Technology Director
Board Report
February 28, 2012

Looking Back

The recent inclement weather caused us to lose power on several occasions and made us aware that our standalone UPS systems are in need of replacement batteries. This kind of project seems a far cry from the everyday happenings within the classroom yet when the power goes out, it is no longer a far cry - it is more of a nearby shriek. The UPS systems serve to power a few of our most important systems as well as provide outstanding protection from any power surge that may come once electric service has been restored. With the latest power outages, I found the battery condition of our UPS systems ranged anywhere from embarrassingly inadequate to completely worthless. I have since ordered the replacement batteries and will be installing them over the next few months.

What's Current

While it is tempting to take advantage of the potential for a really creative play on words for "what's current" and again discuss the battery backup systems, instead I wanted to let you know that a current project worth noting is an attempted revamping of the wireless network. The wireless has by and large been very reliable for a certain type of access but very unreliable for more secure connections. By that I mean to say that getting a solid system whereby computers properly identify themselves and whomever is using the computer has been a real struggle. It has not been clear to me why this "authentication" has been so problematic. I finally made contact with a contractor to help resolve the issue and am looking forward to hearing from them as to our next steps. At this point, they have gathered information and I am waiting to hear their proposed solution. I really look forward to putting this long-term problem to rest. I hope that will be soon.

Looking Forward

The network trade magazines have been for years dissecting the problems associated with integrating Apple's computers into a Windows network. The introduction of the iPad (and with it, the iOS operating system) has been giving network managers fits since it was rolled out a couple of years ago. As a further complication to this issue, Apple has said that it will be releasing a new computer operating system (which is quite different than the operating system on an iPad) later this summer called Mountain Lion. It is purported to be going even further in the break Apple has made with Windows-based network systems like ours. This potentially frustrating move by Apple will only exacerbate the difficulties already found in a mixed platform network. It brings many questions to the networking community - even those that love Apple products for all they can do and how well they can do it. Losing even further ground in integrating the various Apple devices into enterprise networks is certainly frustrating for many system administrators. While this probably does not spell the end of our adoption of Apple products, it certainly does not bode well for a low maintenance, high reliability infrastructure that people (such as me!) would like to have available. As Mountain Lion is rolled out and it's capabilities and limitations are discovered, it will be interesting to learn what really can and can not be done. Right now it is a lot of speculation and the ever intriguing work-a-rounds will be coming fast and furious. Seems like the more things change, the more they stay the same... or something like that.