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Year

Kelsey Landgren, Katelyn Landgren,
Lydia Ranard, Jordan Zauha, Kyley
Schroeder, Jessica Peavler

Rod L. Henkel
Yutan High School, rhenkel@esu2.org

Should iPods be in classrooms?

BY KATELYN LANDGREN AND
KELSEY LANDGREN

about this, but art students seem to be upset about the change. Junior Abby Schnoes said music helps to

with other students talking around her. "It makes me mad that I can't use my mp3 player anymore," Schnoes said.

Have you ever used your iPod and found it to be helpful or even maybe a distraction during certain classes? This year, school officials decided if cell phones and iPods are banned in required classes they need to be banned in classes such as art and study hall as well.

Assistant principal Dan Tietjen said by banning iPods in all classrooms, officials hoped it would keep things more consistent. He thinks study hall and art are good times to use iPods, but school officials think it is best to leave them locked up all day.

"We didn't want students having their iPod out for art and then not putting it away for their next class," Tietjen said.

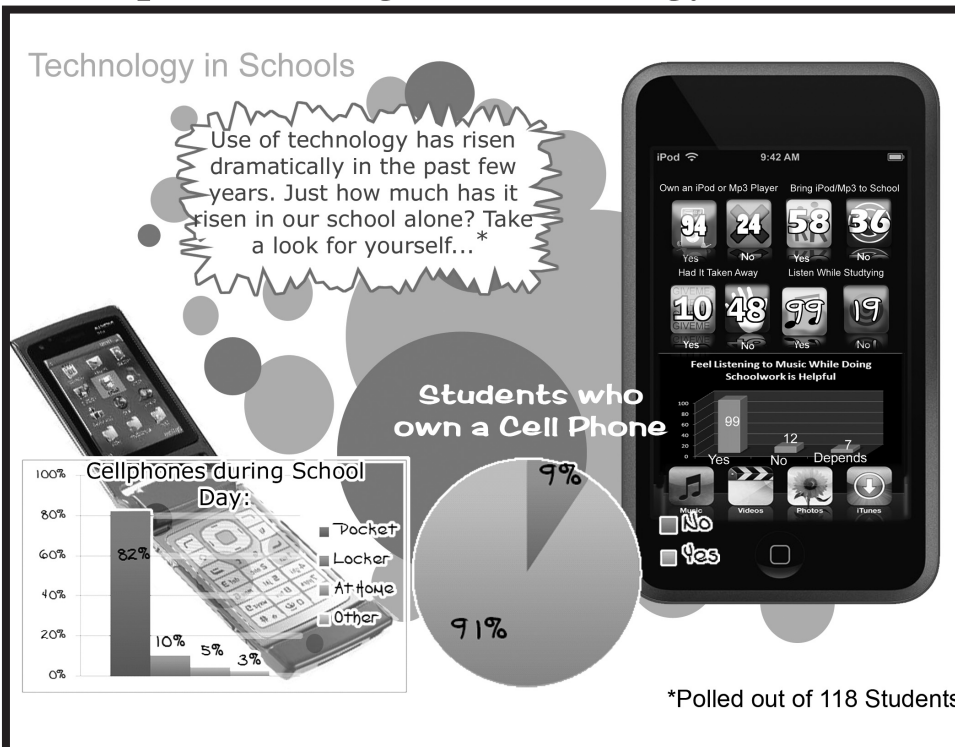
Tietjen hadn't heard any complaints

inspire projects and wishes she could still use hers. Schnoes used her mp3 player everyday because she had a hard time focusing

students chose to listen to music during class," said Nielsen, who believes music

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In-Depth Coverage: Technology in Schools



Senior Steph Roll is also upset she can't use her iPod. Roll didn't use it daily, but when she would remember to bring it she found it helpful.

"It was a way for me to focus on my artwork and not listen to people talk," Roll said.

Art director Dustin Nielsen allowed students to use iPods because he thought it would help some students focus without any outside distractions. iPods kept students out of other student's conversations and helped calm some down, Nielsen said.

"Typically, six to seven high school



Technology policies vary among schools

Ashland, Millard North allow cell phones at certain appointed times during school day

BY JORDAN ZAUHA

The room is silent. Students sit quietly in their desks, working hard on their schoolwork.

Suddenly, the sound of "Single Ladies" begins to play from a student's pocket. Every face in the room snaps toward the unsuspecting student as the teacher walks up to them with those fateful words: "Give me your cell phone."

As technology progresses, the appearance of cell phones, music players and other devices in schools and other public places is on the rise.

Because of this, schools like Yutan work

to stop students from text messaging, calling and listening to music during classes and passing periods.

Not all school policies are equal though.

Ashland-Greenwood and Millard North allow students to use cell phones and other electronic devices during permitted areas and times of the day.

In Ashland-Greenwood, students are authorized to use their cell phones and music devices during their seven passing periods and lunch.

Collectively, this results in about an hour of usage time.

"I think for the most part, kids like it," principal Brad Jacobson said. "It gives them some freedom."

Rules are set up that do prohibit cell phones and picture-taking devices in locker rooms and restrooms. Jacobson said the rule is in place as a safety precaution for the students.

"There are less violations in class than there used to be," Jacobson said.

As for iPods and mp3 players, the same regulations apply. Classroom use is prohib-

ited except for podcasting and recording of classes for educational use.

Also, students may be allowed to listen to them during study halls if teachers allow it.

"There seems to be more violations with the iPod and mp3 uses than the cell phone," Jacobson said.

As for Millard North, a policy change occurred this year. Students are allowed to use electronics during lunch and in designated areas, specifically cafeteria and commons areas.

"The rest of the day, they need to be out of sight in the hallway," said Jay Dostal, the assistant principal for seniors.

Dostal accented that the school is working to embrace that cell phones and iPods are not going to disappear.

Instead as educators, he says it's their job to teach students how and when to use them responsibly.

Dostal said that the number of cell phone issues in the classroom has gone down.

Still, many schools' policies contain similarities to those at Yutan. Yutan policy states that "during the school day, the use of cell phones is not needed and thus their use is restricted."

It also states that, unless permission is given, students who use their cell phones will go through the discipline process.

"It depends on what's going on," principal Dan Schnoes.

Schnoes said that just because a student has his or her cell phone out in the hall does not necessarily mean the phone will be confiscated.

Students sometimes use their phone for time. If the teacher understands the context in which the student is using his or her phone, a simple prompt may just be given.

Otherwise, confiscation is not an uncommon occurrence in Yutan. The office keeps track of confiscations.

Many students at Yutan may feel that the strictness of the policy has increased, but Schnoes said that the policy never

changed.

Instead, he has worked to increase awareness within the faculty.

School officials at Wahoo, Omaha Skutt and Mead all share these feelings.

"Off and away, that's the two keys," Wahoo principal Chris Arent said.

Arent mentioned that although cell phones are the most common offender, other electronic devices have caused problems as well, mainly those of iPods and the handheld gaming system PSP.

Both devices hold the power to use other media, such as pictures and video. This creates an opportunity for inappropriate material to make its way into the school environment.

Arent said two to three cell phones are confiscated a day. While the problem has not completely gone away, he points out positives of the policy.

"It's helped for less distraction," Arent said.

Patrick Slattery, the president and principal at Omaha Skutt Catholic, matched many of these ideas.

If students are caught with a cell phone, it is handed over to the assistant principal, waiting to be picked up by the parent.

"A little more than 100 phones were confiscated in a full year," Slattery said.

Picking up of confiscated items by parents appears to help, according to Slattery. Most offenses end up being one time only. Slattery said that only about five to six students continue to repeat.

According to a school official, Mead's policy is just like that of Yutan's.

Schools throughout the area differ in policies.

Some take the approach of giving some freedom in order to teach, while others work to eliminate it as a distraction.

No matter what the policy, offenses still occur.

And as long as cell phones survive in this age of increasing technology, there will always be that one student with his "Single Ladies" ringtone going off in class.

Staff remain updated on latest technology

BY KYLEY SCHROEDER

Imagine trying to keep up with the latest technology. This could be a tough task to handle with all the new programs and devices. But teachers try to stay up to date.

Yutan High School teachers work hard to have the best possible technology and programs for the students to use. According to business teacher Doug Veik, they hear about other programs mostly through other teachers. Teacher Lyle Mead agrees with Veik that word of mouth is one way they stay updated.

"Dr. Dan Schnoes is good at keeping me updated," Veik said.

Teachers attend in-services to learn about different programs as well, Veik said. Schnoes allows them to go to these seminars even during school hours to stay updated, according to Veik.

Mead said that he uses programs like Google and Apple to stay updated. He goes to these types of websites to obtain ideas. The Apple representative also talked to teachers about different programs, according to Mead.

"Sometimes we just find them on our

own and experiment with them," Mead said.

Sometimes, students know a little more than the teachers. According to Veik, it's good for the teachers to learn. The common knowledge students have can also help the teachers.

With this, the teachers don't have to spend as much time teaching basic steps. The knowledge with technology differs from student to student, depending how much they may use it, Veik said.

"I had a student teach me how to use T9 on a cell phone before," Veik said.

Mead also said that some students know things the teachers don't about technology. It can be tough, though, because sometimes teachers don't like it when they are the ones being taught by students, according to Mead.

"Students know a lot about the social aspects with technology like Facebook," Mead said, "but teachers know more about other programs."

Most students know how to navigate from site to site on the internet, according to Mead. He says that students' common knowledge with computers helps with projects and assignments for school.

Teachers differ on opinions about iPods in classrooms

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can bring out a student's creativity.

English teacher Carey Starns also would like to see students allowed to use iPods in certain classes. Starns took a graduate class that said some students can focus and work better when listening to music.

However, industrial art teacher Bob Wittry thinks iPods are disruptive, distracting and against school rules. He also said that iPods take away student's concentration and independent thinking.

Starns thinks iPods could be used in study halls and other classes if teachers would allow them. Wittry disagrees with that and they shouldn't be used in any class.

"In my class, I would allow students to listen to music if they were writing or work-

ing on grammar assignments," Starns said.

She said when students are reading they shouldn't be able to listen to music, though.

Starns said that she thinks one reason iPods aren't allowed is because teachers have no way of monitoring what songs are being played. Tietjen also agreed that was a concern to officials.

With the changing of technology, some teachers fear what may be allowed next in classrooms if iPods would be allowed. Starns does think that students will be able to use iPods in classrooms again due to the changes she's seen in her 12 years of teaching.

"If the school allows iPod, I'll be fine with that," Wittry said. "I believe in following rules."

Technology issues arise for students

BY JESSICA PEAVLER

"OMG, the printer is not working again!" "The computers are so old!" "Why is this going so slow?!" "What cell phone?" These are some of the things that students from Yutan High School say throughout the school day.

As technology advances, the problems people have with it increases. The students from Yutan often experience issues with technology because it advances faster than the school can buy the more updated software.

"It's hard to stay current with what the students have. They always complain that our stuff is so old," technology coordinator Amy Arensberg said. "We try the best we can with the budgets we have."

The issue isn't always that the school doesn't have the latest technology in the school; occasionally it's just the computer itself isn't working right.

"The computer's not always dependable," junior Jax Miller said. "Sometimes the computers just shut off."

Often the issues don't matter that the computers and printers are outdated most of the time it's that they are being used a lot.

"The amount of people using them

causes a lot of wear and tear," Arensberg said. "High school students are not always nice to them."

A lot of the time, when something needs fixing it doesn't happen right away because Arensberg is the one fixing all of the problems.

"Sometimes things don't get done overly quickly because I also teach, coach, and I am at the elementary," Arensberg said.

Computers and printers are not the only technology issues that Yutan has. Cell phones and iPods have also recently been an issue.

Students keep their phones with them throughout the day and sometimes use them during class.

"Teachers can take them away or they prompt the kids to put them away," assistant principal Dan Tietjen said. "If a cell phone gets taken away they are given back by the end of the day."

However, iPods are a different story. They aren't even allowed into the classroom.

"We want to make sure kids are working and are getting their work done," Tietjen said. "There are some classes where it would be okay to use them, but we want to stay consistent."