The High School of Commerce

Technology Tips

Malware, Spyware, and other nasty things...

Folks, I can't say this enough...while there are many outstanding aspects of the use of technology in our classrooms and lives, there are just as many things that are very nasty and troublesome about it. Some of the more annoying aspects of using the web are; malware and spyware..

Malware (Short for **mal**icious soft**ware**), software designed specifically to damage or disrupt a system, such as a virus or a Trojan horse .

∗ *Malware. Webopedia, Retrieved 03/04/2009, from http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/m/malware.html*

One of the bigger and nastier ones I've encountered in the last few weeks is called "Antivirus 360". This bugger is particularly nasty in that it is a rogue anti-spyware program (fake spyware remover if you will). It infects your computer by giving a false "scan" result of your system and then recommends that you use the program to remove the threats by signing up for the service. What actually ends up happening is your screen will be continually bombarded with security alerts that will make it virtually impossible to get anything done without wanting to throw your machine out a window.

Spyware (n.) Any software that covertly gathers user information through the user's Internet connection without his or her knowledge, usually for advertising purposes. Spyware applications are typically bundled as a hidden component of freeware or shareware programs that can be downloaded from the Internet; however, it should be noted that the majority of shareware and freeware applications do not come with spyware. Once installed, the spyware monitors user activity on the Internet and transmits that information in the background to someone else. Spyware can also gather information about e-mail addresses and even passwords and credit card numbers.

Spyware is similar to a Trojan horse in that users unwittingly install the product when they install something else. A common way to become a victim of spyware is to download certain peer-to-peer file swapping products that are available today.

Aside from the questions of ethics and privacy, spyware steals from the user by using the computer's memory resources and also by eating bandwidth as it sends information back to the spyware's home base via the user's Internet connection. Because spyware is using memory and system resources, the applications running in the background can lead to system crashes or general system instability.

Because spyware exists as independent executable programs, they have the ability to monitor keystrokes, scan files on

Windows to the soul...or at least the classroom… Pt 1

That's what web pages are folks!!! Of course you're saying, "That's what you would say Ed!!!" Sure, that's true. But this time I really mean it. I do.

Throughout the district there are teachers that are using their web pages to help drive instruction in myriads of exciting ways. To be honest people, it's another alternative to offer an increasingly tech savvy student population that is dependent on the ability to access information 24/7/365. I mean, the days when people continually said things like: "My kids don't have the skills" or "My students don't have access" are just this side of anachronisms.

My point is folks, everyone here at The High School of Commerce has a page for their use in the course of improving student learning and communication with; students, families, and colleagues. I have a template you can use that keeps everything neat and simple, or, if you want to learn how to create web pages on a somewhat larger scale (putting in some of those cool bells and whistles), then we can work on that together. With that in mind...

...Let's get on with starting out our web pages. Right now I'm going to come from the perspective that you'll be wanting to keep things simple and direct by using the template that's available to you…

Organization

This is the most important thing you could do (even if you're using a template and not designing your own site from scratch). Collecting and creating the materials you're going to need to make your page as informational as you can make it is going to be enough of a job to be getting on with right now. So…

Aside from putting up a photo of yourself, you have to think of the sorts of things you want to make absolutely sure you have. Those things will include: a letter to parents, expectations,

Stuff To Know

ALL THE FOLLOWING ARE AVAILABLE IN B155

- *Schedule a time to get trained for the use of the laptop carts.*

  No training = No laptop cart use.

- *If you need help with getting on MassOne and taking the TSAT, we'll do that when you get the laptop cart training. Please come on down to B155. We need 100% participation!!!*

- *I am available to co-plan, co-teach, and work out just about any other method for the integration of technology in your classroom. I am a good resource for ideas and inspiration when you find yourself in a bind trying to find an activity that will make the most appropriate connection with a lesson.*

- *The Springfield Public Schools has a district license for…*

  GradeKeeper

  Please stop by B155 for details

- *Email accounts have to be maintained just like everything else, please make sure you take care of yours. If you need help, please let me know, or… stop by B155!!!*

Malware, Spyware, and other nasty things...

the hard drive, snoop other applications, such as chat programs or word processors, install other spyware programs, read cookies, change the default home page on the Web browser, consistently relaying this information back to the spyware author who will either use it for advertising/marketing purposes or sell the information to another party.

Licensing agreements that accompany software downloads sometimes warn the user that a spyware program will be installed along with the requested software, but the licensing agreements may not always be read completely because the notice of a spyware installation is often couched in obtuse, hard-to-read legal disclaimers.

"Webopedia, (3/5/2009). Spyware. Retrieved March 5, 2009, from Webopedia.com Web site: http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/s/spyware.html "

Now, knowing all this doesn't stop us from sometimes being pulled into the scams. Since that's the case, we have to be *VERY* aware of the things that we download onto our

> *"You cannot have a proud and chivalrous spirit if your conduct is mean and paltry; for whatever a man's actions are, such must be his spirit."*
> **Demosthenes**

machines. It's understandable that we'd like to explore the net for free stuff (what teacher doesn't root around for the bargains and "freebees" for our classrooms?). The number of "Open Source" (free) programs is growing exponentially even as we speak. My

point is, be careful and do the research on the program/software before you download and install it. We tell our students to do their homework all the time. Why should we be any different?

Some of the things you might want to look for:

♦ **The Source**- Who created the program/software? Just as with source material for a research paper, the more credible the source, the better the product. Again, we tell our students this all the time when they're citing sources for research papers and presentations. It's the same sort of situation when we think of our own work and the tools we use to get it done.

♦ **Pay attention to the EULA!!!**-Just like it says in the Webopedia article, the **E**nd **U**ser's **L**icense **A**greement that accompanies any software download almost always has a section that mentions whether or not spyware is attached to the license agreement. It may take some effort to actually read the document, but believe me when I say that it will be worth it.

♦ **Colleague's referrals-** Right here in the district we have a really cool resource that comes out about once a month throughout the entire school year (aside from this newsletter of course!!!). **The Instructional Technology Newsletter** is excellent as a resource for many content areas. Each month the current editor Micky Cahillane (the District level Instructional Technology Specialist for Middle Schools and a very cool person to work with) gathers links to web resources from core subject areas and many elective references. You can check it out by going to the **home page of the SPS** and clicking on the link there.

Any way you look at it folks, the issues that we face concerning malware and spyware are exceptionally daunting these days. They can make you want to tear your hair out of your head and throw the machine out the window. All I can say is it's very much like the myth of Pandora's Box. When she had opened the box, all of the world's evils had come out and the only thing left way down at the bottom was Hope.. In our case folks malware and spyware can be dealt with even though it seems hopeless trying to keep up with all the intrusions

Windows to the soul...or at least the classroom
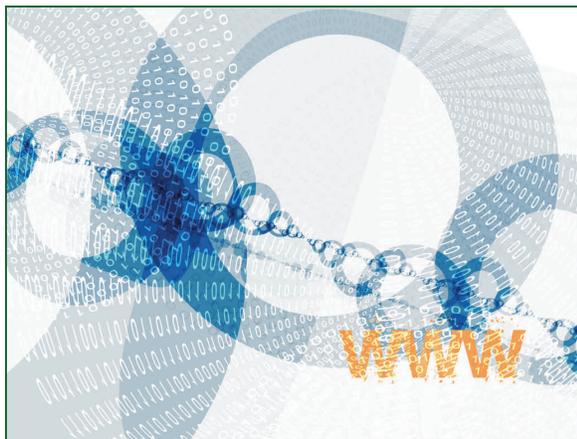
homework, assignments (past homework and stuff done in class, that sort of thing). The point is to get the things that you'll want your audience (the aforementioned families, colleagues, and of course, students) to have access to on your page and displayed as prominently as possible.

Now, in addition to all of that, if you want the "bells and whistles", getting these things prepared is even more important to do considering the fact that most of this stuff relies on a little more in-depth knowledge and execution. An example of this might be having an image map that leads to various assignments within a larger collage as a unit progresses through the different lessons.

If we were to assume that most folks wouldn't want (or have time for) many of the "bells" as it were, then putting together a page for any teacher would take only as long as putting together the documents I

mentioned earlier, linking them to the page and posting it to the Commerce site (or any other school's pages for that matter). All of that, if

using the template I provide and you come with all the materials, should take about 5 minutes. Yes, that's right, 5 minutes.

Here's the really cool part folks! Since

you've already done the hard part when you set up the page, updating is a snap. All you do then is add on to whatever document you'd like to update and then upload that. It's simple because the only thing that changes is your content on the document.

The speed and ease with which you can do this is getting to be sort of irrelevant. I mean, the only real limitation is your physical ability to type as well as copy and paste. The way some folks talk it's so difficult to do this it makes you want to do one of those Friday the 13th things to yourself because of the frustration when the opposite is really the case. As long as we have all our "ducks in a row" as it were, then there's no reason for anyone to say that they don't have enough time   This is yet another way for us to keep the lines of communication open with the world outside the walls of academia here at the good ol' HSofC.

In our next issue we'll go over basic web design to help you get your pages up and running

FAIRY AND FOLK TALES-*The Trooping Fairies*   Edited By: *W. B. Yeats*

The Irish word for fairy is sheehogue [sidheóg], a diminutive of "shee" in banshee. Fairies are deenee shee [daoine sidhe] (fairy people).

Who are they? "Fallen angels who were not good enough to be saved, nor bad enough to be lost," say the peasantry. "The gods of the earth," says the Book of Armagh. "The gods of pagan Ireland," say the Irish antiquarians, "the Tuatha De Danān, who, when no longer worshipped and fed with offerings, dwindled away in the popular imagination, and now are only a few spans high."

And they will tell you, in proof, that the names of fairy chiefs are the names of old Danān heroes, and the places where they especially gather together, Danān burying-places, and that the Tuath De Danān used also to be called the slooa-shee [sheagh sidhe] (the fairy host), or Marcra shee (the fairy cavalcade).

On the other hand, there is much evidence to prove them fallen angels. Witness the nature of the creatures, their caprice, their way of being good to the good and evil to the evil, having every charm but conscience--consistency. Beings so quickly offended that you must not speak much about them at all, and never call them anything but the "gentry", or else daoine maithe, which in English means good people, yet so easily pleased, they will do their best to keep misfortune away from you, if you leave a little milk for them on the window-sill over night. On the whole, the popular belief tells us most about them, telling us how they fell, and yet were not lost, because their evil was wholly without malice.

Are they "the gods of the earth"? Perhaps! Many poets, and all mystic and occult writers, in all ages and countries, have declared that behind the visible are chains on chains of conscious beings, who are not of heaven but of the earth, who have no inherent form but change according to their whim, or the mind that sees them. You cannot lift your hand without influencing and being influenced by hoards. The visible world is merely their skin. In dreams we go amongst them, and play with them, and combat with them. They are, perhaps, human souls in the crucible--these creatures of whim.

Do not think the fairies are always little. Everything is capricious about them, even their size. They seem to take what size or shape pleases them. Their chief occupations are feasting, fighting, and making love, and playing the most beautiful music. They have only one industrious person amongst them, the lepra-caun--the shoemaker. Perhaps they wear their shoes out with dancing. Near the village of Ballisodare is a little woman who lived amongst them seven years. When she came home she had no toes--she had danced them off.

They have three great festivals in the year--May Eve, Midsummer Eve, November Eve. On May Eve, every seventh year, they fight all round, but mostly on the "Plain-a-Bawn" (wherever that is), for the harvest, for the best ears of grain belong to them. An old man told me he saw them fight once; they tore the thatch off a house in the midst of it all. Had anyone else been near they would merely have seen a great wind whirling everything into the air as it passed. When the wind makes the straws and leaves whirl as it passes, that is the fairies, and the peasantry take off their hats and say, "God bless them".

On Midsummer Eve, when the bonfires are lighted on every hill in honour of St. John, the fairies are at their gayest, and sometimes steal away beautiful mortals to be their brides.

On November Eve they are at their gloomiest, for according to the old Gaelic reckoning, this is the first night of winter. This night they dance with the ghosts, and the pooka is abroad, and witches make their spells, and girls set a table with food in the name of the devil, that the fetch of their future lover may come through the window and eat of the food. After November Eve the blackberries are no longer wholesome, for the pooka has spoiled them.

When they are angry they paralyse men and cattle with their fairy darts.

When they are gay they sing. Many a poor girl has heard them, and pined away and died, for love of that singing. Plenty of the old beautiful tunes of Ireland are only their music, caught up by eavesdroppers. No wise peasant would hum "The Pretty Girl milking the Cow" near a fairy rath, for they are jealous, and do not like to hear their songs on clumsy mortal lips. Carolan, the last of the Irish bards, slept on a rath, and ever after the fairy tunes ran in his head, and made him the great man he was.

Do they die? Blake saw a fairy's funeral; but in Ireland we say they are immortal.

Yeats, W.B. (1888). Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry. Retrieved March 9, 2009, from Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry Web site: http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/yeats/fip/

And so gentle readers...

From the time that I was a wee gosson I guess I've been extremely lucky. You say "But what the bloody heck (you'll note I'm watchin' me language here dear readers) are ye jabberin' on about now"? Well, to put it real polite like, I'll be tellin' ye by usin' your bullet things here on this altogether brilliant computer.

☘ I was born on St. Patrick's Day.

☘ I enjoy hearin' a good story almost as much as tellin' one.

☘ I married an Irish girl whose mother makes great soda bread

☘ Between my father-in-law and me own mother, they know by sight or reputation everyone whose lived in town for at least the last 50 years

☘ I've managed to work with the greatest lot of folks here in Springfield's Schools. Sure'n I haven't kissed the Blarney Stone either. The folks here have been dead brilliant ever since I can recall. 'Tis a fact

☘ I've worked with a number of musical acts in my time, one of them bein' The Tinkers,

an International sellin' recordin' group (not much mind, but the lads did sell a few hundred copies around The Emerald Isle).

'Tis true much of this is somewhat indirect-like for an Italian, Polish lad with the Welsh first name and born on an Irish Saint's feast day like meself. However when this time of year rolls around sure'n doesn't everyone get a wee bit 'o the Irish in 'em?

Now all that bein' said in as short a manner as I can summon up from me own thoughts, let me leave you with some words of Irish wisdom.

"Mol an óige agus tiocfaidh said"

Translation: "Praise the youth and they will come"
Meaning: Young people learn more from compliments than criticism

"Irish Proverbs." Wikiquote. 09/03/2009. 9 Mar 2009,<http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Irish_proverbs>.

Sláinte

Life Lessons in Imagery

So far this year we've looked at images that have shaken the world for one reason or another. Hopefully you've had occasion to use these "teachable moments" to stimulate discussion and deepen understanding of issues that have affected , and will affect, us as citizens of the world.

All that being said, for those of you who recall (and for those of you who don't either), this area used to have "Life Lessons in Comics". Here's a gentle reminder that we can find "Life Lessons" in the most unlikely of places...

Ed Musiak

ZITS   BY JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN