer and monitor** over the weekend, during vacations, or when you won't be using it for more than a day.
- ◆ When not using your computer for periods of the day, turn off your computer **monitor**. Tech staff will check into a “sleep mode” setting that might be activated when the monitor is not in use after a certain length of time.
- ◆ Turn off your **large screen monitor, VCR/DVD player, printer**, etc. when not in use.

FAMILY ACCESS

Parents are taking advantage of the opportunity to access Skyward's Family Access option to check on information about their student! To date, parents have acquired logins and passwords to check on nearly 1,700 students. After a review of access records, more than 200 individual parents log in each day to

check on one or more of their children. This option offers great communication between school and family when it is most convenient for the parents.

UNITED STREAMING vs. SAFARI

For the last two years, Charlotte Schools has had two on-line programs available for access to curriculum support videos.

1. REMC 13 has funded participation in United Streaming/Discovery which provides access to videos, video clips, teacher's guides, clip art/images, and a web location for teachers to “store” their Playlists for using these materials. Video titles and other materials are added to this resource monthly with a collection that now includes over 4,000 videos and 40,000 clips. These materials are “downloaded” by teachers and tech staff to CPS server space making them available to all staff for use in a classroom with students.
2. SAFARI was funded by the district Media/Technology program and provided access to the original United Streaming/Discovery collection of about 1,200 videos, 12,000 clips, teacher's guides, and clip art/images. Along with being available “on-site” on a special server, a user friendly inter-face was available to assist with using these resources.

Due to a change in contracts, subscriptions, and service agreements, between SAFARI and video content providers, their relationship with United Streaming/Discovery **will end June 30, 2006**. When that happens, we will no

longer be able to have the SAFARI product available for use.

It is recommended that teachers who use the SAFARI product begin to convert their “playlists” to the United Streaming/Discovery web site and take advantage of the many additional features included in this program. All of the videos and video clips currently on the SAFARI server are included in the United Streaming/Discovery materials so you should be able to replicate your classroom activities and multi-media use. A number of United Streaming/Discovery training sessions are planned but if you would like individual help with this process, please contact your building tech or media staff.

WHAT IS “BLACKBOARD”?

BLACKBOARD is a web based product that allows a teacher to communicate in a “secure” way with students and parents. Often used by teachers as a “web page”, access to the site is provided through a login and password that the teacher gives to students and parents. Teachers use this site to: post class information and announcements, post homework assignments, store resources (web sites, powerpoint, handouts, etc.) that students will be using with assignments, have students take on-line tests that are automatically graded, and many other features that support teaching and learning. Today, a number of colleges, high schools, and institutions use Blackboard for on-line courses.

REMC 13 and Eaton ISD have funded this program as a resource for teachers to use. Check out the tech training schedule for a session on using BLACKBOARD or contact Jeff Haston (ext: 3946) or Gloria Wilson (ext: 5750) if you are interested in learning more about BLACKBOARD or getting a BLACKBOARD account set up.

PHONIC EAR USE

A representative from Phonic Ear will be on site the afternoon of November 2. If you have questions about the use of or are experiencing any difficulties with your room amplification unit, please contact Gloria at ext: 5750 to request a visit to your room.

Occasionally the tech office receives a call reporting “static” from the Phonic Ear unit. Often this is caused by damage to or a bend in the wire from the headset to the transmitter. Wearing the transmitter on the back of your waist will eliminate wire damage that is caused when the transmitter is worn on the front of your waste where it is affected when you bend forward to help students.

NOVEMBER TECH TRAINING SCHEDULE

The Tech trainings for November have been scheduled and published. You should have received an e-mail of the schedule along with instructions for registration. Teaching staff can receive PD credit for attendance. If you have questions or did not receive this e-mail, please contact Gloria at ext: 5750.

There are a number of new sessions being offered by Teri Terry, Jim Stewart, Dian Leckrone, Karen Anderson, Sharon Kubica, Mary Baker, and Jeff Haston including:

BlackBoard, Marco Polo, SmartBoard, Classroom Performance System, United Streaming: Video-on-demand, Filamentality, Graphic Organizers, Kidspiration, and Accelerated Reader.

