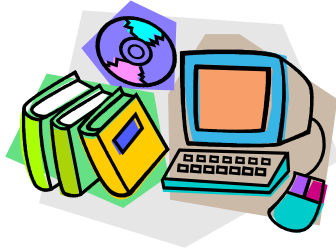


# Technology Newsletter

August, 2004  
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Martha J. Eagle, Director  
Marion Wood, Instructional  
Technologist Coordinator



## Director's News

Welcome back. We hope you had a relaxing break and that you are ready to start an awesome school year.

The purpose of this newsletter is to briefly give you some important information that will hopefully assist you better as you prepare to use technology in your curriculum.

First, I would like to introduce to you two new key personnel on our staff.

Marion Wood, Instructional Technologist Coordinator - a part-time instructional leader to assist us with training and individual staff needs.

April Johnson, Computer Technician - an additional full time computer technician.

Within a quick summer time period, we had new teacher computers installed, three new labs installed, network upgrades and many classroom computers upgrades. There are still many items to take care of as we start the beginning of

the school year. As in the past, we ask that you be patient as we prioritize all work orders.

**REMINDER:** All computer/hardware work orders need to be placed electronically on the network so we can efficiently meet your needs. We appreciate your understanding when they are not seen immediately.

### TECHNOLOGY THURSDAY'S

Our training sessions this year will be hosted on Thursday's thus denoting the new name. More information on the dates and types of training will follow in next few weeks.

As we begin a great school year, please evaluate how you use technology and how we can better assist you.

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## Upcoming Events

- ◆ Technology Thursday Training Workshops
- ◆ NTTI Training, Roanoke, Nov 5-6
- ◆ Educational Technology Leadership Conference, Roanoke, Dec 1-3

## Wireless Connection

Our division operates under a wireless wide area network (WAN). This simply means that our schools are connected to the Internet and network via wireless radios to the water tower and then to central office. All information/data is filtered through the school board server, whether coming in or out. Over the summer, we improved our Internet connectivity by going to a wireless radio connection to a company in Buckingham. We obviously made this decision because we want to increase our bandwidth and we feel it will strengthen our capabilities. Even

though wireless connections are not as stable as fiber hard-wired connections, we feel confident this upgrade will benefit the division.





*“Technology provides new opportunities for affecting eternity. It can be used for learning, for engaging students, and for connecting communities of teachers. Using these tools requires imagination and vision. But they are only tools. Technology only complements the teacher’s instruction, which remains the greatest asset available for students. The teacher is the person who will lead the learning process and provide a continuity of message and content.... Technology can be a remarkable asset in sharing information and expanding intellectual horizons. But our humanity will be learned from teachers and mentors, working with parents and others in the community.”*

*-Secretary of Education*

*Rod Paige*

## Staff News

Our staff has expanded to bring in more knowledge/assistance to our already expert group.

**New staff** - Marion Wood and April Johnson join us this coming school year.

### Instructional Technologists:

Danny Richardson - APS, Nancy Williams - AES, Susan Williams - AMS, Vic Meadows - AMS, Susie Fisher - ACHS, Amy Stump - ACHS

### Web Masters:

Danny Richardson - APS, Nancy Williams, AES, Susan Gramelt, AMS,

Edwina Covington, ACHS

### Computer Technicians:

Gerald Ryan and April Johnson

For general technology issues or procedures, see your instructional technologists and administrators as your first line of resource.

For hardware/software issues, put in a network request for repair or troubleshooting - be as detailed as possible.

For network issues, contact your media specialist, instructional technologists, or administrator.

## Filtering

The Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) states that school divisions must protect against access, through computers with Internet access, to visual depictions that are obscene or harmful to children. Although we know this is very instructionally inhibitive, it is a required process.

The filtering software we use tags sites as inappropriate based on language written for the web site. This language is changed on a daily basis, thus one site that was not blocked one day may get blocked another day. To assist you in

overcoming the filtering process, we have set up BESS software that alerts you of the filter and a process to send a request to us to consider unblocking the site. Please remember to state your name and reason the site is educationally founded. Also remember that some sites are built on a community of pages, and access to your specific page would allow access to unfounded sites and therefore we may not be able to unblock.

## Deep Freeze Software

Another system our division has set up is with Deep Freeze software. All computer labs, excluding APS, and all NEW classroom computers have this software. Simply stated, the software prevents malicious items from infecting the computer. Therefore, any changes to the computer, any downloads from Internet, or any inappropriate actions will not be saved once the computer is shut down. Each computer with Deep Freeze is automatically set to shut down at 5:30 p.m. on a daily basis.- excluding AES 201/206 and ACHS 226 until updated. Please note this if you are working after school in one of the labs. All this means is that as soon as it shuts down, you can turn it back on and continue working.

As part of our summer maintenance, we

used a Spyware/Addware utility to check computers and found an average of 40 on each computer. Simply stated, this means - that these computers were \_\_\_\_\_

There will be a process for unfreezing your computers and making necessary changes. Stay tuned for that information at a later date.

As you use a computer with Deep Freeze installed, please be aware of where you are SAVING your data. You can use external devices (floppy, CD, flash key) or internal (thaw space or personal H drive on network). See your instructional technologists for more info.

## Assistive Technology

Congress, recognizing the importance Assistive Technology (AT) can play in the lives of individuals with disabilities, first defined the terms AT device and AT service in 1988 (P.L. 100-407).

These definitions were later adopted in the IDEA and the 1997 amendments. The IDEA defines an AT device as “any item, piece of equipment or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability.” This definition is broad and includes a range of devices from low technology to high technology items as well as software.

The legal definition of an AT service as it appears in IDEA is “any service that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an AT device.”

Dr. Dorinda Grasty, Director of Remedial and Special Education, and several special education teachers from each school; comprise our Assistive Technology Committee for the ACPS.

If you have further questions, please contact Dr. Grasty.



## Miscellaneous

**Password Security:** we cannot reiterate enough how important it is to keep your passwords secure. I realize that having a billion of them from your work logins to personal ones to activate your home voice mail, are hard to keep straight!! I myself am terrible about this - I keep my bank ATM card in same area as my password because I ALWAYS FORGET!!! That is nuts!!! I am in deep trouble if my wallet is stolen. My philosophy is there is not enough money in my bank account to steal anyway. Still- not a good excuse! Be conscientious of where you keep a listing of your passwords for school use -

the back of your grade book is NOT A GOOD PLACE!!!

**Licensing:** In the past the division has allowed home installation of the most current Microsoft Suite software- this is no longer an allowable issue due to new licensing requirements via Microsoft.

**Employee Computer Purchase:** Certified teachers can buy one computer per year at state bid contract price for personal home use. If you are interested, please contact Martha Eagle.

*“When students have access to technology as a tool, they become more curious about their world. Students become self-motivated, ready to collaborate with others to research and discover the possibilities.”*

*-Challenger Center for Space Science Education.*

## Technology Resources

### **Division Hardware:**

Computer labs, computer stations, wireless labs, projectors, laptop wireless control, laptops, interactive whiteboards, digital camcorders, digital cameras, Quizdom classroom sets

### **Division Software Applications:**

Kurzweil, Compass/Jostens, SASI/Integrate, STAR/Accelerated

Reader, Net Op, Microsoft Suites (2002, ----), GroupWise email (client and web use), and many other individual school and program area applications

**Licensing** - please remember that only software copies licensed to the school division are allowed to be used - any personally purchased software must first be approved by your administrator and the boxed license must be kept on file in the school.

## Virus/Worm Infection

It would seem that the people that create computer virii have been working overtime lately. The virus programs are getting more and more creative and trying to confuse people even more. I think I may be providing you with information that you do not fully understand here, but I will do my best to explain how some of these things work, what to look for, what to worry about and what to do and not do.

1. Some of the recent virii floating around will search the infected computer for the users address book. When it finds one, it sends a copy of the virus to every name in the address book. On top of that, it puts a random address from that stolen address book in the "From" field of the infected message. When the infected message goes to an address that it used from the address book, it will appear to be from someone other than the actual sender. That is why you may see a message sometimes saying that you sent an infected email when you really did not. These types of virii can not hijack your GroupWise address book. The address book is stored on the server, not you local machine. It is also in a stored in a database format that the virus could not understand, even if it could have access to it.

2. Our mail server does not allow you to send or receive internet email with certain types of attachments. Some of them are as follows:

.exe  
.zip  
.scr  
.vbs  
.com  
.bat  
.lnk  
.pif

There are more types that are filtered as well. The reason for this is because these are the types of files (executable programs) that virus programs use to spread themselves. Over the past months the mail server has been catching and filtering HUNDREDS of infected messages daily. These are messages that were all destined for some user here inside the system. The mail server stopped them at the door.

3. Occasionally, you may get a very strange looking message from someone you do not know or perhaps even from someone that you do know. If there is an attachment named "filter.txt", you can view it and see that it is the mail server at work. Every time the mail server removes an attachment from an email, it adds that file to let the end user know that it did so. You can open that "filter.txt" file if you like. You should see the following statement:



"GEE / GEE Whiz has found and filtered an unauthorized attachment at the request of Appomattox County Public Schools email administrator! virusremoval"

A lot of these virus messages have a unique identifier, the same thing in the subject line, the same thing in the body of the message. Something along those lines- Those are easy to filter at the mail server by just keying on that unique identifier. Some of these newer ones have randomly generated text such as Hello, Your document, test, Funny and the list goes on. It is very difficult to filter them based on those criteria alone. I certainly can not filter every email that has Hello in the Subject line.

4. Even with all the safeguards that are in place, there still is the off chance that you could get a virus in a manner other than email. In that case, every computer in the division has our corporate Anti-virus software installed on it. I have a management console that shows every server and every computer that is connected to that server. It shows the version of the Anti-virus software and also how up to date the software is. The software updates are automatic. You do not even have to log in to Novell for the Anti-virus software to receive the update from the server, just turning the computer on and letting it boot to Windows does it. The Anti-virus software gets updated daily, sometimes several times a day, when there is more than one update to be had. Therefore, any virus you might happen to stumble across should get caught. Any computer that does "catch" a virus shows up with a big red "X" in the management console. It tells what kind of virus it is, what action the software took and the current state of the computer. This allows me to go right to that computer and take any corrective action that might be needed.

5. If you ever get a message telling you to remove a file or files from your computer, **DO NOT ACT ON IT!** This is a HOAX. The file listed here is a file used by Windows. In this instance it is the Java De-bugger. Don't worry if you don't know what a Java De-bugger is. That is not important. What is important, there are VERY, VERY, VERY few virii that the Symantec/Norton Anti-virus software we use will not detect. Generally speaking, the only ones that it will not detect are the ones that JUST came out. And by JUST came out, I mean fifteen minutes ago. As soon as the pattern files are updated (done automatically) it will detect it.

I hope this helps a little.  
Gerald



**Appomattox County School  
Board**

124 Court Street  
Appomattox, VA  
24522

**Phone:**  
(434) 352-8251

**Fax:**  
(434) 352-0883

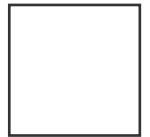
**E-mail:**  
mjeagle@appomattox.k12.va.us

**Learning and Succeeding in  
a Caring Environment-**

**We're on the Web!**  
[www.appomattox.k12.va.us](http://www.appomattox.k12.va.us)  
All pages are listed on the left side  
of the home page - hover and click  
to go to each area listed

## Tidbits of News

- USB Flash Keys - Each teacher/staff will receive one of these as their computers are upgraded. These storage devices act just like a floppy disk or CD and plug into the front or back of your new computers.
- Junk mail - please be aware that the amount of junk mail you receive on your school account is directly related to how often you give out your email address. For example, if you use [expedia.com](http://expedia.com), [amazon.com](http://amazon.com), some screen saver downloads; these companies may ask for you to accept a license agreement and it states they will give your email address and other information out to vendors. Continue to send your unwanted email to [junkmail@appomattox.k12.va.us](mailto:junkmail@appomattox.k12.va.us) and we will attempt to monitor and filter unwanted mail. Unfortunately, this type of mail comes from many different types of accounts under many different types of names and is difficult to filter.
- Web site advertisements - one frustrating occurrence is when you or your students may be surfing the net and you come upon a web site that is very useful and all of a sudden all these extra web ads come popping up or the banner on the web page changes and one of them is for Victoria Secret with not much secret :0) Please be aware that these sites give rights to these advertisements and there is not much that can be done in regards to filtering the ads as long as the site can get through. Please survey all sites prior to use in classroom - even educationally founded ones can be intrusive.
- Technology Plan - our division completed the six-year educational technology plan as directed by the VA Dept. of Education (DOE). A copy of this can be found on the web site and in the hands of instructional technologists and administrators for further reference.



**STAFF OF  
APPOMATTOX  
COUNTY PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS**