

# Technology Newsletter

January, 2006  
Volume 2, Issue 2

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Instructional Technologist



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## Upcoming Events

- ◆ February Fun for Fifteen Feb. 6-9 3:30 - 3:45
- ◆ Tech Workshops Feb - April
- ◆ NTTI Training March 10 - 11 for K - 5

## Director's News

### Notes from the ACPS Technology Plan:

*Our philosophy is simple... there are great strides to be made in Enhancing Education Through Technology. Our vision is to update and implement a comprehensive technology plan so that access and use by staff and students prepares them to use technology as a tool for lifelong learning and as a tool in the workplace. A variety of technological tools should be an integral part of the teaching-learning environment in all disciplines.*

I know living in the Information Age can be very overwhelming. However, staying two steps ahead of our students is our job and keeping up with all this information is our responsibility. I hope this PACKED newsletter will assist

you in keeping all this information organized.

Marion Wood has created an AWESOME web page and is willing to share her resources with all. Please check her website out at [www.marwoodweb.org](http://www.marwoodweb.org) and let her know how she, or any other instructional technologist, can assist you.

Let us know how we can assist you!!!!

*Martha Eagle*

*To thrive in today's world and tomorrow's workplace, America's students must learn how to learn, learn how to think and have a solid understanding of how technology works and what it can do. American schools must, therefore, provide students with the opportunity to combine the best of traditional learning with the unprecedented opportunities technology offers."*

- CEO Forum

## Research Shows Technology Increases Student Achievement *By Danny Richardson*

We are all aware of the many different software and hardware products available in education today, but is there any research that shows that the integration of technology in the classroom actually helps increase student achievement?\*

The following is a series of blurbs and data from various resources demonstrating the benefits of utilizing technology to increase student achievement.\*

1. Teachers surveyed by the National School Boards Association felt that:

-92% of students are more engaged  
50% have a stronger ability to communicate

-49% have increased critical thinking skills  
-31% have improved their test taking performance

2. "Being able to use technology is a prerequisite for success in the global and digital economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Try to imagine any profession that does not rely on some level of expertise with technology."

3. A surveyed fourth grade class using technology scored 15% above grade level at the end of the year. A sample eighth grade class scored 42% higher.

Info. found in: *Breaking Into the Boy's Club*, Scholastic Administrator, Jan. 2006; *Making the Case to Teachers and Does it Compute*, *The Relationship Between Educational Technology and Student Achievement in Mathematics*, <http://iste.org/Template.cfm?Section=Teachers1&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=35&ContentID=3137>;



*Teachers are enthusiastic about the possible technology activities that they can implement within the classroom*

*Students in Freda Layne's class use a GPS to mark a trail and then return to where they started.*



*This is a valuable resource in educating our children for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

## APS Has a New Wireless Lab *By Kellie Baldwin*



APS is delighted to have a new wireless cart! Teachers are enthusiastic about the possible technology activities that they can implement within the classroom. The students are just as excited to have a computer on their desk. It is fabulous that all of the students are able to participate in the planned activities at the same time. Some the teachers use the laptop computers for Accelerated Reader each week. This allows the teachers to

## GPS & GIS *By Tim Peterson*

The Global Positioning System (GPS) is a worldwide radio-navigation system formed from a constellation of 24 satellites and their ground stations. It is usually accurate to around a few meters. Over the last 30 years, the United States Government spent over \$10 billion dollars developing the Global Positioning Systems and has made it available for free. This is a valuable resource in educating our children for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are a digital representation of the real world which uses spatial databases. GIS puts data on a map and visually shows data with geography in mind. It answers where, when, how and why questions.

Both GPS and GIS are used to interpret topographic maps, aerial photographs, and satellite imagery. GPS and GIS also train students in applying



freely monitor the students and enables all the students the opportunity to earn dots for their SPOT and DOT hat. Other teachers have utilized the clip art function in the Word program to help the students remember keywords for each alphabet letter. The Kidspiration and Kid Pix software programs have been purchased and uploaded on the laptops. The teachers are very anxious about the possibilities of these two programs within the learning environment.

technologies to geospatial issues. In the classroom, GPS and GIS help foster critical thinking and problem solving, develop 21st century work skills, and they promote community participation among students. When using GIS, the lessons are set up for more complex and extended inquiries into topics. Lessons are built around different geographic themes on three different levels. The themes are global perspective, regional perspective and advanced investigation. When incorporating GPS in the classroom, activities such as a mapping your community lab, a space shuttle disaster lab, a geocaching lab, a GPS hide and seek lab, and a GPS logic challenge are used.

Obviously, GPS and GIS are valuable technologies and teaching tools. The students are excited about using them, and the uses are almost limitless.

## The Use of Technology in My Classroom *By Peter Sengenberger*

One of the reasons I chose to teach at Appomattox Middle School was the amount of technology available for teachers. I was surprised that a school district the size of Appomattox would have such a variety of resources, and it made a great impression on me. I am not a "technology" person per se, in fact I don't even own a cell phone, but I found the technology to be fairly easy to understand. Following are my top 3 choices of classroom technology.

### (1) Qwizdom

We all have found ourselves looking for fun game reviews that will keep our students interested. Qwizdom is the answer. Qwizdom allows you to input a variety of question formats and use them in several review games, including soccer, car racing, and baseball. The game is projected using a laptop/LCD, and students each have a remote control to answer the questions. Students can be broken up into teams, and the team with the most answers correct will progress further in the game. The games consist of cartoon-like animations that keep the students excited and interested. The best feature is that teachers receive immediate feedback on how well students did answering questions. You might find that 14 of the 20 students missed a particular question, so you can make a note to review that information. A bit of advice, don't use Qwizdom too often and try to limit the game sessions to 20 to 30 minutes, or they will tire of it.

### (2) Wireless Computer Lab

Many of our students are familiar with using computers...for games. However, I feel it is our responsibility to expand their knowledge of computers to educational pursuits. At AMS, each teacher is assigned a computer lab day every other week. Unfortunately, this does not always correspond with lesson planning. The Wireless Computer Lab is the answer. With the Wireless Computer Lab, each student is provided with a laptop computer, which can connect with the Internet and a printer via the base unit. I found that students were more

interested in using the computers to learn because they felt that it was "cool" to use a laptop, versus the standard PCs in the computer labs. Another benefit for teachers is that the Wireless Lab is in our classroom. Therefore, we have easy access to other lesson-related teaching materials (overheads, manipulatives, etc.) that can enhance the students' use of the computers.

### (3) UnitedStreaming.com

While I am not a prevalent user of videos, I do understand that many students learn effectively by watching videos. This is not too surprising considering that recent studies have found that the average child watches over 4 hours of television per day. They are definitely a television and media generation, and this is something that we need to keep in mind. UnitedStreaming.com, which Appomattox County Schools has an account with, enables teachers to log in and search for videos and video clips on virtually any topic. There are also lesson plans, teacher's guides, video quizzes, and image galleries. I have found that the easiest way to use UnitedStreaming.com is to save the video clip that I need to a Flash Drive and project it using a laptop/LCD setup. What I like most about UnitedStreaming.com is that I can find brief 3 to 5 minute segments, which are excellent for introducing new topics or as a review.

These are just a few of the technology resources available for Appomattox County teachers to use. As all of us know, children today are accustomed to being entertained. Computer games and television have trained them to be that way. In addition, their comfort with technology is often higher than our own. It is important that we embrace these technologies and resources and add them to our teacher "bag of tricks." We are fortunate to have Instructional Technologists employed by the County to help us learn and implement these technologies. If you have not yet met with one of our Instructional Technologists, I would highly recommend that you do so.



### *My top 3 choices of classroom technology*

- (1) Qwizdom*
- (2) Wireless Computer Lab*
- (3) United Streaming*



## What is Assistive Technology?

Article submitted *By Dorinda Grasty*



*Educational and assistive technology give students with disabilities greater possibilities to master content, organize and control behavior.*

Assistive technologies (AT) are the tools and strategies that act to liberate the use of technology for all students as well as to provide new ways to “assist” interactions and learning. They act to “augment abilities and bypass or compensate for a disability” (Lewis, 1994)

AT is anything that makes it easier for a student to: read, write, speak, see, get around or move and play. Educational and assistive technology give students with disabilities greater possibilities to master content, organize and control behavior. Recent technology innovations are changing the ways teachers teach and children learn. Students with disabilities are capable of participating in the general education curriculum to varying degrees with some adaptation and modifications that AT can provide. For more information about AT visit [www.atto.buffalo.edu](http://www.atto.buffalo.edu). The Virginia Department of Education is working hard to provide resources in the

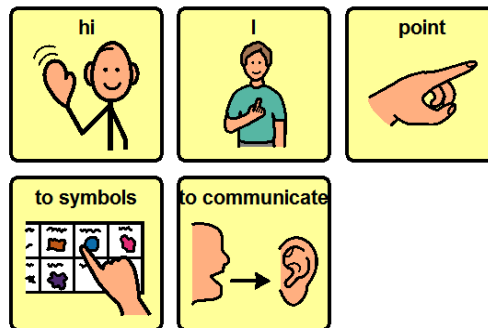
area of AT. Training has been provided to local assistive technology teams in local school systems across the state by the Department’s Training/Technical Assistance Centers (T/TAC) located at seven universities. Visit the T/TAC training website at [www.ttaonline.org](http://www.ttaonline.org) for more information on events, resources, Enhanced Scope and Sequence Plus, webshops and [www.workshops](http://www.workshops).

Information taken from the following article: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VD OE/sped/AssistiveTechnology.pdf>

The AT team in Appomattox County Schools is comprised of the following individuals:

APS-Evelyn Ford, Mary Paciocco  
AES-Beth Haught, Amy Paulette  
AMS - Heather Cofflin, Julia Lisa  
ACHS - Jane George, Susan Hamlette, Cathy East

## Boardmaker *By Marion Wood*



Most people in the Assistive Technology community are already familiar with Boardmaker. It has been widely used and is one of the easier programs for producing communication displays and rebus type books. You can see from the above examples how they look. You can also find and paste picture symbols into your display or desktop publishing program. You can print your displays in black and white or color. Boardmaker is



a very popular program for creating communication products. You can also import your own digital photos for more personal communication displays and books. You can create custom-drawn images, easily resize and format picture symbols for greater customization. For more information go to: <http://www.mayer-johnson.com/MainBoardmaker.aspx?MainCategoryID=5419>

## Blogs, Wikis, and Moddings - the New Vocabulary

By Susie Fisher



Keeping up with the vocabulary that goes with the new technology is almost as hard as keeping up with the technology itself. Here are a few of the latest terms that teachers should know.

**Blogs** is short for web-log. In other words, a blog is an online journal that is usually updated frequently. **Although most blogs are blocked within our filter, blogs can be set-up for classroom use within ANGEL.**

**Wiki** is both a website that can be added to or edited by anyone and the software that allows that editing. Wikis are popular with the 13-18 yr. old age group. The biggest problem with wikis is that anyone can put anything on these sites. Since they are constantly changing, they are not "safe" sites.

**Moddings** is slang for modification. This term is usually used in connection with modifying gaming hardware and software.

**Wi-Fi** is short for "wireless fidelity." We most often hear of WiFi when using wireless computers. Many airports, hotels, and restaurants have become "hotspots" for the wireless community.

**Bluetooth** is another way to receive wireless connectivity. Bluetooth began in 1997 as a collaboration between Ericsson, Nokia, IBM, Intel, and Toshiba allows data connections between electronic devices.



## Best New Gadgets By Susie Fisher

Fly Pen Pentop computer is an amazing new toy; but "toy" sells this gadget a little short. The Fly Pen comes with built-in computer processor that scans what you write on special paper (flypaper) and calculates math problems, and allows you to draw instruments then play them and record the music. This little computer comes with 17 educational games,

Blackberry, Palm Treo, and other smart phones are actually a combination of a PDA and a cell phone. People can email, instant message, surf the Web, listen to music, keep an address book and calendar, and talk on the phone using this one device.

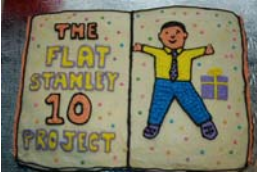
The \$100 laptop is now a reality. This



laptop was developed by MIT to help educate poor children in undeveloped countries.

One notable feature is a hand crank for providing power in places where electricity is un dependable or unavailable. Although this computer will not be for sale, it does open paths for a cheaper laptop for all students.





*Grade: 3-5,  
Social Studies  
By sending a flat  
friend on vacation,  
children learn  
about life in other  
countries and get  
an opportunity to  
host flat travelers  
from around the  
world.  
<http://www97.intel.com/en/ProjectDesign/UnitPlanIndex/FlatStanley/>*

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## Portaportals *By Marion Wood*

Sometimes you wish you had your Favorites folder from your Internet Explorer with you. That is possible. With Portaportal, you can access your favorite files wherever you are. Go to [www.portaportal.com](http://www.portaportal.com) and create your own free account. It is easy and there is an online Tutorial. Take a look at some sample portaportals by going to <http://quest.portaportal.com/sample>. As the sample above left shows, you can organize your links any way you want to. Some teachers use their portaportals to

make resources easily accessible to their students. If you were teaching a unit on Simple Machines, you could choose the sites you want your students to visit and put them in your portaportal under a category named Simple Machines. Your students will not have to type in complicated URLs. They will simply have to click on the link you have created for them. It's a really wonderful free tool. Please take a look at mine by going to [www.portaportal.com](http://www.portaportal.com) and typing

## Technology Workshops

**February Fun for Fifteen**  
15 Minute Interactive Technology Workshops  
3:30 - 3:45 Mon. - Thurs.  
**2/6/06**  
Virtual Manipulatives APS Computer Lab  
Inspiration, AMS 512  
Mimio, AMS/508  
GPS/GIS, ACHS Library  
Photostory, ACHS Room 301  
**2/7/06**  
Handhelds in the Classroom ACHS Library  
Document and Microscope Cameras, AES Library  
Google Earth AES 204  
SnagIt AMS 207  
United Streaming, AMS 512  
**2/8/06**  
Virtual Manipulatives ACHS 224  
Kid Pix APS Computer Lab  
SmartBoard Jeopardy, AES Library  
Portaportal, AMS 206  
**2/9/06**  
Google Earth ACHS 224  
SnagIt AES 204  
Kidspiration APS Computer Lab  
School Pad, AES 206  
Marco Polo, AMS 512

**Extended Workshops**  
3:30 - 5:30  
*\*Unless noted.*

Friday, Jan. 27  
"Setting Up Angel for 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester"  
\*1:30 - 3:30  
ACHS Room 226

Friday, Jan. 27  
"Groupwise and Integrate Pro"  
AMS Room 512

Thursday, Feb. 16  
"Mobile Lab"  
AES Library

Monday, Feb. 20  
"Advanced Angel"  
ACHS Room 224

Wednesday, Feb. 22  
Homemade Books  
APS Computer Lab

Thursday, Feb. 23  
GroupWise Plus  
ACHS Room 224

**Extended Workshops**

Thursday, March 2  
Kid Pix  
APS Computer Lab

Tuesday, March 7  
MovieMaker  
ACHS Room 301

Thursday, March 9  
"Videostreaming"  
APS Computer Lab

Thursday, March 16  
Kidspiration  
APS Computer Lab

Thursday, March 30  
Digital Cameras And Scanning"  
ACHS Room 301

Tuesday, April 4  
Qwizdom  
AMS 207

Tuesday, April 11  
Virtual Manipulatives  
AES Room 206