

Technology Tips

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HOLIDAY EDITION
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Multimedia and Today's Teacher...

Hey Folks!!! It's that time of the year again. We seem to get here quicker and quicker every year don't we? The holidays are upon us (in the middle of them for some) and we're wondering, "Good grief! I have a million things to do!". The lists of "to do's" are piling up and making us feel as if it's not really worth all the fuss and bother. Let me assure you, it is.

The most interesting thing about all of this is, and has always been for me, is the amount of holiday things that are related to the technological advances we've made over the years. You're sitting there saying "But Ed, you're a techie. You get all this stuff!". True enough, I suppose. However, when you begin to think about it all, you'll realize that it doesn't take a "techie" to understand that some of the things that are becoming "traditional" are all about how they're al-

most indispensable they are in our view of the holidays as teachers.

Think about how many of the English teachers out there have shown versions of "A Christmas Carol" done by any number of brilliant actors (I've used: Patrick Stewart, Alastair Sim, Reginald Owen, Albert Finney, George C. Scott, and even Bill Murray). I've used each of these films for purposes outlined in the Curriculum Framework with success on a number of levels. Some of the techniques (depending on grade levels) have included: compare and contrast, metaphor, symbolism, imagery, allegory, and loads of other literary terms and conventions. The fact that in each of them, from Owen (1938) to Patrick Stewart (1999) used the filming techniques and approaches to both the story and special effects had everything to do with the production of the films and the telling of the story during that period and time.



The same sorts of approaches to technology have been used by the military to "track" Santa's flight path for children all around the world. I've reprinted (from last year's "Holiday Tech Tips") a more detailed story on how NORAD does this.

Now, for the typical high school student, this might seem somewhat silly to be dedicating so many vital resources to, but then why shouldn't the military bring a little more joy in the world while they help to protect it? Educating students about the job they do and how they can do it, begins here.

The science behind the methods they use to protect the citizens of the U.S. and others should be discussed and understood by folks in a way that doesn't inspire fear and distrust, but hope and appreciation for how far we've come in our ability to communicate.

STUFF YOU NEED TO KNOW

- *Rudolph really does have a red nose. It's powered by some really neat nano-technology and nickel-cadmium batteries.*
- *Santa has tried to get his systems changed from the "regular" mail to e-mail to speed up things at the NPOIT (North Pole Office of Information Technology, but he's running into problems with people in some educational institutions having him blocked by server side firewalls.*
- *Bing Crosby's version of "White Christmas" is still the biggest selling Christmas song of all time. It was written in 1940 by Irving Berlin for the 1942 movie "Holiday Inn" starring Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire. Bing first heard Berlin audition "White Christmas" in 1941 he reassured Irving that he had created a winner. Bing's preliminary evaluation turned out to be a gross understatement.*



Happy Holidays Folks!!!!

Things that are good gifts for teacher types...

O.K. here's a new one. Teachers like gifts too. But what should you get the teacher on your list? Cuervo 1800? Good, but can only be consumed at home. Jewelry? Now who really wants those diamonds and emeralds anyway? Why not get your teacher person something a bit more useful than a brand new Homer Simpson Chia pet?

Of course all those ideas are really good ones that

make an awful lot of sense in many cases. However, the fact is, getting your teacher person a piece of technology can be very useful and even help save them a bunch of work in the new year when they get back from their holiday break. Here are just a couple of suggestions:

1. A Flash Drive- You can get one that will hold 2 GB of info for about \$15 at Staples any day of the week.

2. A 12-1 card reader-Be able to read a number of different storage devices/media types. A bargain at less than \$40.

Lexus 460L-Granted, you could get one of these for just under the price of a house (96k), but think of all the wonderful times you could have with the PCS [1] uses millimeter-wave radar projected from the front of the vehicle to determine when a frontal collision is unavoidable. Cool huh?

And the Grinch, with his Grinch-feet ice cold in the snow, stood puzzling and puzzling, how could it be so? It came without ribbons. It came without tags. It came without packages, boxes or bags. And he puzzled and puzzled 'till his puzzler was sore. Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before. What if Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. What if Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more.

~ Dr. Seuss

Tracking The Big Fella... Again!!!!

For more than 50 years, NORAD and its predecessor, the Continental Air Defense Command (CONAD) have tracked Santa. The tradition began after a Colorado Springs-based Sears Roebuck & Co. store advertisement for children to call Santa on a special "hotline" included an inadvertently misprinted telephone number. Instead of Santa, the phone number put kids through to the CONAD Commander-in-Chief's operations "hotline." The Director of Operations, Colonel Harry Shoup, received the first "Santa" call on Christmas Eve 1955. Realizing what had happened, Colonel Shoup had his staff check radar data to see if there was any indication of Santa making his way south from the North Pole. Indeed there were signs of Santa and children who called were given an update on Santa's position. Thus, the tradition was born. In 1958, the

governments of Canada and the United States created a bi-national air defense command for the North American continent called the North American Air Defense Command, known as NORAD. Canada and the U.S.



believed they could better defend North America together as a team instead of separately.

NORAD carried out its first Santa tracking in 1958 after inheriting the tradition from CONAD. Since that time, Canadian and

American men and women who work at NORAD have responded to phone calls from children personally. Additionally, media from all over the world call NORAD on Christmas Eve for updates on Santa's location. Last year this Website was visited by millions of people who wanted to know Santa's whereabouts. This year, the information is provided in six languages.

NORAD relies on many volunteers to help make Santa tracking possible. Hundreds of volunteers spend part of their Christmas Eve at the Santa Tracking Operations Center answering phones and emails to provide Santa updates to thousands of inquiring children worldwide.

From the website

[NORAD Tracks Santa](#)

A Visit from Saint Nicholas by Clement Clark Moore

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house

Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;

The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,

In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;

The children were nestled all snug in their beds,

While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;

And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,

Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap,

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,

I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter.

Away to the window I flew like a flash,

Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.

The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow

Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below,

When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,

But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer,

With a little old driver, so lively and quick,

I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.

More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,

And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name;

"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!

On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donder and Blitzen!

To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!

Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"

As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,

When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky;

So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,

With the sleigh full of Toys, and St. Nicholas too.

And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof

The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.

As I drew in my head, and was turning around,

Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.

He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,

And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;

A bundle of Toys he had flung on his back,

And he looked like a pedler just opening his pack.

His eyes—how they twinkled! his dimples how merry!

His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!

His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow

And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow;

The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,

And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath;

He had a broad face and a little round belly,

That shook when he laughed, like a bowlful of jelly.

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,

And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;

A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,

Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;

He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,

And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,

And laying his finger aside of his nose,

And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;

He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,

And away they all flew like the down of a thistle,

But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,

"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night."



And so gentle readers. . .

Hi Everyone!!!

Well, the Tech Tips newsletter is done for 2007! It just doesn't seem like an entire year has gone by does it? Let's take a quick look at some of the things that we've done here at the good ol' HSofC during the year that has passed with an emphasis on technology.

E-mail

The biggest thing to say about what we've done here is started really using the SPS Exchange server in a most impressive way. Our usage is continuing on the trend we started last year (2006) and continuing to grow as we expand our communications to include not just each other, but also the students and their families as well.

The uses I've seen from each of the teachers that I've worked with over this year (that amounts to about 120 out of the 150 or so staff) with regard to communication have been encouraging. Not only has the back and forth between students and teachers been growing in terms of the extent of use in the classroom, but the communication between teachers and parents has certainly become more common as well (all, from what I've seen, well within confidentiality rules and AUP policies). This gives us another avenue for improvement in our quest to truly become as integral to families and the goals of giv-

ing students the most we can while also maintaining the balance of responsibility of communication to ensure success.

Computer usage

More and more I've noticed that the teachers in the various content areas are working technology components into their lessons as something more than just a word processor or research/print device.

While folks like ClaraLee Sharrard, Dave Barsalou, Pat Boylan, Ashoke Ghosh, and our monster of a librarian Chris Franks (to name but a few, there are so many more) have always led the charge in terms of using technology as an integral part of any curriculum, there are others that are certainly becoming leaders in their own right. They would be: Catie Donohoe, Angie Scarfe, Mary Lou Crowley, Brian Duffey, Harold "Buddy" Langford, not to mention so many others that have done some outstanding work with their students.

These folks I've mentioned are only a few of the large number of staff I've visited with over the past year. They've shown me, and subsequently folks outside of the good ol' HSofC that we do some damn fine work here with what we've got (Yes, that's right, I brag about you guys all the time to the brass).

The more we use even the stone knives and bearskins we have

right now in a successful manner, the more likely it will be that we'll be able to get the sorts of resources that will enable us to use: interactive forms that collect data (some of the surveys I've sent you), PDF files, Flash documents, Shockwave, documents created with programs that were created in this century, and generally any of the other stuff we can't use because our machines are incompatible.

Multimedia

In terms of this, I'm aware that people have been using their TV monitors for presentations for years, however, the increasing number of folks who are requesting the use of the available LCD projectors is highly encouraging. Though much of the use initially has been for films and clips for demonstration purposes, I'm very excited about the ways teachers are requiring their students to present research projects and lead class discussions using multimedia resources.

Additionally, in the opening months of 2008, the plans have been laid for the creation of a mobile recording studio to record the oral presentations of IB students for presentation (in CD form) to the IBO. The natural extension of this is also the ability of interested folks to begin creating HSC podcasts.

The past has been fun to recollect folks, but the future is going to be even better to make. I can see that, with the way we're heading, we'll be doing more outstanding things in 2008!!!

Have a safe and happy holiday break,

Ed Musiak



Life Lessons in Comics

