

# HCS Tech Specs.

HARTLAND CONSOLIDATED SCHOOLS

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## What Anti-Virus Software Do You Use?

In today's ever-changing technological world, if you are running a pc-based computer and you are not protected from computer viruses, you may want to reconsider. Even if you don't want to shell out the hundred or so dollars for a good antivirus software, there are several free options available. Three products that I have found some interesting reviews on are as follows: AntiVir PersonalEdition Classic, AVAST, and AVG Free Edition. To add to the mix, our good friends over at Microsoft have now released their own Free AntiVirus application (Microsoft Security Essentials.)

While all four of the products mentioned above claim to assist with the protection of a PC from wild viruses, only one claims that it has "comprehensive malware protection." Microsoft is claiming that their free AntiVirus software will help protect against spyware and other malicious software in addition to the more traditional viruses.

PC Magazine recently reviewed AVAST, AVG, and Microsoft's free products and concluded that either AVAST or AVG would provide better comprehensive protection against viruses and malware. I feel that if you are running a pc-based computer and do not currently have it protected against viruses and malware, then you may be benefited by installing any one of these 4 free products and keeping them updated. Some protection is better than none at all, but protection that you pay for is a lot better than that which is for free.

To find the free products listed above, you may browse to the links below:

AVAST: [http://www.avast.com/eng/avast\\_4\\_home.html](http://www.avast.com/eng/avast_4_home.html)

AVG: <http://free.avg.com/ww-en/download-avg-anti-virus-free-edition>

AntiVir: <http://www.free-av.com>

Microsoft: [http://www.microsoft.com/Security\\_Essentials/](http://www.microsoft.com/Security_Essentials/)

If you decide to try any of these out, let the HCS Tech Department know your reaction.

## What Did The Tech Dept. Do Last Summer?

Each summer as part of the HCS Tech. Department's standard routine, computers are updated and/or re-imaged. However, for the past eight years, we have implemented some major changes for some subset of HCS Staff. In 2002, we outfitted our new elementary and updated our server infrastructure. In 2003, we provided our new high school with some of the latest technology available. In 2004, we provided new or newer tech-

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nology to our support services and Alternative Education Facility. In 2007, we replaced over 420 computers, most of which were over 9 years old, migrated to a new network operating system and began running high-speed fiber between buildings. In 2008 we extended our phone system and implemented a sophisticated voice mail system.

This past summer, we replaced all the computers at Creekside Elementary and replaced the Teacher and Administrative Computers at the High School. Upon the re-imaging of the high school student laptop computers, we discovered that many of their BIOS batteries (about 75%) had died over the summer and since their removable batteries were mostly dead to begin with, the administration and Technology team decided it would be in the best interest of the students to move up the replacement of the student laptops at the high school one year. While the student laptops are still in the process of being replaced, staff at Creekside and

the high school seem to be very happy with their new computers.

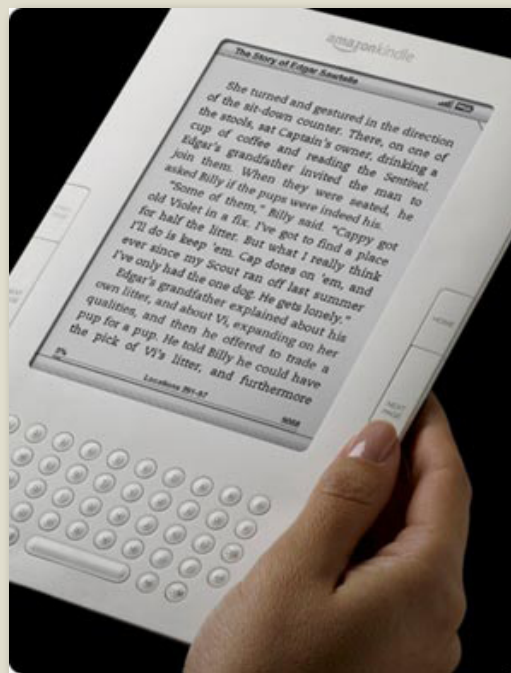
In the upcoming two years, the remainder of the student computers at the high school and all the computers at the Support Services Center will be replaced.



## How Long Before Books are All Electronic?

Did you ever think you would be reading books on an electronic medium like Captain Picard does in his ready room on the Starship Enterprise? Most of us who have tried to read books via our computers or existing handheld devices or phones have discovered it is just not convenient to do so. But how far off is this capability?

Actually, this type of pad-reader device already exists. Have you ever heard of the Kindle Wireless Reading Device? If not, browse to Amazon.com and type in the search field "Kindle Wireless Reading Device." It is 10.2 ounces, just over 1/3 of an inch thick, and can carry over 1,500 books. Now at \$259.00, the Kindle manufacturers boast that you can "read for days without recharging" and with text-to-speech, you can even continue your favorite book



when you are too tired to keep your eyes open.

How much are the books? Well, at the Kindle Store, the "Best Sellers" are usually around \$9.99 and a lot of books cost much less. With its wireless feature, you can even download and read newspapers.

Some folks have indicated they don't think

this type of technology will catch on. They may be right. But how long ago was it you were jogging down the street holding your bulky walkman with your favorite mixed workout tape in the tape player? Today you can jog down the same street with your tiny little iPod strapped to your arm. This device is capable of playing hours of songs programmed in one of a hundred playlists designed to custom-fit your mood on that particular run. Perhaps it may not be that far off.

## So You Want To Buy A New Computer...

Each year members of the HCS Tech Team field a multitude of questions from HCS Staff Members interested in purchasing personal computers or computers for their children heading off to college. We are happy to attempt to answer your questions to the best of our ability but for those of you interested in purchasing Dell Computers for your personal use, the following information may be of some assistance to you. The tech team wishes to be perfectly clear that we are not advocating the purchase of Dell over another system, but because of our working relationship with Dell, we are aware of their employee purchase program.

The Hartland Consolidated Schools District Employee Purchase Program (EPP) is available to all HCS employees by browsing to <http://www.dell.com/epp>. From there, you will need to enter our member ID: KS29270482 and

you will be in the EPP store. Selecting from any of the pre-configured systems is purported to provide us with “additional savings providing us the best value on a Dell Home PC.” You can also choose to customize your PC and receive up to 7% discount on top of any generally advertised system. Other electronics are said to be discounted 7% off of generally advertised Home and Home office promotions. Another advantage to using this site is that in the event you do find a better deal on the Dell home website ([www.dell.com/home](http://www.dell.com/home)), all you need to do is call an EPP representative and you will be given a better price. The number for the EPP is 1-800-695-8133.

If you have any additional questions, give them a call.

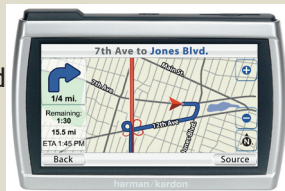


What does this YouTube video say about how we should be educating our children?  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2lXh2n0aPyw&feature=player\\_embedded#](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2lXh2n0aPyw&feature=player_embedded#)

## Electronic Safety Is A Must!

Today, most of us have a cell phone and many of us have GPS resting on the dashboard of our car. While it may seem completely safe to have these items, the accounts below seem to indicate that caution may be warranted and that extra steps may seem prudent. The original information came from a Vehicle Safety Manager from Ford of Canada but the email was passed to me from a detective in the Livingston County Sheriff's Department. Below you will find the accounts of two individuals who never expected their GPS or cell phone to be used against them.

A couple of weeks ago a friend told me that someone she knew had their car broken into while they were at a football game. Their car was parked on the green which was adjacent to the football stadium and specially allotted to football fans. Things stolen from the car included a garage door remote control, some money and a GPS which had been prominently



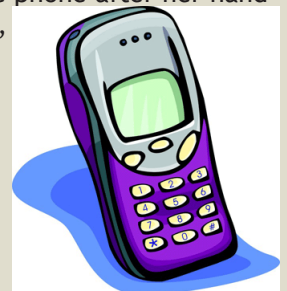
mounted on the dashboard.

When the victims got home, they found that their house had been ransacked and just about everything worth anything had been stolen.

The thieves had used the GPS to guide them to the house. They then used the garage remote control to open the garage door and gain entry to the house. The thieves knew the owners were at the football game, they knew what time the game was likely to finish and so they knew how much time they had to clean out the house. It would appear that they had brought a truck to empty the house of its contents.

This lady has now changed her habit of how she lists her names on her mobile phone after her handbag was stolen. Her handbag, which contained her cell phone, credit card, wallet... etc...

20 minutes later when she called her hubby, from a pay phone telling him what had happened, hubby says ‘I received your text asking about



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our pin number and I've replied a little while ago.'

When they rushed down to the bank, the bank staff told them all the money was already withdrawn. The thief had actually used the stolen cell phone to text 'hubby' in the contact list and got hold of the pin number. Within 20 minutes he had withdrawn all the money from their bank account.

#### **Moral of the Lesson:**

Do not disclose the relationship between you and

the people in your contact list. Avoid using names like Home, Honey, Hubby, Sweetheart, Dad, Mom, etc.... And very importantly, when sensitive info is being asked through texts, CONFIRM by calling back. Also, when friends or family text you to meet them somewhere, be sure to call back to confirm that the message came from them. If you don't reach them, be very careful about going places to meet 'family and friends' who text you.

When it seems you can't get to Internet resources and can't figure out if it's their site or your issue, try this. <http://downforeveryoneorjustme.com>. Obviously, if you can't get to this site, it will be your issue.

<http://www.wordle.net> is a website where you can go and create "word clouds" from text that you provide. The one to the right is one that I created from simply copying and pasting all the text off our Hartland Home Page. The website calculates which words appear most often and assigns them a higher value which translates to a larger word in the resulting cloud. Could this be of any educational value? Perhaps. Could you use this the next time you are doing a survey in one of your classes and wish to show the results visually? Could this also be used when doing a class brainstorming activity?



Since we have come up with a way for teachers to bypass the Internet Content Filter, this may not be as important to some of you, but just in case: <http://dirpy.com> provides you the ability to actually download YouTube videos to your computer or a thumb drive for transport to another location. It can also convert your favorite YouTube videos to MP3's enabling you to listen to the audio content on your iPod.

Museum Box <http://museumbox.e2bn.org/> is a site which provides the user the ability to build an argument or description of an event, person or historical period by placing items (text, photo, movie, etc.) in a virtual box. What items would go in the box to describe the life of a Roman soldier or that would indicate that slavery was wrong or unnecessary?

Do you want an example of a cool webcast site? Browse to <http://www.mrcoley.com/coleycast/index.htm> and just listen to what these students are creating.