

# TSS Newsletter

GULFPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT—TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT SERVICES

## TECHNOLOGY AND 21ST CENTURY STUDENTS

How can we get the 21st Century students to learn what we are teaching? How do we capture their attention? Just talking to them can be a little difficult. Their attention spans are very short. It also seems that we sometimes aren't even speaking the same language. Are they even human?

While we know that they are indeed human, we cannot resist the urge to label these children. We call them digital kids, the YouTube Generation, Net Kids, and digital natives in order to make ourselves feel better while professing that we are *really* trying to understand them. Well, many of us really don't want to understand them as much as we want to modify their behavior so we can continue to teach the way we have always taught. Maybe, just maybe, we should spend less time trying to conform them and more time trying to understand them, their customs, their mindset, how they think, how they learn best, and what makes them tick. This will allow educators an opportunity to make learning more relevant to them. (When their education is more relevant, they tend to come to school more often, and are more interested in learning.)

21st Century children are wired differently. They learn differently. And, remember this, they have no first-hand knowledge of this world or life without technology (iPods, mp3 players, computers, cell phones, video games, and the Internet) regardless of their socio-economic status and whether they own any of these gadgets or not. These children process information differently than we do. They even read in a different manner than we do. They REALLY like vivid colors and colorful things. They socialize differently. They don't even dial a landline phone the way we do (or did) if they dial one at all. Some are even unfamiliar with the sound of a dial tone because they have only used cell phones in their short lifetime. Furthermore, there is emerging research that has discovered that the brains of the digital natives are actually neurologically wired differently than our brains, and their cognitive process is simultaneous, unlike our process, which is linear and sequential (Jukes & McCain, 2008).

Keeping all of these things in mind, can educators teach 21st Century students the same old, conventional way by focusing on the left brain processes of logic and reasoning? Marc Prensky, author of "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants", asserts that we should not. He believes that we should, instead, infuse the "tools of the natives' trade" into our delivery of the curriculum and stop acting as the gatekeepers. (As gatekeepers, we tend to let in only those technologies with which we are very comfortable.) Does this mean just simply replacing those old transparencies with Promethean flipcharts and/or PowerPoint slideshows, or allowing students to type their notes instead of writing them, or changing a poster assignment to a digital flyer project? Are we truly and fully integrating technology into the curriculum to

### What do students do regularly outside of school?

64% of K-12 students - Gaming (Online or Electronic)

40% of middle/high school students - Social Networking (Facebook, MySpace, etc.)

50% of high school students - Communications (E-mail, IM, texting)

*-Speak Up 2007, national initiative of Project Tomorrow*

better educate the natives or are we just doing the same old things in different ways with technology in an attempt to check the technology-inclusion box?

*-Tracy Daniel*

*Technology Training & Assessment Specialist*

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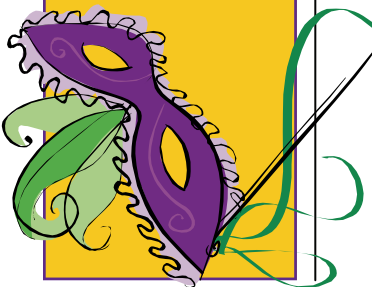
#### In this Issue...

Technology and 21st Century Students	1
E-mail Quotas	2
Passwords	2
Did You Know...	2

### FEBRUARY 2010

#### Upcoming Technology Training

- \* February 27 - Promethean Filling in the Gaps
- \* March 20 - Word Intermediate



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### DID YOU KNOW...

in Microsoft Word, you can highlight an entire line with one click? To do so, move your cursor to the left of a line until the cursor changes from the normal I-beam cursor to an arrowhead cursor and click. You can click twice from that location to highlight the entire paragraph. You can click three times to highlight the entire document.

## ARE YOU OVER YOUR E-MAIL QUOTA?

The word for today is "Quota." A quota is a proportional share assigned to each user. It is very important to clean out your mailbox daily. This includes cleaning out folders such as Sent, Inbox, Drafts, and Trash. The limit is 100 megabytes for each user. This is not the number of emails, but the size allowed. As an example, as the Email Administrator I have around 2,500 emails and they only account for 45 mb of space. So, you can have a lot of email that does not take up much space. However, pictures, videos, presentations, and other attachments will take up your space. The mail server is not a storage unit. Do not save attachments on our mail server. If it is important, save it to your local machine.

When you can no longer access your email, the problem, in most cases, is that you have reached your quota limit. This means that you will be unable to do anything in email because the quota is maximized. Cleaning out your e-mail at this point is too late. Clean your mailboxes daily to keep your size down. If you have a lot of mail, clean out what you can today because we have quite a few days of school left.

*-Rick Herro, GSD Email Administrator & Network Engineer*

## PASSWORDS

**Password**.....yep it is two, four letter words rolled into one. So, what is the big deal with passwords? Let's begin with terminology. A "simple" password is between 3 and 7 characters long and contains only lowercase, uppercase, numbers or a dictionary word. For Example: 123456 or password. A "complex" password is 8 characters in length or longer and contains at least 3 of the 4 character types: lowercase letter, uppercase letter, number, and special character. Example: Tu41fiPp. If under 3 characters, why even bother?

Simple Passwords are bad! The problem is the more complex the password the more likely you are to write it down, which defeats the purpose of a password.

In a recent password audit, I found that of the 1,000 accounts I tested, I was able to obtain 784 passwords. What does that mean? It means I hacked your accounts. Yep and in most cases, I did so in under 10 seconds.

So how do you prevent this from happening? You use a complex password that's not that complex. I

realize this make no sense, but here is an example: Thesaintsarenumber1. Look at that password. It is over 8 characters. It has an uppercase letter, a lowercase letter and a number. Best of all, it's easy to remember. The use of phrases or short sentences is the easiest way to have a complex password you can remember. It would take me around 14 months to hack that password and by that time you would have changed it. Yes, even with a complex password you must change it. Changing a password every 3 to 6 months is usually good enough, unless you're paranoid and then once a month is sufficient.

10 Most Common Passwords:

1. 123456
2. 12345
3. 23456789
4. Password
5. iloveyou
6. princess
7. rockyou
8. 1234567
9. 12345678
10. abc123

E-mail questions or topic suggestions to me at [jonathan.geiselman@gulfportschools.org](mailto:jonathan.geiselman@gulfportschools.org)

*-Jonathan Geiselman,  
Network & Security Engineer*