

May Technology Board Report

May 16, 2008

Desktop Systems

We have been testing and investigating using a desktop support freeware application called iTALC. It enables the ability to see real-time desktop displays from a remote computer to help identify and solve possible computer problems. Upon discovery we shared the knowledge with peer technology managers in Erie County, and are working together to streamline deployments. So far we've found the software to be of exceptional value in helping us understand students' habits with our computer systems.

Windows Vista service pack (SP) 1 has been installed and tested on three computers at ECTS. It is a significant improvement over the initial release; however, we still have no interest in widespread deployment of Windows Vista in the coming school year. Windows XP SP2 and/or SP3 is much faster and more stable still. Beyond this, the next largest limiting factor for Windows Vista is the significant demand in hardware requirements over Windows XP that would require large investments in memory and hard drive upgrades.

Server Systems

The Server room was slightly re-arranged to make room for more storage and equipment, thinking the new fold and seal mailing machine might be best suited in the Records/Server room. The servers remain not beneath any known water hazards.

Network

Network expansion continues in the Skills Center to facilitate a re-arrange of the upstairs computer lab, and the installation of a teacher office downstairs for the transition center contractors and instructors.

Travel

Spent an afternoon with Jeremy Dylewski at General McLane School District to evaluate the differences, challenges, and opportunities a Macintosh (MAC) and Windows dual platform environment may have. While ECTS's abilities to support Apple software is equal to our abilities with Microsoft's, the total cost of ownership to implement a dual platform environment can be significant beyond the cost of the desktop machines themselves. Even General McLane struggles with the lack of support some software vendors have with MAC environments.

Vendor

I have invited Apple Corporation technical engineers the opportunity to present their opinions and solution suggestions for a MAC/Windows dual platform environment at ECTS. I feel it is in the best interest of ECTS and my career to at least consider the potential with other vendors from time to time. Certainly the industry changes very quickly. Should Windows Vista remain to be dismissed by IT implementers in majority, the need to 'think outside the box' will become more and more important. The previous philosophy when considering Linux/MAC/Windows for the desktop has been dominated by costs and 3rd party software support.