

# The Tech Trainer Year End Edition

2011

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Thank you for a wonderful year and for the excitement I already anticipate regarding the year to come. Eastern is truly full of innovative individuals. If you need anything concerning tech, we will be here over the summer, myself included, working to add to your experiences for next year.

## Tech Tuesday Final Session

**May 31<sup>st</sup>**—The final session for Tech Tuesday will take place at the high school and will review the Level Two Proficiencies which apply to teaching staff. If you would like to test out of either level of skills you can email tech for an appointment and someone will reply with available dates and times.

## Remember To Fill Out the Tech Surveys Please!

As of right now we have had 43 individuals take the two surveys that we have set up regarding new computer images and summer training. Remember that participation is not required but will help us to tailor decisions in these areas to help everyone. The surveys are anonymous, so all answers are confidential. If you haven't already read and clicked on the links in Mr. Bagley's year end email, please consider participating.

## A Note with Summer Work Looming

Whether you have been in the teaching game for a long time or you have just started out, odds are you have acquired a lot of "stuff," some of which sits on your desks and filing cabinets. As we install boards over the summer some things will be moved. It would be helpful if you could clear out any items that may hinder summer work. We will take the utmost care when moving your possessions, but the less we have to move, the faster we can finish. Thank you.

## iPad iNtegration Group

Whether you are a hardcore Apple fanboy (or fangirl) or simply a teacher that has access to an iPad and you are wondering how to use these tools in the classroom to effectively integrate curriculum, I would like to invite you to try an experiment with me over the summer. We will be using tools like the iPads for years to come and I believe we need to discover how to use them to teach effectively, instead of using apps to only enhance teaching. Apps are great but with imagination and collaboration I'm sure we can "push the limits" with these devices. In response to those that have already answered the training survey, I see a need for a group collaboration. This summer I will be launching the "iNtegration" group through collaborative cloud based tools such as "My Big Campus" and some web 2.0 tools yet to be named. Any individual is welcome to participate as this will be web based for the most part. I hope that we can have one or two face to face meetings at some point, but that would be up to group consensus. If you are interested in taking part in this learning experience, send me an eMail with "iNtegration Group" in the subject line. I look forward to hearing from those that are up for it. More details will be forthcoming.

## Summer Tech Plans

Summer 2011 will be flying by in the tech department. Not only are we adding to the netbook initiative by expanding at the elementary to include a full grade level instead of two classes, but we have new computers coming in along with a major whiteboard install. Top that off with the adoption of our new student management system and server maintenance and you're sure to see us running around if you are in the buildings. Right now, the schedule for the summer is a little up in the air, but we tentatively plan on adding in interactive boards first. With luck and hard work we will then be working on computer redeployment. The reason for the order is the arrival of parts; the majority of whiteboard parts are already in, whereas the new computers are on order but will still take a while to arrive. Other maintenance and work will be taking place throughout. With some hard work we should have everyone ready for a great new school year when break is over.

## Windows 7 Tip of the Week

So you know how you sometimes have a problem with a program, and you try to convey it to tech in words, but it just doesn't seem to come out right? Well, Windows 7 has you covered with a new tool called "problem steps recorder." If you go to the search box of Windows 7, under the start menu, type "psr" into the box, and hit enter, a recorder tool will launch. You can then keep working and any issues you encounter are snipped and put in a sequential file that you can easily email to tech. It's not only a great tool for troubleshooting, but also for creating a demo.

## Living With iPad Apps

There are a lot of great iPad apps out there, but what are some of the best for organization and preparing for education? Well, check out the list below.

1. Keeper (see article to the right)—free password tracker which uses a master password to unlock all others.
2. SugarSync—sync up to two gigabytes of data to a free web account. You can set up folders on your computer with their computer app and on the iPad with their iPad app and everything automatically updates.
3. NeuNotes—Keep handwritten notes on lined screens with this handy app. A new take on note taking, it allows you to take real notes and easily email them to yourself.
4. Stellarium—This out of this world app is a miniature planetarium, just like it's PC counterpart.
5. Prezi—This app allows you to view flash based Prezi presentations directly on the iPad.
6. Evernote—Note taking to the next level. Take notes based on sight, sound, etc.
7. Whirly Word—This app is a game that involves combining letters to make up an alphabetical list. I think it is kind of hard, but the wife is addicted.
8. Where's Waldo(\$\$\$)—Need I say more.

## How To Keep Your Passwords Straight

There are myriads of web sites out there that allow you to sign up for “free accounts.” How do you keep them all straight though? Do you use only one password? Do you write them down on a piece of paper? Do you use personal information as clues to your password? Really you shouldn't do any of these. At the very least you should use tiered passwords (easy password for service accounts and a much harder password for sensitive information). If you want to be more secure, a great way to do it is to use a master password with a program designed to encrypt (make the passwords unreadable without the master code) your password list. This is more secure than writing the password on a piece of paper or using the same one over and over. In order for someone to gain access to all of your passwords they would have to have physical access to the storage device as well as the correct master code. I myself use a program called KeePass that I have reviewed before. There is even an android version so I can store my master list on my phone. A great iOS alternative is “Keeper,” an app with military level encryption and one touch launch to the websites connected to your passwords. You do have to put up with ads from the maker of Keeper though as well as a nagging reminder to upgrade.

## Web 2.0 Resources: The Best of the Best

Throughout the year I have covered many different web 2.0 tools. Not all tools are created equally. Below is a list of the “best of the best” that I have encountered throughout my time as a teacher.

1. Kidblog.org—Kidblog allows you to create a classroom and grant permissions to your students to “blog.” If you sign-up for the free account you can easily create multiple classes with multiple users and monitor messages before postings.
2. Storybird.com—Storybird uses flash to create amazing books using artwork donated by artists. It is fun, simple and engaging, and you can also set-up a classroom that is private.
3. Twiddla.com—Think of Twiddla as an online virtual meeting space. You can start a meeting without an account, share the meeting space address with others and then everyone can add to it.
4. Picsviewr.com—Turn your pictures into visually stunning presentations with this online tool. Note, you need to have a Flickr account to use this tool with your own pictures.
5. Comicmaster.org.uk—Creating comics to tell stories has never been so easy.
6. Primarypad.com—This simple online tool allows you to create a public workspace. Each person that joins gets their own color and you can write together in real time.