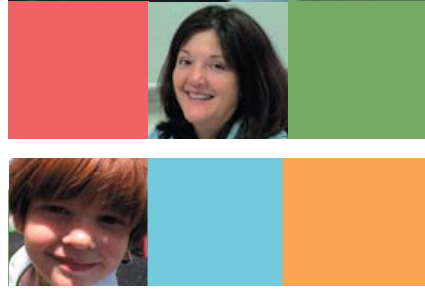


Fall 2007
Volume 4 ■ Issue 1

SISD

Technology Unplugged



Welcome to the fall edition of SISD Technology Unplugged newsletter. Can you believe Thanksgiving is already here? This school year has been fast and furious. We have many new initiatives in the area of technology. In this issue you will read about TPRI reading assessments using PDAs as well as the new voice over IP (VOIP) system implemented at Neblett Elementary School. Eventually all SISD campuses will have VOIP phone systems and voicemail. The recently passed bond program included projectors for all SISD classrooms. Currently projectors are installed at Washington/Neblett as a component of the new building construction. As construction is completed at the remaining campuses, projectors will be installed. One of the challenges we are facing in the deployment of classroom projectors in existing buildings is wiring and electricity. We are addressing the issues as we go, and although it is frustrating to wait, the end result will be powerful instructional tools for all SISD students, in all SISD classrooms. Another exciting initiative in progress is the upgrade of the Excelsior gradebook. For several years it has been requested that SISD teachers have access to their gradebook from any computer, even at home. The new Excelsior program is web based. Teachers, parents, and students will have access to grades from any Internet connected computer. The Excelsior system is installed and Campus Technology Specialists will be trained after the Thanksgiving break. SISD Technology staff will be coordinating with principals and teachers to insure a smooth transition to the new system.

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Another significant project in process is the implementation of a video on demand (VOD) system. During the 1996 bond, a media retrieval system was installed at all SISD campuses. Although the media retrieval systems have served us well, they are currently obsolete and have many technical issues. In an effort to upgrade the media service with current technology, the recent bond included the purchase of a VOD system. Video on demand systems allow users to select and watch videos over a network as part of an interactive television system. The new system has arrived in the district and SISD Technology team members are collaborating with the vendor to install and configure the system. Look for more information about the new system in December.

"We can do it better, more consistently, and in the end, it will cost us less because the students that we produce will be superior to those without technology experience."

Major Owens

Enjoy this issue of SISD Technology Unplugged and have a great Thanksgiving!!
Mignon Plyler
SISD Director of Technology



Elementary Teachers Administer TPRI and DIBELS on PalmOne PDA's

By Sharon Krenek
Technology Specialist at Crutchfield and Washington

Kindergarten, first and second grade teachers at Crutchfield, Wakefield and Jefferson Schools are using something new to assess their students' reading abilities this year.

PalmOne PDA's were issued to all the second grade teachers this summer after they received training on the DIBELS 3-Tier Reading Assessment program, sponsored by Region 10.

Teachers attended a week long training session where they learned how to administer a variety of different tests and use the Palm device to record all of their students' responses. The student has a test booklet and the teacher records their answers on the Palm as they answer. After they are finished testing, the teacher "syncs" the device with their teacher computer and all of the information is transferred to a Web based data management system, Wireless Generation-MClass. The assessment information is then immediately available to the teacher through a variety of different reports on the Website. Teachers are able to determine what areas of instruction they need to work on to meet each individual student's needs in just a few minutes.

Kindergarten and first grade teachers are using the PDA's to administer the TPRI test, which is given three times each year. The test must be administered to each student individually and is therefore very time consuming. With the use of the Palms, assessment time has been cut dramatically.

First grade teacher Delana Hutson said, "The PDA is a welcome addition to our assessment procedures. It greatly reduces test administration time and provides immediate test results. The PDA also allows for greater mobility during testing sessions. It is an invaluable tool."

Kindergarten teacher Margaret Kloppers also gives the PDA a great rating. "I have been giving the TPRI for several years to my kindergarten students, but this fall was the first time I have ever given it on the Palm Pilot. I was amazed at the amount of time it saved me. I never even picked up a pencil or pen. It was a breeze. I'll never go back to the paper/pencil method."

	LNF	PSF	NIWF	WUF
INTENSIVE				
8	23	34	6	32
23	34	24	14	29
34	44	12	25	29
STRATEGIC				
30	27	33	32	29
31	14	30	37	47
BENCHMARK				



Happy Birthday Wakefield!

By Sharice Jennings
Technology Specialist at Wakefield and Jefferson

Wakefield is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. Students and teachers have been talking about how things have changed at Wakefield since its opening in 1957. This year's fourth grade students were given a creative writing assignment to predict what changes would happen at Wakefield in the next 50 years. The students pretended to be the principal and composed a newsletter to send to the parents of these future students.

The ideas were as creative and different as the students. Here are some of the ideas from Mrs. Shelton's class:

Cash wrote, "After ten years of waiting...all students get their own laptop at their desk. It is also extremely fortunate that the phone system has changed to holographic media projectors."

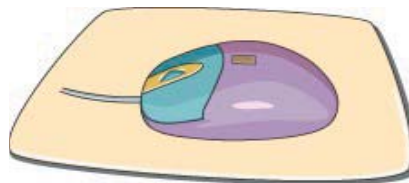
Thomas asked for help from parents, "because the robots keep blowing up."

Ja'Mia warns us, "There is also a pink squishy blob in the middle of the hall telling you to behave."

After the students finished typing their predictions on the Microsoft Publisher template provided for them, they changed the size, style, and color of their font and illustrated their ideas with clip art graphics. The students did a great job formatting their font and pictures for a newsletter specifically intended to be printed and sent to parents.

What's Under My Bed? A Mouse Lesson for Kindergarten

By Beth Weeks
Technology Specialist at Perrin and Fairview



Kindergarten students at Perrin and Fairview used the PowerPoint and video lesson called “What’s Under My Bed?” to practice click, double-click, and click drag and drop. Students double-clicked on the word name on the opening slide to start. They typed their name, clicked “OK”, and then chose slide two and started watching video clips as they double-clicked on the box. Each slide had an activity to do that included click drag and drop as they practiced those important skills and had fun with the story. At the end, teachers helped students print the handout format of their work so that it could be cut apart to create a book of the story.



Here are pictures of Mrs. Burns’ class as they worked their way through this 10 slide PowerPoint.

MENU MATH

By Tracey Powers
Technology Specialist at Dillingham

In this engaging activity, students apply real-life mathematical challenges while integrating technology applications such as PowerPoint, Word and Publisher. Students eagerly use different problem-solving strategies as they determine a restaurant theme, create menus, analyze costs, and set prices for their café.

The activity begins with a practice menu found at a website called the Hamburger Hut:

<http://educ.queensu.ca/~fmc/july2005/WeekendMenu.html>

Teacher Sharon Bledsoe has students pass a test to create their own restaurant. Part of the test is a demonstration in front of the class. Participants compute the change from \$20.00 and count

out the change with transparencies of money. The students then work in groups of four to name their restaurant and come up with a theme to build their menus around. The prices have to be realistic. The participants examine several restaurant menus to get ideas. They use PowerPoint or Publisher to create a menu. Each team member does one section. They make a money box with different coins from the play money kit, and create guest checks and tax tables. They bring or make simple props and decorations for their tables.

They practice on each other. (Whatever they order, they get trail mix and lemonade.) One member waits on the guest as the other does the math. Proper restaurant behavior is discussed



and the students calculate appropriate tips using mental math. Now they are so excited, they have to have real customers. They share invitations created in either Word or Publisher with staff members and parents. Guests come and are served in the themed restaurants.

Later the same menus are used to do solution sentences, percentages, and figure taxes by multiplying decimals. Additionally, the students use these menus to calculate “best deal” and “specials” for consumer math. This innovative project puts math in a real-world context.

Reference: Scharf, Kitty, and Barbara Johnson. Menu Math: The Hamburger Hut. Scottsdale, AZ: Remedia P, 2000.

DLC Makes Use of Plato Educational Software

By Victoria Barber
DLC Science Teacher

Students at Douglass Learning Center have an opportunity to complete their high school education using a variety of learning tools. Teachers act as facilitators while students work at their own pace on assignments geared toward their learning style. The Plato Learning Environment Program plays a large role in student success at DLC.

The district purchased the Plato software program four years ago and immediately implemented it at the DLC. The program allows students to have online access to a variety of curricula that include reading, social studies, math, science, language arts, and even job skills. Students enjoy the fact that it is computer-based, interactive, and interesting. And, what do teachers love about it? It's aligned to the TEKS and TAKS.

Teachers at DLC use Plato as a supplement to their curriculum. The Plato assignments consist of three components: the tutorial, application, and evaluation. The tutorial introduces and teaches the concept using animation and narration. The application is interactive and allows the student to practice the newly acquired knowledge. After completing the tutorial and application, the student accesses a multiple-choice test which evaluates the learning. As soon as a

student completes a test, the score is available to the student and the teacher. If the score is unacceptable, the student reviews the tutorial and accesses a new test. Teachers can monitor students' progress on any Plato assignment by running reports that display grades, time spent on the assignment, and a variety of other components.



'Robert' loves to work on Plato assignments because he not only likes computers, he prefers to work independently. He can complete assignments on his own schedule. If he has difficulty with a certain topic, he can review the tutorial again, ask for help from the teacher, and get going again.

'Jennifer' enjoys the animation and narration. She says, "Textbooks are dry. On Plato, I can see the words and hear them pronounced and explained. The animation shows how things interact and change." She

also likes the 'application' because she can interact with the screen. Depending on the subject, she may be asked to solve an equation, fill in a crossword puzzle, place labels on a diagram, match vocabulary words to definitions, or find the grammar and spelling errors.

'Rebecca' is a senior and needs only one English credit to graduate. She is excited that she can move quickly through the course by doing Plato at home and her other assignments in class.

A new version of Plato has been implemented this year that provides more options for teachers. Teachers can view educational standards, find a Plato assignment to meet a particular TEK, and search for resources, such as Internet sites and books, that help to supplement the lesson.

It was an expensive program to purchase, and expensive to update, but worth the price. As opposed to textbooks, which become dog-eared and outdated quickly, this computer program offers current, up-to-date information and resources. Teachers and students both benefit from using the Plato Learning Environment Program as part of their curriculum.

Plato Training at SHS

By Jimmie Pilcher
SHS Technology Specialist



Secondary teachers Phillip Scheibmeir, Cathy Cunningham, Jane Johnson, Pam Howeth, Teresa Dooley, John Miller, Linda Estes, and Jimmie Pilcher attended a hands on training for the new Web based Plato Learning Environment (PLE). SISD uses Plato for credit recovery purposes. In addition, it can be utilized by students who wish to gain additional credit or need assistance with a subject.

This group of teachers spent the entire day with Brian Halvorsten from Plato. They worked through the process of setting up learners in the system and assigning courses and assignments. The SHS teachers were very excited about the content of the courses and the capabilities that they viewed.

Turning Point in Math

By Richard Crookston
8th Grade Math/Algebra Teacher

To stay more competitive, textbook publishers are stepping up to the plate with the resources being offered to schools through textbook adoptions. With the adoption of the new Glencoe text books, the Piner Math team received leading edge technology in student interaction—Turning Point 'clickers'. This has been an immediate hit with the students.



The clicker is a small remote that allows a student to respond to questions shown on a TV or LCD projected image. They see immediate feedback as they watch the counter record their responses and display a graph showing the class's responses to the questions. Their enthusiasm is displayed with claps and cheers as the class responds well and approaches the 100 percent correct.

With the system, the teacher can get prompt response on how well a class understands a subject by pre-testing and post-testing them. It increases the student's attentiveness and creates an atmosphere of fun and anonymity as they respond to the questioning.

The instructor gets information on each student's answer and the class as whole in table and graphic format. This information can be imported to Excel. The system comes with PowerPoint presentations with interactive questions that include warm-ups, quizzes and instruction slides. There are also PowerPoint templates to build your own questions.

The math team is looking forward to using this technology with overhead LCD projectors in the future. This will enable teachers to use the resources provided by textbook publishers, such as Turning Point, on a regular basis.

Voice-Over-IP Technology at SISD

By Kyle Harris
SISD Communication Systems Administrator

Here at Sherman ISD we are always looking for ways to improve processes and grasp new technologies to help us work and teach more efficiently. The opening of the Neblett Elementary campus has allowed us to deploy many exciting new technologies that help to accomplish that goal. One of these technologies is a Voice-Over-IP phone system built by Cisco Systems, Inc. This article will explain the basics of how this system works and outline some of its many benefits to the district and end users.

Basically, a Voice-Over-IP system allows telecommunications over standardized computer networking instead of traditional phone lines. The phones used in the system have network ports on them instead of standard RJ-11 jacks which connect back to the main network switches for the district. Also on the network are three Cisco CallManager servers and one Cisco Unity Voicemail server, as well as the main voice router at Central Office, a secondary voice router at Piner Middle School, and a small voice gateway at each campus in which the system is deployed. All these components work together to process calls, provide voicemail and other services, and route emergency (911) calls out of specific ports for identification by emergency services.

One of the greatest advantages to the end users of this system is the availability of Voicemail to all users. Currently only four of our campuses have voicemail capabilities on the old Nortel digital phone system. With the completion of district-wide VoIP deployment, each of our 1,000+ users will have availability to their own private voicemail. This allows for greater communication between both our internal



Continues on page 8

Jackson Pollock Meets the Wii

By Mary Hensler
Art & Technology Sherman High School

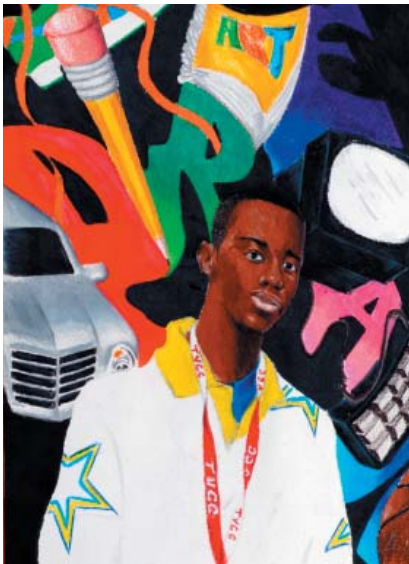
Art students in our AP Portfolio classes are now allowed to include electronic media in their two-dimensional portfolios

for the College Board. These advanced level art students are augmenting their studio classes with technology classes, to in-

clude illustration and imaging projects done in Photoshop, Illustrator, and the 3D program Maya. In addition, since the computer lab shares space (right next door) to the studio, studio work is increasingly incorporating or mixing new technology and classical art media.

It is interesting to observe the innovative ways creative types are utilizing these new toys and tools. The same young artists involved in traditional rendering in graphite and the nuances of a watercolor wash, often carry over their

aesthetic into working with gradients and displacement maps creating bold new art forms utilizing media which is both original and futuristic.



Created by Brad Hambrick

Creatives of all kinds have adopted these new technologies today, just as readily as those of the avante garde movements of a hundred years ago who delved into the realm of photography, motion and time, serving as the catalyst for art movements such as Cubism and Surrealism. Art-

ists are innovators and have been known to embrace



Created by Nina Brockman

emerging technologies from the Renaissance machines of Leonardo da Vinci to the printing press



Created by Karissa Sherry

utilized by Albrecht Dürer to the experiments with multimedia and video in the 1960s.

The advent of the Internet in 1994, as a popular medium

catalyzed a global art movement that began to explore the cultural, social, and aesthetic possibilities of new modes of communication such as the Web, video, wireless devices including phones, hand-held computers, and MP3 players. These New Media Arts are differentiated from traditional artist's media to

include fields beyond computer graphics and computer animation, toward 3D visualization, the Internet, interac-

tive technologies, and even robotics.

New Media derived from digital content utilizes mass media and telecommunications modes of delivery for artwork ranging from conceptual to virtual art, including performance and installation art. The World Wide Web is itself a fluid contemporary art medium, a Global Art Gallery with a universal interface that touches almost every aspect of our lives.



Created by Victoria Curry

Net medium, and developing an aesthetic for the creative aspects and pleasures of net art that must be experienced to be understood.

So as cutting edge creative experimentation occurs with this desktop art form, other innovative artists today will begin to exploit game engine technologies, tinkering to more unpredictable aesthetic ends, and the "any where, any time, any place" philosophy of technology can further be expanded to include "any one, any art, any way."



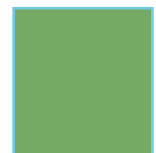
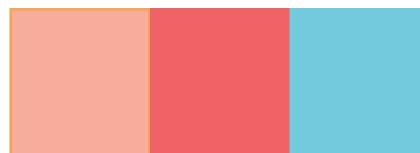
Created by Sydney Sbarbaro



Created by Kimberly Sherry



Created by Helen Mealy



Young artists today are exploring the full spectrum of the Inter-

Voice-Over-IP Technology at SISD *continued*

staff and outside entities such as parents and other districts. Also, this-voicemail system has the ability to be remotely accessed and administered.

This allows for staff to retrieve their messages from anywhere in the world by making a simple phone call and entering a code. The phone number for outside access to the Unity messaging system is 903-891-6644.

Another great advantage of the system to the district is the ability to make inter-campus calls without the use of Verizon circuits. Any internal calls made on the VoIP system travel across our computer network. This frees up circuits for incoming calls from outside the district, such as parents and other districts. It also keeps lines open for outbound emergency 911 calls. In fact, other than the emergency lines installed for 911 calls at each campus there are no analog phone lines for voice calls located at any campus using the VoIP system. All circuits for this system are part of several "PRI" (Primary Rate Interface) lines that are connected to the primary and secondary voice routers located at Central Office and Piner Middle School.

There are many available add-on features for this system which the district is considering purchasing in the future. One of these features is rolling outbound calling which will allow the phone system to automatically place calls to each household in the district with notifications of bad-weather or other emergency related school closings. There are also many features that can be enabled in the future to allow the phones to interact with other systems in the district. The possibilities are endless when working with a system that has a direct link to the backend systems in the district.

Now that you've read everything this system can do, you're probably wondering when it is coming to your campus. The deployment of this system was included in the recent bond for all campuses. Neblett Elementary is currently using the system, and there are immediate plans to install the system at both Sory Elementary and Washington Elementary as soon as they are built. Other campuses will follow those deployments as the network is upgraded on each campus to support the system. For any questions regarding the features, advantages, or operation of this system, please contact Kyle Harris at 903-891-6514 or extension 2850 from Neblett Elementary.

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SISD Technology Unplugged is published by the SISD Technology Department for all of the district employees, the Board of Education and interested patrons.

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