Tech Trainer

Michael K. Berg

Hello Eastern! I wanted to say a big welcome back to everyone as the school year begins, and well, I guess, say welcome for the first time to myself. I hope everyone is getting back into the swing of things and remembering the first weeks of school are usually the craziest, at least until the end, or is it the middle? Ummmmm.....

Anyway, you are probably wondering why this document has made its way into your mind (and hopefully your hearts). Well, it's because I want to have a way to keep in touch with you as we make our way through the school year together. As your technology coach I am responsible for a number of things; foremost amongst my responsibilities is helping you to discover new technologies and how you can creatively apply them to your classroom. This not only means that you can ask me questions or attend group or one on one trainings (remember, I am a teacher and I love children), but that I can also enter the classroom if needed and co-teach a lesson with you to help acclimate you to the new technology you are implementing.

I am also kind of a productivity coach as far as software is concerned, and I will from time to time be showing you some tips on the use of the productivity software the school provides you, whether it is traditional software like Microsoft Office or open source alternatives like OpenOffice.

This brings me to a note on open source offerings. You are probably going to be hearing the term "open source" thrown around quite a bit over the school year, and many of you no doubt already know what that term actually mean. If you do, great, just roll with it. For the rest of you that do not, open source means that the software you might use is under a general public license of sorts that allows anyone to download and use the full version of the software for free. You can even copy the software and distribute it to your classes provided you follow any guidelines the author puts in the licensing agreement. Open source software saves money, provides high quality software with fewer glitches as it's developed, and provides tools you may not have regular access to. You will be seeing an open source feature in all of the Tech Trainer newsletters that will be coming your way.

All-in-all I hope the Tech Trainer becomes a valuable tool for you over the year and that it gives you an easy reference for new things you might choose to learn at training sessions or on your own at home. Thanks and I hope you enjoy the first issue.

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EASTERN WEB PAGE UNDERGOING TRANSFORMATION

The Eastern Howard School web page is in the process of a redesign by an outside firm. What does this mean for you right now? Well, nothing really, because the old page is still up and running. However in the near future you will be introduced to a redesigned web page with enhanced functionality designed to keep up with the digital age. One of the new web page's key features will be the ability for teachers to host their own class web page. Now I know many of you may be thinking, when am I going to design my own web page? (Right? I know that's the first thing that popped in your head.) Well, that is the unique part of this particular web page layout; you will actually use your browser to access and update your page without using secondary software. This means that with a login you will be able to simply type, upload files, or insert graphics as you choose. It's actually a pretty quick process. After the new page is online and any bugs are worked out I will be providing training on exactly how to create your new class web page and keep it up-to-date (with a minimum investment of your time). The new page is in production; you're gonna love it.

PRODUCTIVITY TIP #1

Microsoft Office allows for users to click on shortcuts at the top of the software screen called toolbar buttons to access frequently used functions. If you ever find that one of your toolbars has disappeared or you would like to remove some of the buttons you do not use to free up screen space you can right click near the drop down menus at the top of your window and add or remove any of the toolbars you wish.

FEATURED SOFTWARE

UPCOMING EVENTS AND TRAINING

*I will be out of the Corp. on Monday (8/24) morning for Acuity training.
*Is there some sort of software that you want training on? Or maybe you just want to know if it's possible to make your programs look or behave the way you're used to on your home computer. If that's the case or you have any questions please email me directly; the address is under my name.

OPENOFFICE.ORG 3

OpenOffice is just what the name implies; it is an open source office suite which is comparable to Microsoft's Office product. OpenOffice contains numerous programs including Writer (Word), Impress (Power Point), Base (Access), Calc (Excel), Draw (PhotoDraw), and Math (Equation Editor). OO is very intuitive if you have ever used any of Microsoft's products. There are a few differences but for the most part things are even in similar menu areas. We will look at OpenOffice in the future and training will be made available. In the meantime you may wish to visit www.openoffice.org to download your own copy to tryout at home.

Note: This document was created entirely in OpenOffice.org 3.