TECHNOLOGY SERVICES PRESENTS...

The Technology Insider

KEEPING YOU INSIDE THE TECHNOLOGY LOOP

The Easy Button
Simple Solutions

New Performance Monitoring Tool in TDAS

A new tool has been created in TDAS which enables teachers and administrators to analyze both TAKS and CBA data in TDAS with a simple click interface through the Student Center.

Once logged into TDAS, click on Student Center and then Performance Monitor. A new screen should appear in the center of the TDAS window.

The data an employee sees is based on their role within TISD. Teachers will only see the students that are in their current classes. Principals will only see the students located at their campuses. District administrators will see the entire district.

The information displayed is based on the date of the Test Administration and where the students are located on the day the report was generated, not where the students were on the day they took the test.

Technology Changes in 2010

There are some big changes in technology coming in 2010 that Technology Services hopes will strengthen and improve the technology infrastructure in Tomball ISD. With the approval from the TISD Executive Council, Technology Services is embarking on making some major changes to the District's network infrastructure over the next six months.

There are seven major goals for Technology Services this year, which are:

1. Develop district-wide policies and procedures for data collection to improve data accuracy.

2. Upgrade current and replace outdated network equipment to improve the speed and consistency of data transmission.

3. Improve performance of technology equipment throughout district to aide staff and students in effectively and efficiently using the technology tools at their disposal.

4. Create a Disaster Recovery Plan that ensures critical data is redundant, secure, and highly available.

5. Implement new Virtualized and Active Directory infrastructure district-wide to improve server redundancy and prevent application downtime.

6. Develop additional tools for the analysis of district data.

7. Establish a seamless identity integration system for all district applications.

In order to accomplish these goals, there are some technology infrastructure upgrades that must be put into place, which are:

1. Install new VMWare servers.

2. Implement Active Directory structure and Migrate Employee Data.

3. Install Exchange 2007 Server.

4. Migrate employee's to Microsoft Outlook.

5. Move employee login accounts to Employee IDs.

How these upgrades will effect you will be covered in more detail on the following pages of this newsletter.
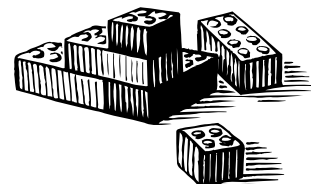
Technology Services Staff Member Bio...

Lance Cooper

Lance was born in Houston and has lived in Houston all of his life. He moved to Tomball four years ago. Lance worked in the technology field for the Oil & Gas industry for 10 years, as well as attending night school for his A+ and CISCO CCNA Certifications.

Lance came to Tomball ISD last year as the HelpDesk Support until he was promoted to a Computer Technician during this school year.

Lance enjoys fishing and playing pool, as well as being a DJ on the weekends and holidays. We are glad to have Lance as part of TISD Technology Services Team.

Robert Aldridge

Technology welcomes Robert Aldridge as our new Helpdesk. Robert joined the technology team in February and hit the ground running. He was born in Frankfurt, Germany, but as he says, "celebrated all of his birthdays here in Texas." I believe that makes him a Native Texas particularly since he opted for US citizenship at the age of 18.

He has lived in the Houston area all of his life and graduated from Klein Oak High School. After taking a little time for himself, he enrolled in ITT Technical Institute where he earned his ITT degree as well as some teaching experience. Robert was born the only child to two self proclaimed "techies" so he really had no option but to go into some type of technology. We were lucky to lure him away from working at the Houston Public Library particularly since he is an avid reader. Robert knows a lot about all things technology so next time you have a question, give him a ring!

Active Directory Infrastructure (Network)

There are two versions of Directory Structures used by a majority of the networks around the world; Novell e-Directory and Microsoft Active Directory. Currently TISD uses Novell's e-Directory for its network access and Microsoft's Active Directory for e-SchoolPLUS, FinancePLUS, Teacher Access Center, and TDAS. Using both Directory Structures has caused a number of problems with management and synchronization of Usernames and Passwords, so Tomball ISD has decided to make the move to an all Active Directory infrastructure.

Currently when employees and students log into the TISD network and gain access to their network drives, they must make sure to enter their Username and Password, along with the correct Network Tree and Context, and then click a second login which is typically either User or School.

Under Microsoft's Active Directory, employees and students will only have to enter their Username and Password. They will no longer have to select the correct Network Tree or Context. The second login will not be necessary either.

Moving to Active Directory will simplify the login process and enable TISD to synchronize Usernames and Passwords between a number of applications, such as; Network, TDAS, and E-mail.

The process for moving to Active Directory fully is well underway; however, the switch for employees and students will not take place until the summer. More information and reminders will be coming throughout the school year.
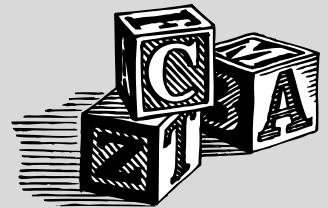
Username Changes

As mentioned in the article above, TISD will be moving to Active Directory this year, which will change how employees log into the network and their computers. In the switch to Active Directory, TISD has also decided to change how usernames are created and used.
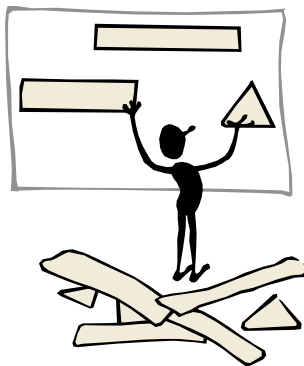
Currently, usernames are First and Last Names when it comes to the network, TDAS, and a number of other applications used in TISD; however, due to name changes and inconsistencies between systems used in TISD, Tomball ISD has decided to move logins from first and last names to their five-digit Employee ID number which will help with consistency between systems, as well as make the management of users easier when name changes occur.

Moving to Employee IDs as your username means that your username will never change as long as you are in Tomball ISD. We hope this will simplify usernames in TISD and prevent future problems when names change or are too long. If you do not know your current Employee ID, you can log into TDAS and find your Employee ID next to your username in the top right-hand corner and it can also be found on your paycheck stub.

The move to using Employee IDs for usernames will not occur until the summer for most employees. More information and reminders will be coming throughout the school year as we get closer to making the final move.

Network Drive and Data Access

As TISD moves to Active Directory (AD), Technology Services will make sure that your network drives (H:Drive and/or any other network drives) and your data will be intact. However, since your usernames will be changing to your Employee ID, your network drive will be changing to your Employee ID as well. Your network drives will be exactly where they were before; however, instead of seeing your first and last name next to your network drive, you will see your Employee ID.

The move to using Employee IDs for your network drive and the moving of employee data will not occur until the summer for most of the TISD employees. Technology Services has already started moving employees of Central Office, Transportation, and Maintenance to AD. More information and reminders will be coming throughout the school year.

GroupWise to Microsoft Outlook Switch

Over the years, Tomball ISD has used Novell's GroupWise as its e-mail; however, with the move to Active Directory, the District has decided to move to Microsoft's Exchange e-mail system. The move to Exchange provides the District with the opportunity to start using Microsoft Outlook.

The new Exchange Server will be installed on the new VMWare Servers to give TISD more protection and stability, which we hope will prevent future issues with e-mail as TISD has been experiencing over the past several months with GroupWise.

The move to Microsoft Outlook will not take place until the week of July 3rd, 2010.

Summer Outlook and TDAS Training

Technology Services has established several summer training dates to help you navigate your way through TISD's NEW Microsoft Outlook e-mail system, as well as guide you through all of the options available to you in TDAS. The two hour sessions will be held in the Technology and Staff Development Center in the computer lab on the Technology Services side. The sessions only seat 20 each, so sign up as soon as possible through Infosource. This training will cover Outlook Web Access ONLY.

The dates and times are as follows:

June 2010 ————————————————————————————————————

Tuesday June 15th (9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.)   Tuesday June 15th (1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.)

Wednesday June 16th (9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.)   Wednesday June 16th (1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.)

Thursday June 17th (9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.)   Thursday June 17th (1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.)

July 2010 ————————————————————————————————————

Tuesday July 20th (9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.)   Tuesday July 20th (1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.)

Wednesday July 21st (9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.)   Wednesday July 21st (1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.)

Thursday July 22nd (9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.)   Thursday July 22nd (1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.)

August 2010 ————————————————————————————————————

Tuesday August 3rd (9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.)   Tuesday August 3rd (1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.)

Wednesday August 4th (9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.)   Wednesday August 4th (1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.)

Thursday August 5th (9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.)

Additional trainings will be available at your campus and within your departments at the beginning of the school year.

Old and New E-mail & Contacts

As mentioned in an earlier district-wide e-mail, two major things will occur in Tomball ISD the week of July 3rd, regarding old and new e-mail & contacts.

GroupWise will shut down and all current and archived e-mail and contacts in GroupWise will become unavailable.

In July, when Tomball ISD moves to MS Outlook, the District will lose all current and archived e-mail and contacts in Novell's GroupWise. In order to maintain proper archiving records, each employee will need to print out e-mails they feel are pertinent and properly file the printed hard copies. Please review the Local TISD Retention Schedules; EL, GR, SD, and TX found in TDAS Document Library, under Technology Services. Each employee has until July 2nd, 2010 to print out any important e-mails and properly file them before they are lost. If you need to save any contacts, please print them out, because you will need to add them into Outlook once TISD goes live in July.

Microsoft Exchange (Outlook) will be turned on and available for use by employees by July 7th, when employees can start checking their e-mail at https://owa.tomballisd.net using their five-digit employee number and district password.

Technology Services Staff Member Bio...

Thomas Brawley

Tom was originally born in Osceola, Arkansas; however, grew up in a military family and moved every three years to a new location in and around the world. Tom has lived in such places as; Morocco, Guam, Jacksonville, Corpus Christi, Charleston, and Norfolk to name a few. After graduating high school from Goose Creek South Carolina in 1983, he moved to Houston, and he has called it home ever since.

From 1983 to 1991, Tom worked at a number of different jobs ranging from Cabinet Making to a Retail Manager until he figured out that he wanted to become a teacher, so in 1991 as a single parent, Tom went back to College where he received his Bachelor's Degree from the University of Houston in 1994 and Master's Degree from Houston Baptist University in 2000.

Tom was a substitute teacher for the three years while he was in college and then became a Social Studies Teacher in 1994 until 2000, where he also served as a Curriculum Specialist for Texas History in Fort Bend ISD. In 2000, he took a job at Region IV ESC as an Educational Specialist in Instructional Technology and served in that capacity until 2003 when he moved to Alief ISD as the Career and Technology Coordinator.

In December of 2005, Tom was hired in Tomball ISD as the Director of Technology Services. He is married to Kristie Brawley who teaches Second Grade at Willow Creek Elementary and his twenty-two year old son Stephen is currently a student at Lone Star College.

New Campus and District Websites

In December of 2009, a Website Committee was formed to investigate making changes to the campus and District websites. After four months of meetings and discussions, a new design was established. Many new enhanced features will be available on the new campus and District websites which will hopefully improve the end-user experience while visiting Tomball ISD's on-line presence.

District and Campus Website Time-line:

May 2010 - School Board Presentation on the upcoming website changes.

June 2010 - Alpha test begins in-district ONLY for comments and feedback by TISD employees.

July 2010 - Beta test begins for Tomball ISD parents and community for feedback and comments.

August 2010 - New District and Campus websites go live.

No changes will be made to the current Teacher websites. Teachers will continue using TeacherWeb as a communication tool with parents and students.

New Substitute Folders on Teacher Desktops

Due to the recent changes of moving to Active Directory, an issue arose on how Substitutes log onto the computer and have access to lesson plans and/or other files needed to teach a class, when a teacher is away.

Technology Services will be pushing down a folder called; "**Substitute Folder**" on the desktop of every teacher's computer. This is the folder that teachers will place files into before they leave, so that a Substitute can access those files when they are away.

When a Substitute arrives in a classroom, the Substitute can log into the computer using the Campus Substitute login information that will be given to the Principals for their campus. Once logged into the computer, there will be a folder on the desktop called; "**Substitute Folder**" where the files are located.

Please remember, that the Substitutes may not have the proper training to operate all of the technology at their disposal in your classroom.

TDAS Changes (Department/Campus Visits)

Technology Services has concluded their visitations with departments and campuses with regards to the future of TDAS. We received a lot of very valuable feedback from each department and campus and have already started the tedious process of planning for a bigger and better version of TDAS to serve you.

Technology Services is working feverishly to accomplish as many items staff members requested in the new version of TDAS. Working in all of the changes may require Technology Services to extend the debut of the new version of TDAS to a later date than hoped. Technology Services wants to make sure that we do not rush putting something in place and possibly cause more headaches because they do not work properly.

You might see some slight visual changes in TDAS at the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year due to some required changes to make the new TISD and Campus websites work properly. Many of the visual changes will help us prepare for the major upgrades the following year.

Thank you again, and we are excited and looking forward to putting your vision in TDAS 2.0! Technology Services' Goal is to have as many of your new ideas built into the new TDAS by August of 2011.
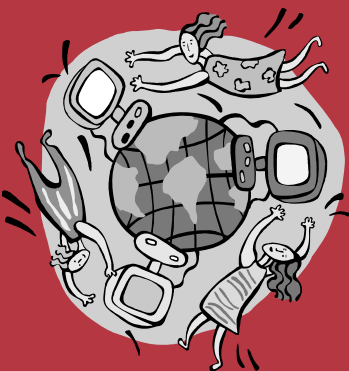
Technology Services Staff

Director of Technology
Tom Brawley

Mgr. Desktop/Network Services
Thomas Cranshaw

Mgr. Information Services
Cam Hendricks

Network Administrator
Chris Montgomery

Network Administrator
Twila Rank

Web Application Developer
Jason Curry

PEIMS Administrator
Joan Deleon

Gradebook Specialist
Savilla McEntire

Data Specialist
Tina Deleon

MIS Adm. Assistant
Arlene Knobloch

Technology Services Secretary
Leigh Ann Holloway

HelpDesk Support
Robert Aldridge

Computer Technicians
Mary Avera
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Choosing and Protecting Passwords

Information provided by the US-CERT (Us Computer Emergency Readiness Team)

Passwords are a common form of authentication and are often the only barrier between a user and your personal information. There are several programs attackers can use to help guess or "crack" passwords, but by choosing good passwords and keeping them confidential, you can make it more difficult for an unauthorized person to access your information.

Here is a review of tactics to use when choosing a password:

- Don't use passwords that are based on personal information that can be easily accessed or guessed.
- Don't use words that can be found in any dictionary of any language.
- Develop a mnemonic for remembering complex passwords.
- Use both lowercase and capital letters.
- Use a combination of letters, numbers, and special characters.

Now that you've chosen a password that's difficult to guess, you have to make sure not to leave it someplace for people to find. Writing it down and leaving it in your desk, next to your computer, or, worse, taped to your computer, is just making it easy for someone who has physical access to your office. Don't tell anyone your passwords, and watch for attackers trying to trick you through phone calls or email messages requesting that you reveal your passwords. No one who is legitimate will ever ask for your password via phone or e-mail. Never click on a link to change your password, because you never know where that link will take you.

Staying Safe on Social Networking Sites

Information provided by the US-CERT (Us Computer Emergency Readiness Team)

The popularity of social networking sites continues to increase, especially among teenagers and young adults. The nature of these sites introduces security risks, so you should take certain precautions.

Here are a few ways you can protect yourself:

- Limit the amount of personal information you post.
- Remember that the internet is a public resource.
  (Everyone can see it and don't just think just because you delete it, that it is gone.)
- Be wary of strangers and be skeptical.
- Evaluate your privacy settings and use strong passwords.
- Use and maintain anti-virus software.

While the majority of people using these sites do not pose a threat, malicious people may be drawn to them because of the accessibility and amount of personal information that's available. The more information malicious people have about you, the easier it is for them to take advantage of you.

Technology Services Employees of the Year

This past July, Technology Services decided to implement a Technology Services Employee of the Year Award for both the Information Services and Desktop/Network Services divisions of Technology Services. Each division manager chose the employee who best exemplifies the hard work, customer service, and dedication that is the driving force behind the Vision of Technology Services. The winners of the First Annual Technology Services Employees of the Year were:

Tina Deleon - Data Specialist - Information Services

Cindy Fowler - Computer Technician - Desktop/Network Services

I would like to personally thank each and every one of the Technology Services staff members for the tireless work they perform each and every day. Without them, Technology Services would not be able to provide quality customer service.