

# Mountain Brook High School

Our Journey Beyond the 21st Century...



## Stops along the journey

- The Blogosphere
- The Wild, Wild Wikis
- Utopia (Successes and Perfect Plans)
- Dead Ends (Bumps in the Road)
- Detours (Changing Directions)
- Favorite Destinations
- Next Year's Trip



# The Blogosphere

To infinity and beyond.



## Science Blogging

- Set up
  - Easy
  - Quick
- Problems
  - Getting kids to buy into it
  - Posting (who can, who can't)
  - Guidelines for what will be published





## Right Turns

- Uses
  - Review
  - Concept building
  - Tutorials
  - Assignments
- Positives
  - Kids responsible for their learning
  - “extended” time in the classroom
  - Easy way to put technology into the curriculum
  - Comments are not held against students so they feel free to share and expand on ideas



## Wrong Turns

- Negatives
  - All kids won't post
  - Cheating on some assignments
  - Will read but won't comment
- Changes for next year
  - Handouts of use
  - Will have students create their own blog
  - Grade for the number of postings made
  - Regular questions
  - Video blogs of demonstrations



## English Blog

- Set up
  - [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com)
  - Handouts on use of blog
- Problems
  - Membership (anonymous postings)
  - Immature and irresponsible posts
- Uses
  - Reflections on class topics
  - To replace journal grade
  - Bonus point opportunity
  - Collaboration



## Right Turns

- Positives
  - Discourse outside of class
  - Piqued interest in topic (teaser)
  - Outside comments and interests
  - Cross-class discussions
  - Attention from outsiders (“worldwide”)
    - Another school
    - College students
    - Random bloggers

## Wrong Turns

- Negatives
  - Blogging for the grade
  - Comment moderation email load
  - Recording the grades for the blog
- Changes for next year
  - Points for the insight/creativity of comments
  - A way to manage the comment moderation
  - Collaborative effort with other classes in the school and outside the school walls
  - Vaestro Audio Guestbook
  - Comments limited to the posts for that week



## The Wild, Wild Wiki

Rounding up information and  
corralling it in one place.



## The Wiki Round-up



- Set Up
  - Ad-free for teachers
  - [www.wikispaces.com](http://www.wikispaces.com)
- Problems
  - Email memberships and permissions
- Uses
  - Posting handouts, links
  - Collaborative projects
  - Collaboration with another school

## The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly



- Positives
  - Easy access (for the technophobe and techie)
  - Familiar to students (wikipedia)
  - Collaboration
- Negatives
  - Had to make wiki public when membership emails failed (vulnerable to “open” web surfers)
- Changes
  - Have one day of training and have all students join during that day rather than invite

# Utopia

Peace, serenity, and that good  
“just out of the techie spa”  
feeling.



## Success

- Student engagement in that activity is increased
- Students more responsible for their learning
- Students become more aware of responsibilities in a virtual learning environment
- Safe environment
  - Ability to moderate promotes teacher comfort
  - Students feel confident in replying to prompts



## Dead Ends

Where the heck is the  
“Mapquest” for this mess?



## Mayday! Mayday!

- Buy-ins by all participants
- “Blogging for the grade” (not commenting unless a grade was given)
- Teachers, admin, techs might not see the academic value of this technology in the classroom
- Grading of comments (individual preference)
- Teachers see this technology as a trend/not relevant



## Detours

Ask directions. Turn around.  
Get on the right path.



## Changes

- Expanding the technology to the next level
- Network with teachers outside of individual schools (branch out)
- Find a way to give all teachers within the school the comfort to use these tools (in the classroom/professional learning communities)
- Use for ongoing professional development or technology training





## Favorite Destinations

- Audio Blogging
  - [www.vaestro.org](http://www.vaestro.org)
- Podcasting
  - [www.podomatic.com](http://www.podomatic.com)
  - [www.audacity.com](http://www.audacity.com)
  - [www.freeplaymusic.com](http://www.freeplaymusic.com)
- Plagiarism Detection Software
  - [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)
- User-Friendly Practical Tools
  - [www.4teachers.org](http://www.4teachers.org)
    - Rubistar
    - Project poster
    - Quiz star



## Planning Next Year's Trip

- Video Blogging
- Tech Tool Multitasking
  - Smash-ups
  - RSS Feeds/Suprglu
  - Skype about a Blog and collaborate on a Wiki
- Advanced Video/Audio Editing
  - Audacity/Garage Band/Podcasting with Chapters
  - Windows Movie Maker/ iMovie/ Camtasia Studio



## And...

- Small Group Professional Development
  - Blogs, Wikis, TappedIn
- Student-Directed Tech Tools
  - Blog posts/ Wiki pages
  - Tutorials and Surveys
  - “Pen Pals” and Collaboration Activities



**What are we going to  
do now that this year’s  
journey is over?**

# We're Going to Disney World!!!



- Ok, some of us are... but that is not relevant.
- We had fun on the journey.
- We cannot wait to see what is around the next turn.
- Thanks Sheryl, John, and Cathy for being our travel guides.