BEING A 21ST CENTURY LIBRARY

One-to-One Laptop Program for Middle and Upper School
by Ed Curtin, Director of Technology

Ranney School has always been first when incorporating technology into the educational environment, and this school year is no exception. At Ranney, our core focus is always the value that technology brings to the education process. With this year's exciting one-to-one laptop initiative, our faculty and students have the ability to fully experience the education process as never before. Ranney School's technology program not only provides a means to fulfill the technological requirements being placed on students today, but also allows faculty to advance their own abilities to present and manage academic content. Students and teachers are now functioning in a unified technological environment with everyone on the same server.

As a result, students and teachers in the Middle and Upper Schools are using laptops as tools to enhance nearly every aspect of the learning experience. Students can now access digital tools for inquiry and research, instructional content, library resources and online presentations at any opportunity. Teachers are able to communicate and work collaboratively with students both in and outside the classroom to meet learning goals, extend classroom dialogue, and move assessment and learning projects beyond the limitations of a scheduled class period. The one-to-one laptop program has removed physical learning boundaries for Ranney students.

In the Lower School, technology use is centered on the values of a 21st century education while maintaining balance with the school's mission: highly personalized instruction allowing for strong student/teacher relationships and mentorships, and ongoing communication in collaborative environments. Individualized access to relevant teaching and learning materials that support student skill development, curriculum development, and the advancement of learning goals will provide our younger students with the foundational skills necessary for success in the Middle and Upper School – and well into their adult life.

Ranney School's technology program does not only provide a means to fulfill the technological requirements being placed on students today, but also opens the door for faculty to advance the learning capabilities of our students now to better prepare them for the future.

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Armen Krikorian '26

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A New Technology and Media Center for the Upper and Middle School
by Deborah Fanslow, Library, Media and Technology Specialist

The Paulus Library was renovated this past summer to include a new Technology and Media Center. With this dedicated instructional space in the library, students now have access to resources, technology and instructional support all in one place. The new Media Center also enables students to develop digital media skills through access to the same graphics, video and audio software used by working professionals in similar creative fields. Using a digital camera and videoconferencing software, students can even communicate and collaborate with professionals, experts and other students worldwide. Ranney's Technology and Media Center contains interactive SMART-board technology as well, transforming classroom discussions into interactive learning experiences.

The Paulus Library media program plays a critical role in supporting the academic achievement of Middle and Upper School students at Ranney School, and serves as a center of information, communication and technology for the entire academic community. The resources, instruction, services and programs available through the library media program enable Ranney students to become effective users and producers of information.

In partnership with classroom teachers, the library's staff members guide students to develop skills in accessing, evaluating, managing and using information in print, digital and emerging formats. Students learn to become competent information seekers, while researching curricular topics and exploring personal interests through in-depth classroom assignments and Capstone research projects. New to the library media program this year is a series of instructional sessions for Middle School students on information and digital literacy. Through this instructional program, students will learn how technology impacts information use, as well as how to effectively search for and evaluate information on the web using popular academic research venues.

Through the Paulus Library, students have access to comprehensive resources and technologies that extend the learning process. As information moves from print to digital, so do our library collections. The library maintains an extensive inventory of digital resources and tools including an online materials catalog, subscriptions to over 65 research databases, two collections of digital reference libraries totaling over 1,000 ebooks and an abundance of links on the library's website directing students to quality, authoritative research tools that support a rigorous academic curriculum. The Paulus Library's online collection also includes an interactive digital library of resources that provides students with instant access to instructional support and research guides, as well as with links to free digital media tools that assist students in creating exciting multi-media projects and interactive digital portfolios. These online resources are available 24/7 for student and faculty use. Alongside traditional print materials, technology passes through the circulation desk on a daily basis – ranging from nook e-Readers loaded with the latest bestsellers to digital cameras, tripods, video cameras, flash drives and other hardware.

In addition to supporting student achievement, the library media program also plays a pivotal role in enhancing classroom instruction. As a member of the Academic Technology Committee, the Library, Media and Technology Specialist provides professional development workshops for teachers on the curricular application of current and emerging educational technologies, including blogs, wikis, collaborative applications and multi-media production tools.

As the ability to find, manage, evaluate and use information becomes as important as recalling information in today's world of information overload, these literacy skills have become an essential tool for learning.

It's a Digital World
by Tess Nielsen, Performing Arts Chair

The Upper School Digital Media curriculum, by design, is fluid and student-centered. This year, the structures of Ranney's digital media technology program transformed, allowing students to accomplish even more. The newly-renovated Technology and Media Center is updated with Adobe Creative Suite Software. This innovative software, combined with a one-to-one laptop program, helps students create multi-layered digital media projects that allow them to show others what they have learned.

The center's media lab is a highly-collaborative learning environment where students use digital tools to create self-directed projects such as e-portfolios, 3D animations and video documentaries. Students go beyond acquiring software skills as they work in a new realm of problem solving. Digital media students typically progress through all stages of media production, including concept development, construction, editing, testing and final presentation. The new course of study, however, takes students through digital photography, graphic design for print and web, and beginning 3D models. The second semester covers audio and video production, with projects including documentaries, commercials and original student films.

Students can also apply these real-world media skills to their current academic undertaking. The new media curriculum aligns with Adobe learning initiatives, which most prominently include 21st century critical thinking skills of information, communications and technology literacy. Tomorrow's publishers, marketers and business leaders will need to know the rules and grammar of movie production, broadcasting and media presentation. The field of digital media possesses a powerful new vernacular that is highly relevant to the lives of our students.

Hands-on experience helps students to learn about these technologies, and makes them aware of the tools available to enhance learning. Through digital media study, students explore how technology principles are used in math, history, science, and creative writing and gain a wealth of knowledge about different areas of study. Success in the digital media lab builds self-confidence and fosters self-esteem, making students believe that they can do anything if they just put in the hard work. Best of all, digital technology engages students because it's fun!

Technology in the Middle School
by Stacy Goto, Computer Science Teacher

Now that sixth, seventh and eighth grade students use their laptops in all of their classes, the teachers are inspired by the ability to access online resources in the classrooms. The laptops allow for "equal" access to the same applications and resources whether the students are in school or at home. So, students can begin assignments, projects and research in school and easily continue working at home or on the way home! This year every student has a Google Apps for Education account, giving him or her the ability to collaborate with their peers and teachers in the Cloud. From Google Apps for Education to a myriad of websites for specific content areas, students are now able to explore and learn, anytime, anywhere.

Middle School students are also learning how to manage their laptops on campus and at home. Particularly helpful is the use of One Note for note-taking and learning how best to manage their files on the Ranney network. In addition, they learn the skills necessary to become proficient at the applications they will be using in other classes. This will help them to focus on learning the content and ultimately, achieve greater success.

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