

Tech Talk v.1.4

Winter 2011

Website Facelift

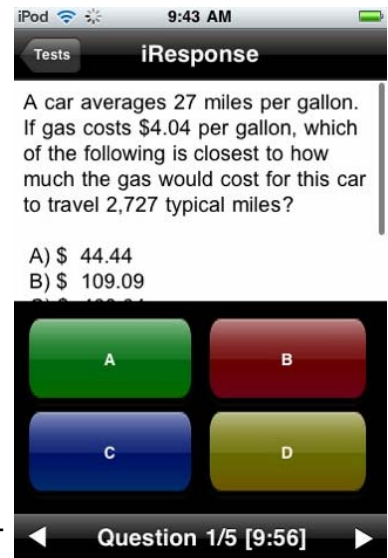
CUSD's website will be undergoing minor surgery in the upcoming weeks. The team that first developed our website met early this year to discuss ways of making it even more functional and user-friendly. The home page facelift will include moving a few of the photo links, increasing the size of some of the quick links and giving school links more prominence. In addition the site will be optimized to work with all Internet browsers. As a way to help facilitate event planning, we are looking at a more integrated calendar that features all non-sporting events and activities for the district in one calendar. Once the facelift is complete, we will be doing a spring cleaning of the content – making sure all links work, updating photos, removing outdated content, etc. The website will be up and running during this process but you may find some things have moved. You can always use the SEARCH option at the top of the page.



An Apple a Day

In January a few teachers met with representatives from Apple to explore iPod Touch/iPad curriculum for science, math and literacy. These devices provide teachers the ability to turn their lectures into an interactive learning experience in order to help students increase their learning and retain more knowledge from each teaching session. Colleen Poynter, Shauna Ames, Sean Spradley, and Michael Lant got some hands-on experience with many applications including the iResponse classroom responder system. When asked for feedback, Colleen Poynter, SLMS Reading and Social Studies teacher, said "I can envision a tool like the iPad being used in my classroom. As much technology as many of the students use on a daily basis, this would be an easy tool for them to pick up and use in all aspects of their education."

Shauna Ames, SLMS Math and Science Teacher, was impressed with the amazing possibilities technology can bring to students on a one-to-one basis. "If each student had an iPad, or something similar, the teaching possibilities multiply. There are apps that support the curriculum, provide interventions, give teachers immediate feedback on student work, and promote an interactive modern classroom. It also provides more equity among the students."



Game On!

The Gaming Lab at CUHS is still doing brisk business during lunch time. The lab is staying current with gaming

innovations: Kinect, the new Xbox gaming add-on that includes skeletal tracking, and 3 new games were added earlier this month. According to Sean Spradley, Chief Gaming Officer, the lab continues to be a popular hangout. "We are close to 2/3 of the year done and still getting 20-30 students each day."



Image of skeletal tracking

John Calandro: MyTechDesk Master!

Since we started using MyTechDesk to track tech support requests the technology team has resolved an impressive 269 support tickets. We are able to better manage our resources, track time spent on each ticket, determine which areas of tech need more support than others and produce all kinds of data that nerds just love to look at. Thank you for helping us help ourselves. By the way, the staff person with the most tech requests to date is . . . John Calandro. Go John!



E-rate Skyrockets for CUSD

In 1997 an Order of the Telecommunication Act was designed to ensure all eligible schools and libraries have affordable access to modern telecommunications and information services. As a result, every two years the district asks parents to complete a simple survey and based upon those results the federal government awards reimbursement percentages for certain technology purchases. Historically CUSD has earned a 70-80% reimbursement rate however this year, for the first time ever, the district qualifies for a 90% reimbursement! This additional 10% has challenged us to shoot for the moon with our technology plan. If everything goes as planned we are hoping to install wireless access at all campuses over the summer and to upgrade our email program to the most current version which will give users some of the bells and whistles they've been asking for. A special shout-out to the site secretaries – Lori Nunez, Elizabeth Appel, and Carrol Adams – and Maria Mendoza for working extra hard to get the maximum number of survey responses in.



Click here to play Cisco's Binary Game:

http://forums.cisco.com/CertCom/game/binary_game_page.htm

Netbooks: Testing 1,2

Select CUSD students are helping provide useful information on how to best integrate mobile computing devices in the classroom and at home. Netbooks, small, low-priced, mini-laptops, were given to select students to take home and use for a week. They filled out a survey to provide feedback about their experience with the product. This information will help guide decision-making for next year's technology acquisition program.



Network Upgrade: Thank You

During the Winter Break, we worked really hard to manually change over nearly 400 devices (computers, network printers, switches) to be up and running when you returned to school on 1/3. We had about a 95% success rate. To that 5% of you who had network connectivity issues when you returned, a big THANK YOU for your patience!

Rosetta Stone

¿Habla usted español? Sprechen Sie Deutsch?

Since Rosetta Stone was offered to district staff and students 526 students have enrolled along with 65 staff members. By far the most common language requested has been Spanish, followed by French. Other popular languages include Portuguese, Italian and Pig Latin. If you're interested in learning a foreign language or just brushing up on one, please contact Patti Stroh



via email with your language preference. Limit one language per user.

Castle Connections

CUSD is offering to help Hearst Castle gain videoconference connectivity to California's K-12 schools. California State Parks PORTS program provides teachers and students with complete units of study and live videoconferences. The units include lessons to prepare students for the videoconference, supporting materials, and links to further resources. CUSD will house the equipment that allows the digital traffic to traverse our fiber connection to SLOCOE. For more info on this exciting project, see www.ports.parks.ca.gov.

Tech Tips:

- Blabberize.com
Do a voice over to any photo. Maybe something you tell the students all the time.
- Prezi.com
Try a different presentation tool to peak students' interest.
- Rollyo.com
Create a restricted search environment in which students are led to preapproved, appropriate websites.
- Travelpod.com/traveler-ig
Challenge students and friends with a geography game.
- Zamzar.com
Convert files without downloading software.



CUSD Tech Team: Henry Danielson, Sean Spradley, and Patti Stroh sport nerd attire from the Danielson Collection.