MH RIC News

MID-HUDSON
REGIONAL INFORMATION CENTER

Cyber Security

by Eugene Knudsen,
Director of the Mid-Hudson
Regional Information Center

As technology advances, there are folks that have dedicated their lives to exploit these changes for their personal gain. While fraud and criminal activity are not new, the methods to use technology to gain access to your assets are ever changing. The need to remain digitally vigilant in your professional and personal life cannot be overstated.

Phishing, a social engineering method, has become the preferred method of gaining access to information. A more focused method is called "spear phishing" where a person that has access to particularly valuable information is targeted. Often the attack is a gradual process, gaining your confidence by initially requesting innocent information followed by requests for more sensitive data.

On May 15th, the Mid-Hudson Regional Information Center (MHRIC) will be hosting a regional conference on Cyber Security. A panel of experts will discuss the threats, methods, and defenses of which all organizations need to be aware. Please join us for this important conference.

The symposium will be held at the Ulster BOCES Conference Center in New Paltz; there is no cost and it is open to all Mid-Hudson schools. More details will be coming soon.

SchoolMessenger Robocalls Help Pawling Reduce Negative Meal Balances by 40%

The number of student lunch accounts with negative balances in the Pawling Central School District has dropped 40 percent in the last year, thanks to the use of the SchoolMessenger notification system and WebSMARTT school lunch management system, both supported by the Mid-Hudson Regional Information Center (MHRIC).

Pawling had been using WebSMARTT, a product of Heartland School Solutions, through the MHRIC for several years when Jan Traynor-Hack, Director of Food Services & Wellness at Pawling,

learned about SchoolMessenger's capability to generate robocalls to parents, alerting them to a negative balance on their child's account. Up to that point, Traynor-Hack had been making those phone calls herself. After hearing about the robocall option at a WebSMARTT meeting at the MHRIC, Traynor-Hack put it into action.

"It helps me a lot, just putting a Band-Aid on that one task," said Traynor-Hack. The robocalls are made every Monday evening and "we get a lot of checks on Tuesday and Wednesday," Traynor-Hack said. "The messages have helped parents stay more in tune with the money that's in the account."

In addition to cutting the number of accounts with negative balances, the robocall system has also freed up time for Traynor-Hack to work on other priorities, like determining

IN THIS ISSUE

MHRIC is a division of Ulster BOCES serving Dutchess, Orange, Sulllivan, and Ulster counties.

DUTCHESS BOCES

ORANGE-ULSTER BOCES

Sullivan County SCB Board of Cooperative Educational Services

SHARED VISION SHARED COMMITMENT SHARED SUCCESS ULSTER BOCES Board of Cooperative Educational Services

WinCap: Financial and HR Management System *and* WinCapWeb: Online Suite of Tools to Complement WinCap

by Kathi Goodyear, Financial Services Manager

The MHRIC Financial Services department has recently begun supporting Harris/Capital Computer Associates WinCap and WinCapWeb. WinCap is a fully functioning Financial and HR system in use across the state in BOCES and school districts. The product was developed exclusively for New York State and was developed to address the complex tax laws and reporting requirements in the state.

WinCap features extensive security and setup options to ensure data safety for the district. Security can be field-specific to allow users access to only those functions they require to perform their job duties. Not only does WinCap handle security, it is also designed for powerful reporting based on any criteria the user needs.

WinCap is "position-centric", meaning that business officials can easily and quickly provide reporting on open and filled positions in the district at any time. WinCap provides for the calculation and account distribution of employee benefits and this, plus employee salaries, can be imported into budgets as detailed budget notes for more in-depth reporting.

Files in WinCap may be imported or exported in the system with ease. Most reports can be sent to an Excel file for ease of sorting and using the data for individual scenarios. WinCap uses Crystal Reports to allow users to extract and report on criteria as needed. If there are particular reports that a user needs on a regular basis, the user can simply set the report up once and save the criteria to be run any time it is needed.

WinCapWeb is a powerful and convenient Web-based Employee Self Service feature that complements the WinCap Financial and HR System. When utilized, employees can enter leave requests, view paycheck history, print W-2 forms, print copies of paychecks, request changes to their personal information, and much more. The leave requests are entered by employees and go through district-defined approval processes before being posted to WinCap. In addition to the Employee Self Service module, other features in WinCapWeb include Requisitioning, Payroll Vouchers, and Timesheets.

For more information on this powerful financial system, please contact me at 845-255-1450 x1330 or email to kgoodyea@mhric.org.

A Look at the Graduation Rate in New York State

By Marlene Anderson-Butler, Assistant Director

The New York State high school graduation rate of general education students has steadily increased over the past four years. According to the New York State Education Department, 79.4 percent of general education students in the 2012 cohort (class of 2016) graduated on time. This was a slight increase from 2015 when 78.1 percent of the general education students in New York State graduated. The 2002 cohort of students graduated in 2006 at a rate of 67.2 percent.

While this is great news for New York State schools, there is still concern about subgroups identified in the graduation rate, including racial groups and ethnicities. Concern for these subgroups has been expressed by state education policymakers and targeted for improvement. State Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia commented, "While the upward trend in New York State's graduation rate increases, there is still much work to do." Additionally, students with disabilities are not graduating at a rate commensurate with their non-disabled peers. The graduation rate in New York State for students with disabilities increased slightly from 49.8 percent for the 2011 cohort to 52.4 percent for the 2012 cohort.

While some districts in our MHRIC region saw an increase in the graduation rate for students with disabilities in 2015, most saw a decline. Directors of special education attribute the decline to the educational reform efforts regarding accountability requirements and graduation outcomes. The 2014 elimination of the Regents Competency Tests (RCT's), offered solely to students with disabilities as part of the "safety-net", also appears to have impacted graduation rates. These students are expected to meet the same graduation requirements as their non-disabled peers, with accommodations when noted on a student's Individualized Education Plan. Although students with disabilities are permitted to attend school until the age of 21, many choose to "drop out" rather than stay in school, as reported by local Directors of Special Education. Typically the students with disabilities who do stay in school until age 21 are impaired physically, or present with significant cognitive delays. The path to graduation for these students differs in that this path was chosen earlier, with students and their families participating in a long-term goal to reach graduation.

Districts are responding to stagnant or declining graduation rates of students with disabilities by discussing options on an individual basis. In many districts students at risk of not graduating have been identified through a red, yellow, and green system and assigned staff individually to follow and track progress and report back in a group setting with team members. Team members include the building principal, guidance counselor, special education teacher, and other support staff to keep the student on the right path to graduation.

If you would like additional information about your district's graduation rate for students with disabilities and how to improve student outcome, please contact me at mbutler@mhric.org.

"Cybersecurity 101" Keeps Rhinebeck CSD Staff "In the Know"

Class was in session for Rhinebeck Central School District staff during a half-day of professional development recently, and part of their education included an eye-opening seminar on cybersecurity presented by the Mid-Hudson Regional Information Center (MHRIC).

Silas Whittaker, a Network System Specialist at the MHRIC, presented "Cybersecurity 101" on February 17 in an effort to help Rhinebeck staff learn more about the many ways that both professional and personal information can be compromised.

Whittaker said that while most people realize that their cell phones and laptops are potentially susceptible to a cyber attack, they may not realize that it's also true of things like baby monitors, garage door openers, thermostats, and devices like the Amazon Echo. "Anything with internet access can be hacked. Anything attached to the outside world is susceptible," he said.

Whittaker said that while the idea of a breach in cybersecurity may seem unlikely, "the danger is real, it's clear, it's present, and it's around us every day." He added that cyber attacks "take on new meaning when it equates to dollars and cents and you see real people suffering."

Silas Whittaker, a Network System Specialist at the MHRIC

Two Rhinebeck staff members enjoying the seminar.

MHRIC Director Gene Knudsen said this is especially true in schools. "If there's anything more vulnerable than money, it's kids and their identities," Knudsen said.

In addition to providing advice about how to protect devices from being compromised, Whittaker also outlined scams that hackers engage in, such as phishing and spear-phishing, in hopes of obtaining sensitive data or money.

Knudsen reminded participants that cybersecurity isn't just a professional concern, but a personal one as well, and both he and Whittaker urged staff to be vigilant at all times, whether they're downloading software for students or using a restaurant's Wi-Fi connection to access social media.

Whittaker said that the MHRIC has taken a "forward-thinking approach" to cybersecurity and has consistently been ahead of the curve on the topic. The MHRIC's Technical Services department can help districts assess and improve their cybersecurity through training, phishing testing, and other services. "Just being in the know really does help," Whittaker said.

For more information about the CyberSecurity Service, contact Rick Olsen at rolsen2@mhric.org.

Rhinebeck CSD Receives Hands-on Excel Training

An Office Automation day was held as part of Rhinebeck Central School District's Professional Development Day. Barbara Heiles led Excel classes for district personnel covering topics on pivot tables, conditional formatting, Vlookup, macros, shortcuts, tips, and tricks. There is always something new, even for experienced users! For more information about the MHRIC Office Automation service, please contact Kathi Goodyear at kgoodyea@mhric.org.

MHRIC District Members

Office Professional Institute (OPI)

We are pleased to announce that we are offering another Office Professional Institute (OPI) on Wednesday, March 22, 2016 at The Conference Center at Ulster BOCES. This event is free to Technology Support Service & Office Automation district members.

The focus of the institute is to offer training to a wide range of office professionals on technologies they can use every day to make their jobs more productive. This one-day institute will focus on helping employees from all areas of the district to utilize technology tools, network, and develop best practices that will help them perform their roles more efficiently.

All registrations must be done through MyLearningPlan.com. For registration information, please go to our web site at www.mhric.org/mlp.html. For general information about the Institute, please contact Kathi Jones at 845-255-1450 x1270 or kjones@mhric.org.

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT SERVICE

Technology Support Service Districts

Arlington

Dutchess BOCES

Fallsburg

Highland Falls

Hyde Park

Kingston

Middletown

Minisink Valley

Monticello

Onteora

Pine Plains

Poughkeepsie

Rondout Valley

Saugerties

Spackenkill

Sullivan BOCES

Sullivan West

Tri-Valley

Tuxedo

Ulster BOCES

Valley Central

Wallkill

Warwick

OFFICE AUTOMATION

Office Automation Participating Districts

Arlington

Fallsburg

Hyde Park

Kingston

Middletown

Monroe-Woodbury

Rondout Valley

Saugerties

Tri-Valley

Ulster BOCES

Wallkill

Warwick

Our classes fill quickly.

Sign up today!

Technology Support Service *Spring 2017 Classes*

	DATE	TIME	TRAINER	LOCATION
WORD PROCESSING CLASSES				
Word Introduction	Apr. 19	8:30-3:30	Barbara Heiles	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
Word Intermediate	May 30	8:30-3:30	Pascale Martel	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
Mail Merge using MS Word	May 16	9:00-12:00	Pascale Martel	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
Word Shortcuts, Tips, & Tricks	May 9	4:00-7:00	Barbara Heiles	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
Word Shortcuts, Tips, & Tricks	May 17	8:30-11:30	Barbara Heiles	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
DATABASE CLASSES				
Access Introduction	Apr. 20	8:30-3:30	Barbara Heiles	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
Access Intermediate	Apr. 27	8:30-3:30	Barbara Heiles	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
Access Forms	May 4	8:30-11:30	Barbara Heiles	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
Access Queries	May 11	8:30-11:30	Barbara Heiles	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
Access Reports	May 18	8:30-11:30	Barbara Heiles	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
SPREADSHEET CLASSES				
Excel Introduction	Apr. 25	8:30-3:30	Barbara Heiles	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
Excel Intermediate	May 12	8:30-3:30	Pascale Martel	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
Excel Automating Spreadsheets	June 8	1:00-4:00	Pascale Martel	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
Excel Charts	Apr. 5	12:30-3:30	Pascale Martel	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
Excel Functions & Formulas	June 6	8:30-3:30	Pascale Martel	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
Excel Lists & Pivot Tables	June 8	9:00-12:00	Pascale Martel	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
Excel Shortcuts, Tips, & Tricks	Apr. 24	4:00-7:00	Barbara Heiles	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
Excel Shortcuts, Tips, & Tricks	May 19	8:30-11:30	Barbara Heiles	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
SPECIALTY CLASSES				
PowerPoint Introduction	June 5	8:30-3:30	Pascale Martel	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
Specialty Projects Workshop	May 22	2 hours by appt.	Staff	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
INTERNET CLASSES				
Gmail Basics	Apr. 21	8:30-11:30	Barbara Heiles	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
Gmail Contact Groups vs. Google Groups	Apr. 26	12:30-3:30	Pascale Martel	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
Google Calendar Basics	Apr. 21	12:30-3:30	Barbara Heiles	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
Google Docs	Apr. 28	8:30-11:30	Barbara Heiles	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
Google Drive	Apr. 10	9:00-12:00	Pascale Martel	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
Google Forms	May 1	4:00-7:00	Pascale Martel	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
Google Forms	May 15	12:30-3:30	Barbara Heiles	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
Google Sheets	Apr. 28	12:30-3:30	Barbara Heiles	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
Google Sheets	May 15	8:30-11:30	Barbara Heiles	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
new Google Sites	June 1	12:30-3:30	Barbara Heiles	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
Google Slides	May 2	12:30-3:30	Pascale Martel	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
Mail Merge with Google Docs using autoCrat	May 16	1:00-4:00	Pascale Martel	MHRIC – Computer Lab A
MS OneDrive	Apr. 10	1:00-4:00	Pascale Martel	MHRIC – Computer Lab A

Lab Location
Find directions to our lab at www.mhric.org/directions.html

**MHRIC - Computer Lab A
Ulster BOCES, 175 Route 32 North, New Paltz
(845) 255-1450**

TSS Go-To-Meeting Online "Slices"

Slice Instructions

Our "slices" will offer 45 minutes of application training content followed by 15-20 minutes of group discussion. Participants will be able to access a website to view and listen to the various "slice" offerings by MHRIC trainers. Several options will be provided in order to allow the participants to communicate with the trainer and others in attendance. For more information, go to www.mhric.org/slices.

SLICE	DATE	TIME	TRAINER
Create Print Publications using Publisher	Apr. 6	1:30-2:30	Pascale Martel
Create Print Publications using Lucidpress	Apr. 6	3:00-4:00	Pascale Martel
Excel Functions & Formulas	Apr. 19	1:30-2:30	Pascale Martel
Excel Lists & Pivot Tables	Apr. 19	3:00-4:00	Pascale Martel
Mail Merge using MS Word	Apr. 25	1:30-2:30	Pascale Martel
Mail Merge with Google Docs using autoCrat	Apr. 25	3:00-4:00	Pascale Martel
Google Calendar Basics	Apr. 26	12:30-1:30	Barbara Heiles
Google Calendar Tasks & Reminders	Apr. 26	2:00-3:00	Barbara Heiles
Google Docs Overview	May 10	3:30-4:30	Barbara Heiles
Google Sheets Overview	May 10	5:00-6:00	Barbara Heiles
Word – Using Tabs & the Indent Tool	May 11	1:30-2:30	Pascale Martel
Word Bullets & Numbering	May 11	3:00-4:00	Pascale Martel
Google Sheets Overview	May 24	9:00-10:00	Barbara Heiles
Google Forms Overview	May 24	10:30-11:30	Barbara Heiles
Chromebook Overview	May 31	3:30-4:30	Pascale Martel
Gmail Contact Groups vs. Google Groups	May 31	5:00-6:00	Pascale Martel
Excel Charts	June 1	1:30-2:30	Pascale Martel
Excel Conditional Formatting	June 1	3:00-4:00	Pascale Martel
Gmail Labels	June 9	12:30-1:30	Barbara Heiles
Gmail Filters	June 9	2:00-3:00	Barbara Heiles

You are eligible to attend these classes if your district belongs to our Technology Support Service (TSS) and is listed on page five. If your district is not listed and you would like information on how to attend, please call Kathi Jones at 255-1450 x1270 or email to kjones@mhric.org.

TSS Class Descriptions

Access Introduction

This class is intended for individuals needing to learn about Access databases. Topics include: orientation to Access and database terminology; viewing, editing, and adding data; working with datasheets and design view; creating and using tables, queries, forms, and reports. The focus of the class is to understand how Access works and understanding tables.

Access Intermediate

This class is intended for individuals needing to create Access databases. Topics include working with primary keys and understanding table field properties like text and number/date formats, input masks, and lookups. The class will also focus on database design considerations and creating table relationships.
Prerequisite: Access Introduction or equivalent experience.

Access Forms

This three-hour class assumes participants understand how to create a basic form. Time will be spent modifying forms and form controls, working with form properties and settings, creating calculated controls, and creating and modifying sub forms. We will also learn to apply formatting techniques to forms.
Prerequisite: Access Intermediate or equivalent experience.

Access Queries

This three-hour class assumes participants understand basic query concepts. We will cover more advanced topics such as creating calculated fields, working with the expression builder, and summarizing groups of records. Additionally, we will examine various query types including parameter queries, crosstab queries, and action queries.
Prerequisite: Access Intermediate or equivalent experience.

Access Reports

This three-hour class assumes participants understand how to create a basic report. Time will be spent using, creating, and modifying reports in design view. We will look at report sections, grouping, sorting, and inserting formulas. Additionally, we will learn to modify report and control properties and use report formatting techniques.
Prerequisite: Access Intermediate or equivalent experience.

Chromebook Overview "Slice"

A Chromebook is a tablet that boots up in about eight seconds, and is optimized for internet use. In this session, we will see how to open, save, and delete files that are saved to the device, as well as saved to Google Drive, and how to pin and unpin apps and web pages to the Shelf. We will familiarize ourselves with the differences on the Chromebook keyboard, and learn some handy keyboard shortcuts. We will also see how to set up different accounts to share the same device among different individuals.

Create Print Publications using Publisher "Slice"

This class and/or slice introduces the student to Microsoft's print production program. Publisher is used to create professional looking publications such as newsletters, booklets, and flyers. Typical topics to be covered may include: creating a publication using templates, making changes, inserting graphics.

Create Print Publications using Lucidpress "Slice"

This class and/or slice introduces the student to a free online print production program. Lucidpress is used to create professional looking publications such as newsletters, booklets, and flyers. Typical topics to be covered may include: creating a publication using templates, making changes, inserting graphics.

Excel Introduction

Microsoft Excel makes using a spreadsheet easy. This class will cover basic spreadsheet skills including: creating, saving, and printing workbooks; basic skills used in building and editing worksheets; techniques used in selecting, copying, moving, and replacing cell contents; basic formatting features such as alignment, fonts, and column widths; using basic formulas and functions; including relative and absolute cell referencing.

Excel Intermediate

If you have mastered the basics of Excel you are ready to move on to this class. Topics will include: working with and managing larger worksheets and workbooks, creating lists and data forms, using filters and functions with lists to analyze data, and more work with functions and formulas.
Prerequisite: Excel Introduction or equivalent experience.

Excel Automating Spreadsheets

In this session we will be using Excel tools, such as External Referencing, Vlookups, and Data Validation. You can automate your spreadsheet to make things quicker and easier.

Excel Charts

Illustrate your data with great looking charts! During this class and/or slice you will learn to create, edit, and format charts, and work with different types. Creating and working with charts in Excel is easier than you might think and actually is quite fun.
Prerequisites: Excel Introduction or equivalent experience and knowledge of spreadsheets.

Excel Conditional Formatting "Slice"

Conditional Formatting is a way to have Excel apply certain formatting to part or all of your spreadsheet, based on a condition. For example, you may have a spreadsheet set up as a grade book and you would like all of the grades that are below 65 to stand out with a yellow background. Or, you may want to easily find missing data (blank cells) by formatting those cells with a pink background. When values change and no longer meet the criteria, the cells return to their original formatting. For instance, if you've entered data in one of the blank cells, it would no longer be pink. We will also see how to set and modify rules for Data Bars and Icon Sets, how to work with dates, and more.

Excel Functions & Formulas

Do you need to know more of the basics on how to work with functions and formulas in Excel? We will use some of Excel's built-in functions like: If, Proper, Vlookup, Max, Min, PMT, Average, DCount, count, countA…as well as build some of our own specialized formulas like weighted averages. In this class and/or slice we will include a review of Order of Operations and Relative and Absolute Cell Referencing.
Prerequisite: Excel Introduction or equivalent experience.

Excel Lists & Pivot Tables

Learn about Excel's list management features, such as: data forms, sorting, filtering, data validation, and subtotals. Once we understand how to work with lists, we will introduce the topic of Pivot Tables. Pivot Tables summarize data. They allow you to filter out selected data from a main table in order to show only the records you specify. Topics in this class and/or slice will include creating reports, modifying Pivot Tables, and creating Pivot Charts.

Prerequisite: Excel Introduction or equivalent experience.

Excel Shortcuts, Tips, and Tricks

This class and/or slice is designed for people who currently use Microsoft Excel. Microsoft Office has many hidden options, unknown features, and shortcuts. We will show you formatting tips, keyboard shortcuts, and other tricks to customize Excel to work the way you want. You will be able to apply many of the same techniques in Word, PowerPoint, Publisher, and Access. Learn how to make Microsoft Office more powerful, more productive, and even easier for you to use.

Prerequisite: Excel Introduction or equivalent experience.

Gmail Basics

Make the transition to Gmail! In this class and/or slice you will learn how to organize your email using conversations, labels, stars. We will also look at how to manage contacts, use filters, search, use the vacation responder, and more. Discover how easy it is to accomplish your everyday tasks in Gmail.

Gmail Contact Groups vs. Google Groups

Contact Groups and Google Groups both contain email lists, yet they are very different. Contact Groups are groups that you can create in your "My Contacts", these groups are available only to you. However, in Google Groups you can create email lists that can be used by more than one person. For example, if my co-workers and I need to contact the same group of people, we need to use Google Groups. We will be creating one of each type of group.

Gmail Filters "Slice"

Get control of your email! Use Gmail Filters to help you automatically route your multitudes of email messages so they don't pile up in your inbox. We will briefly review Gmail Labels, introduce Gmail Filters, then take a more in-depth look at how to work with and manage Filters. You can keep your mail organized and out of the way, but still accessible for when you need to find something.

Prerequisite: Experience with Gmail. Experience with Gmail Labels helpful.

Gmail Labels "Slice"

Get Organized! Use Gmail Labels to help you categorize the multitudes of email messages that pile up every day. We will introduce Gmail Labels, then take a more in-depth look at how to work with and manage them. You can keep your mail organized and out of the way, but still accessible for when you need to find something.

Prerequisite: Experience with Gmail.

Google Calendar Basics

Learn how to use Google Calendar and get the functionality that you have in other email programs. In this class and/or slice, we will schedule appointments, invite guests and reserve resources, do busy searches, see how to create recurring meetings, share calendars with others, and find out how to view other calendars that have been shared with us. Get what you need using Google Calendar!

Prerequisite: Gmail Basics

Google Calendar Tasks & Reminders

Get Organized! Google Tasks help you to keep track of your to-do lists for work and home. Reminders let you set a specific date and time. Do you need a system to remember what to bring to that important meeting, who to make follow up phone calls to, attend the webinar, stop by the store, and get ready for evening class? Find out whether Tasks or Reminders is right for you and how to use them. Keep it all straight with Google Tasks and Reminders!

Prerequisite: Experience with Gmail.

Google Docs

Google Docs lets you create documents and organize them, and to collaborate with others using shared documents. You can also upload existing Word documents, or save a Google Doc as a Word document. All of your word processing needs, in free storage, from any device with internet access.

Google Drive

In this class and/or slice, we will learn how to use Google Drive. We will demonstrate how to create documents and organize them. We will also see how to collaborate with others using shared documents. With Google Drive you can store your Google documents and your other files – all online, and all for free.

Google Forms

With free Google Forms, you can quickly create a form or survey; send it to students, parents, teachers, or staff; embed it in a webpage; and keep track of the answers in one spreadsheet. This session will give you an overview of developing a form and creating the spreadsheet that will allow you to sort, analyze, and visualize the information.

Google Sheets

Google Sheets lets you create spreadsheets and organize them, and to collaborate with others using shared spreadsheets. You can also upload existing Excel documents, or save a Google Sheet as an Excel document. All of your spreadsheet needs, in free storage, from any device with internet access.

Google Sites

new

Thinking of creating a website? Google Sites is a free and easy way to create and share webpages. You can use Sites to plan club meetings and activities, share info on a secure company intranet, collaborate on a team project, or stay connected with family members. In this class and/or slice, we will create a site and customize it, and then learn how to edit pages and set permissions for editing and viewing.

Google Slides

Google Slides is Google's presentation software. In this class and/or slice you will learn how to create presentations and add animations. Slides also has an audience participation feature that is quick and easy to use.

Class Descriptions continued

Mail Merge using MS Word

Topics covered in this class and/or slice will include using Word to create files for producing form letters and labels. Using Access and Excel as data sources will be included.
Prerequisite: Word Introduction or equivalent experience.

Mail Merge with Google Docs using autoCrat

autoCrat is a mail merge tool. It is a free add-on for Google Sheets. In this class and/or slice, we will use autoCrat to create customized letters from a document template in Google Docs, and a data source from Google Sheets. These customized letters can then be shared, emailed, and/or printed from your Google account. autoCrat can be used in combination with Google Forms to automate customized emails triggered by a Form entry. In the three-hour class, we will quickly review how to create Google Forms.

MS OneDrive (the free version of Office 365)

With an internet connection, and a free Microsoft OneDrive account, you can use Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, and Publisher for free without installing Microsoft Office. In this class and/or slice, we will learn how to use OneDrive to create, save, and edit files; how to upload and download files; and how to share them with others. Note: Microsoft OneDrive is the free version of Office 365.

PowerPoint Introduction

Learn the basics of creating powerful presentations for colleagues and others. This class will cover creating slides, customizing slides, inserting graphics, creating notes and handouts, giving on-screen presentations, and printing options. Use of the templates and wizards will be discussed. Bring ideas to create your own presentation. Also, bring a disk so you can save your creation to take home with you.

Specialty Projects Workshop

Is there something you need help with? This workshop is what you've been asking for. We can help with any software product listed on our classes' page. Bring your special project, problem, or anything that you need help with and we will help you to work it out. We will have two-hour blocks throughout the day for individualized help. When you sign up for this workshop, you will be asked to tell us what you need help with and also sign up for a specific time slot.

Word Introduction

Microsoft Word makes word processing easy. This class will cover basic word processing skills including: creating, saving, and printing documents; editing techniques for selecting, copying, moving, and replacing text; basic character and paragraph formatting techniques; such as line spacing, indenting, and tabs. Using bullets and numbering lists will also be covered.

Word Intermediate

If you have mastered the basic word processing techniques of Word, you are ready to move on to some of the more advanced features of this program. Topics will include: basic page formatting features such as margins, headers, footers, and mail merge.
Prerequisite: Word Introduction or equivalent experience.

Word Bullets and Numbering "Slice"

Working with Bullets and Numbering in Word can be tricky. But you will find it easy to control your lists once you learn a few basics! Some common issues that will be addressed are: working with sub-lists; how to add lines without numbers/bullets; how to change the alignment of numbers/bullets; how to customize the numbers/bullets; along with helpful tips and tricks and other topics. There will be a Q&A session at the end to ask your particular bulleting or numbering questions.

Word Shortcuts, Tips, and Tricks

This class and/or slice is designed for people who currently use Microsoft Word. Microsoft Office has many hidden options, unknown features, and shortcuts. We will show you formatting tips, keyboard shortcuts, and other tricks to customize Word to work the way you want. You will be able to apply many of the same techniques in Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher, and Access. Take this class to learn how to make Microsoft Office more powerful, more productive, and even easier for you to use.
Prerequisite: Word Introduction or equivalent experience.

Word using Tabs and the Indent Tool "Slice"

Tabs are used to align text on the page. Pressing the tab key will advance you to the next default tab stop, but there are different kinds of tab stops available, and they can be placed anywhere on the ruler. We will look at the different kinds of tabs and how to use them. Indenting adds space between the left or right margin and the paragraph text. We will learn how to use the indent tool to create different kinds of indents.

nVision Institute

The MHRIC Financial Services Department is proud and excited to offer the second nVision Institute. The Institute will be held on May 2 in the morning. Sessions will include tips and tricks on features available throughout the system. We will also be offering a session on Varonis DatAnywhere, the MHRIC's new file sharing system.

After the initial session, we will be breaking out into groups for presentation style topics targeted for specific roles within your district. The topics will include timely reminders and helpful hints to help district employees accomplish their jobs more efficiently.

Be on the lookout for our invitation with registration instructions and specific topics. We look forward to seeing you in May.

Need reliable and relevant information?
You Need Google Scholar
By Pascale Martel, Application Training Specialist

With the proliferation of questionable online material like fake news, falsified information, clickbait, etc., how do you find trusted sources of information online? Whether you need to do research for a homework assignment, or just want to get the news, there are ways to find relevant online sources.

For Doing Research
If you need to study a particular topic, try using Google Scholar. Google Scholar is a search engine that finds results from academic sources around the world such as: articles, theses, books, case law, university sites, and more.

Go To scholar.google.com ①

Here is the Google Scholar search screen:

Searching Options to Explore ②

③ *My Library:* Your personal collection of articles you want to keep
My Citations: If you have submitted publications of your own, you can track citations to your publications
Alerts: Receive email notifications when Google finds new results based on preset search criteria
Metrics: How documents rank within the scientific community. Clicking Metrics here will display top publications from a variety of categories.
*Settings:* Set preferences for Google Scholar searches
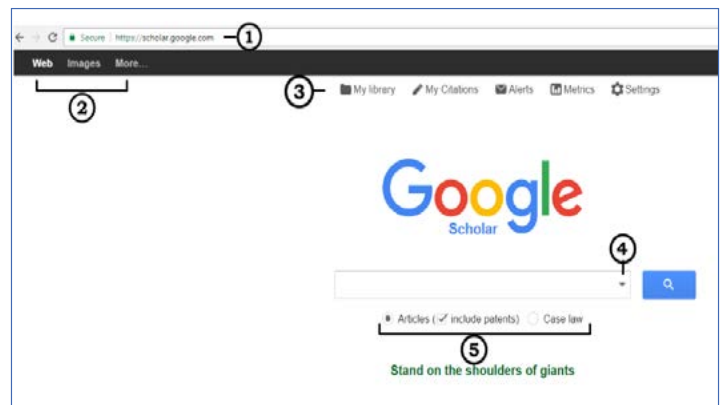
Advanced Search Options ④
Choice for the Type of Results ⑤

After entering a topic in the search bar, you will find ways to dig deeper. The left pane options allow you to search Articles, Case Law, or your Library collection; you can also search within specific periods of time. And the links under each result: "Cited by" or "Related articles" allow you to find additional related material.
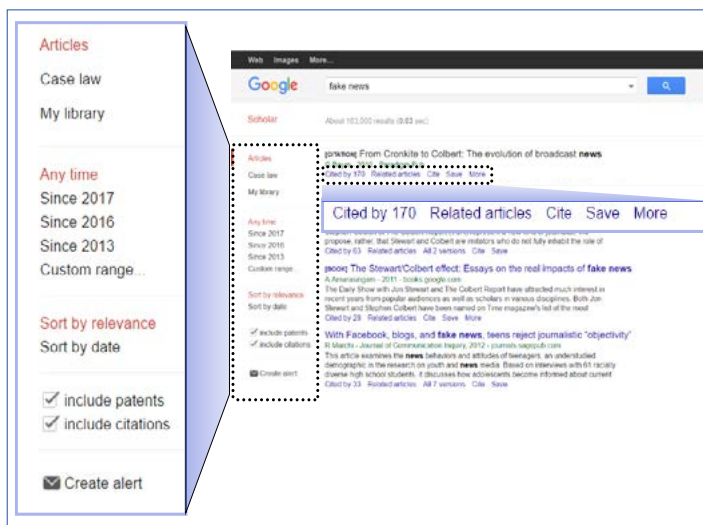
For News Sources
This is where critical thinking helps. Here are some things to look for.
- *The URL:* Look at the end of the domain name. *xyznews.com* Let's say this is a well-known news organization. *xyznews.com.co* This could be an imposter with the extra (.co) at the end.
- Are the sources of the information being named? Or, are the sources of the information vague? For example, note the difference between: "Our reporter on location, Joan Smith, observed…" vs "Sources have reported that…"
- Are there specific quotations with the name of who is being quoted? For example, note the difference between: 'Our advisor John Doe said, "Due to the budget, there will be no company trip this year."' versus 'The advisor is cancelling all future company trips.'
- Is there an "About Us" section of the website with the mission statement and names of who is managing the organization, including contact information, etc.?
- Double check the story with other news organizations.

*For an interesting analysis on news websites, Melissa Zimdars, an assistant professor of communication & media, has put together this document for her students:*https://docs.google.com/document/d/10eA5-mCZLSS4MQY5QGb5ewC3VAL6pLkT53V_81ZyitM/edit

A Look at the "Opt-Out" Movement in New York State

by Marlene Anderson-Butler, Assistant Director

In recent years there has been a growing trend in and significant attention paid to parents who "opt out" or refuse their child's participation in the required state standardized assessments. Twenty percent of parents in New York State (NYS) with children in grades three through eight refused their child(ren)'s participation in the 2015 NYS Assessments for English Language Arts and Mathematics. While there are many reasons given by parents, the more common responses are the amount of instructional time lost to administering and preparing for the tests, educational irrelevance of "bubble tests," pressure placed on the students and educators to perform, and the belief that the Common Core State Standards are instruments of corporate-driven reform directed at privatizing education.

New York State requires standardized testing in grades three through eight for federal mandates and accountability purposes. As students enter high school, common core assessments will be required for graduation.

The US Department of Education also requires a 95% participation rate in order to obtain the strongest data from the largest population sample. There have

been threats of funding cuts if participation is less than 95%, so districts want as much student participation and parental support as possible.

Many parents agree there is too much testing in school today and the "opt-out" movement has seen a steady increase in New York. Commissioner MaryEllen Elia and the Board of Regents have adopted many changes to the NYS assessments. These include: fewer questions presented to students in grades three through eight, unlimited time to complete the test, teachers involved in the selection of questions presented on the test, and even a new contractor. But many feel those changes were minimal and basic at best, and continued to refuse their child's participation in the state assessments.

It is important to pay attention to the "opt-out" movement for many reasons. While state laws and policy vary significantly on the "opt-out" act itself, the actual state assessments matter as they are the only comparable measures of student performance at the building level, unlike the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Additionally, the state assessments provide data that measures building performance disaggregated by demographic grouping. When a parent refuses their child's participation in the state assessment,

the "opt-out" can distort those results, which prevents many from understanding how effectively our schools are educating all children.

Some parents agree that high-stakes testing leads to better schools that are held to an exacting but necessary standard, emphasizing that there's value in data. It's hard to make informed decisions about schools, teachers, and curriculum without a metric with which to arrive at those decisions. Teachers also use data for informed decisions about curriculum, instructional strategies, and annual student outcomes.

Other parents contend that standardized testing is "the way of the world." Students must take standardized tests such as the American College Testing (ACT) in order to apply to certain colleges, and in some cases for employment. Parents support standardized testing so that their children can become comfortable and familiar with the testing process and testing tools.

If you would like additional information about NYS assessments and parent test refusal, please contact me at mbutler@mhric.org.

SchoolMessenger Robocalls Help Pawling Reduce Negative Meal Balances by 40%

whether families need applications for free and reduced price lunches.

Traynor-Hack also praised the support she has received from the MHRIC while working with WebSMARTT. "The service has been exceptional," she said. "I can't say enough about the staff at the MHRIC. And it's local, so you're speaking to someone who knows the dynamics of

your district and has a vested interest in supporting the children in our area. That's huge."

Traynor-Hack said she is considering using robocalls for other aspects of the food service program, like alerting parents to low account balances or reminding them that students can obtain breakfast at school. "It's a work in progress," she said.

But as to the negative balance calls, she's "one million percent pleased. I wish I had implemented it a long time ago. If anybody's not using it, they really should look at it. It's such a win-win."

For more information about this service, please contact Kathy Dunlavey at the MHRIC by emailing kdunlave@mhric.org.

Email Attacks on the Rise!
How YOU Can Help Protect Your Account and Data

by Nick Martorano, Help Desk Specialist

With all the new ways that data confidentiality can be compromised, it is important to understand the many different ways attackers can breach security.

Social Engineering

Social Engineering is a very common tactic for getting information maliciously. An attacker can pose as a coworker, bank official, or even your supervisor to request sensitive data. The name of this kind of attack is **"Spoofing"**. The Information Technology world has been working for years on open standards for preventing these kinds of attacks through various systems of checks that help ensure that the email is legitimate.

Another form of common Social Engineering is called a **"Watering Hole"** attack. This involves a nefarious individual who monitors commonly visited websites from your organization, or even department. The attacker will attempt to infect the site or connection with malicious software (a.k.a. malware) and then use this information to gain access to your computer or network. Luckily, many of these attacks can be stopped by having an updated firewall and antivirus database.

Denial of Service

Social Engineering is one of the most common ways an attacker will attempt to retrieve confidential information, but **"Ransomware"** is the most effective way at locking information down. Ransomware falls under the category of Denial of Service. Like Social Engineering methods of attacks, Ransomware is software that is downloaded and executed unintentionally by an unknowing end user. The program will begin to encrypt and lock down your computer, rendering it useless. After the Ransomware has run its course with your files, a message will appear on your screen demanding a sum of money to be paid in order to unlock your computer and decrypt your files.

Both Social Engineering and Denial of Service are commonly used across the email platform. Understanding how these attacks are conducted will better improve your ability to spot suspicious links and attachments in emails. The golden rule is to never open any attachments or links in emails that you are not expecting.

The **golden rule** is to never open any attachments or links in emails that you are not expecting.

Mariah Adin, Ph.D.
Manager of Analytics and Coordinated Support Services

For Mariah Adin, her new job at the Mid-Hudson Regional Information Center (MHRIC) is the latest interesting challenge in a career that has had many, from helping teens pursue STEM careers to writing a book.

"I love it. Every day is something different," Mariah said of her position as Manager of Analytics and Coordinated Support Services.

She began her job at the MHRIC at the end of October and has been busy working with school districts and vendors, reviewing her department's budget, and working on some "really cool" analytics that the MHRIC might put in place in the future to help schools provide even more support to students.

As the former Assistant Director of the CSTEP program at SUNY New Paltz, Mariah worked with students who were under-represented in STEM programs and helped them succeed in those programs.

"Issues of equity have always been important to me and that's what the MHRIC is here for, too," she said, noting that RIC provides equity by making its services available to all districts, not just wealthy ones.

A graduate of Wallkill High School, Mariah earned her undergraduate degree at Arizona State University, her master's from Fordham University and her Ph.D. in U.S. History from the State University of New York at Albany. In addition to her job at CSTEP, she has also worked as the coordinator of the Pathways to Technology (P-TECH) program at SUNY Orange and has provided marketing services for a law firm.

While she was pursuing her doctorate, she stumbled across an article about four teen-age boys who went on a thrill-killing spree in Brooklyn in the 1950s. She was fascinated by the story because "it wasn't how I thought of the '50s," and she wrote not only her doctoral dissertation, but eventually a book called "The Brooklyn Thrill-Kill Gang & the Great Comic Book Scare of the 1950s."

In addition to her busy job at the MHRIC, Mariah is a mom to two little girls, ages three and four. She enjoys both writing and drawing and loves the blended family of six cats that she and her husband created when they got married.

Like so many MHRIC employees, Mariah said that the best part of job is the people she works with.

"My team is fantastic. They're helpful and delightful," she said. "You immediately feel like you're part of a team here."

Manager of Analytics and Coordinated Support Services Mariah Adin

Stacy Lampman
Financial Services Specialist

It's not often that a new employee arrives for their first day of work ahead of the curve, but that's exactly what happened when Stacy Lampman started her job at the Mid-Hudson Regional Information Center (MHRIC).

Stacy joined the MHRIC in January as a Financial Services Specialist and brought with her a decade of experience working with the agency and some of the software it provides support for.

"I worked at Finance Manager for seven years and before that I worked at WinCap for three years, so I brought some experience. It was really helpful," she said, naming two software programs the MHRIC supports.

A business major in college, Stacy "fell into" the software world by working with her father's company for 16 years before moving on to WinCap

Financial Services Specialist Stacy Lampman

and Finance Manager. Eventually, she decided she wanted to work in the public sector and the MHRIC was a perfect fit. "I knew everybody," Stacy said. "It was nice to see familiar faces."

Stacy said she has been enjoying many aspects of her new job. Her responsibilities include taking support calls, troubleshooting issues, providing training, and working on software conversions, like Finance Manager's conversion to nVision. She also provides support for WinCap and WinCapWeb, as well as Timepiece, a time and attendance system. "I really like assisting customers and supporting all of these software products," she said.

Stacy likes to stay busy, and she certainly has plenty of that in both her work and personal life. As a Schenectady resident, she spends a fair amount of time commuting to the MHRIC offices in New Paltz every day, but she's good-natured about it. "I've been listening to a lot of audiobooks," she said with a smile.

When she's not working or commuting, Stacy enjoys running and is on the organizing committee for a 5K race to benefit ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) research. She and her husband spend many weekends traveling to watch their son row with his college crew team. She also loves spending time with her daughter, who recently graduated from college with a teaching degree, and her beloved yellow Lab.

Stacy said the best thing about the MHRIC is the people who work here. "I really like the people," she said. "I've been very comfortable since day one."

MHRIC

Calendar of Events

Registration for all events must be completed using MyLearningPlan.com (MLP). Please see page five for more information.

April

4/5
Excel Charts

4/6
Create Print Publications using Lucidpress "slice"
Create Print Publications using Publisher "slice"

4/10
Google Drive
MS OneDrive

4/19
Excel Functions & Formulas "slice"
Excel Lists & Pivot Tables "slice"
Word Introduction

4/20
Access Introduction

4/21
Gmail Basics
Google Calendar Basics

4/24
Excel Shortcuts, Tips, & Tricks

4/25
Excel Introduction
Mail Merge using MS Word "slice"
Mail Merge with Google Docs using autoCrat "slice"
SchoolMessenger User Group Meeting

4/26
Gmail Contact Groups vs. Google Groups
Google Calendar Basics "slice"
Google Calendar Tasks & Reminders "slice"

4/27
Access Intermediate

4/28
Google Docs
Google Sheets
Security User Group Meeting

May

5/1
Google Forms

5/2
Google Slides
nVision Institute

5/4
Access Forms

5/9
Word Shortcuts, Tips, & Tricks

5/10
Google Docs Overview "slice"
Google Sheets Overview "slice"

5/11
Access Queries
Word – Using Tabs & the Indent Tool "slice"
Word Bullets & Numbering "slice"

5/12
Excel Intermediate

5/15
Google Forms
Google Sheets

5/16
Mail Merge using MS Word
Mail Merge with Google Docs using autoCrat

5/17
Word Shortcuts, Tips, & Tricks

5/18
Access Reports

5/19
Excel Shortcuts, Tips, & Tricks

5/22
Specialty Projects Workshop

5/24
Google Forms Overview "slice"
Google Sheets Overview "slice"

5/30
Word Intermediate

5/31
Chromebook Overview "slice"
Gmail Contact Groups vs. Google Groups "slice"

June

6/1
Excel Charts "slice"
Excel Conditional Formatting "slice"
Google Sites

6/5
PowerPoint Introduction

6/6
Excel Functions & Formulas

6/8
Excel Automating Spreadsheets
Excel Lists & Pivot Tables

6/9
Gmail Filters "slice"
Gmail Labels "slice"