IT Department Newsletter
13/14 School Year

Technology Update

We are working to simplify the everyday use of technology and make your computing experience a less stressful situation. We have been working to look at what you do and what we can assist with to make the technology work better.

Changes that we have made in upgrading the OS to Windows 7 and Office 2010 have been in place for over a year now. In changing, this brings on new challenges in IT to support it.

So what are the best practices end users could follow to make computing safer and easier?

As most of you are aware now, PST file are no longer supported. Although you may continue to use them, they must be created and stored on a flash or removable media. Microsoft will not support the use of this information on network resources. (Also referred to as your P: drive).

We have had many issues where users have stored over 2 gig of information, and this puts the PST file at risk of corruption. Network outages, or machine reboots, leaves the PST file open and vulnerable to corruption when in use.

Saving data in general has presented issues, when users store gigs of data on the district files servers, and don't realize over years how much they have saved. We are suggesting the use of DropBox, SkyDrive, etc. to store your pictures or even files that you might want to access from home. The IT team will help assist in the use of setting up this resource on your computer.

Keeping the computer free of personalized information or work related data allows us to help you faster if your machine needs to be reimaged. Your machine is the device you use, but not the place to keep your files stored locally on it.

Be careful when visiting websites that may ask you to install toolbars, like Google, Ask, Yahoo and others. They can present problems with other applications while accessing internal district resources. They can sneak up on you when a popup occurs and will install without your knowledge if you do not watch what you are doing.

Malware (is legitimate software but contains harmful bugs that were not corrected before release. However, some malware is disguised as genuine software, and may come from an official company website in the form of a useful or attractive program which has the harmful malware embedded in it along with additional tracking software that gathers marketing statistics) is running rampant and it is a major cause of unexplainable issues for users such as in ability to print, IE stops working, and others.

To help prevent malware, computers are installed with an added application called Malwarebytes. This application can be run by the end user and we suggest running a malware scan every week. The application is on SharePoint for anyone to install and we *like* this application!

Installing other programs should be a simple request, but not to IT. We like to test, run, and see how the program works in our environment. If you are in need to have software installed, just put a work order in. Please give IT enough time to do our part, and we will make it available to you through a new software deployment tool. More is to come on this new access to install applications.

There is a lot of new technology being implemented throughout the district, Smartboards in elementary, Laptops and iPad carts throughout the district. Wireless is now district wide, which is in preparation for a BYOD possibility. We hope that you are enjoying your summer and come back refreshed and ready for a new school year. See you soon!

Welcome new IT staff members Brett Burstein and returning to Neshaminy is Matt America. Good luck in the new school year.