

The Start of Computers in Madeira City Schools, Madeira, Ohio

In the late 1970's, personal computers were just starting to emerge on the market. Radio Shack had a personal computer—the TRS-80. Commodore PET had one, and of course, Apple sold the Apple II computer. There were no computers in use at Madeira Schools either in the business area or in the education area.

Math and Science teacher Jon Mauch was hired in 1972 and part of his training at Ohio State University was in computer programming. Ohio State even funded a computer terminal at one of the High Schools in which Jon student taught. He worked with students to teach programming (now referred to as coding) and the first program developed was a Tic Tac Toe program that was difficult to beat.

When the Apple II went on sale, Jon bought one for himself and studied what it could do. One of the first jobs Jon worked on was to create a mailing list database that could be used to print labels for the Board of Education mailings.

Jon made the case to Superintendent John Rahe to invest in computers to start a high school class. Mr. Mauch explained that not only could he teach students to program (code) but that he would also write software to help in other classrooms. This would start as “drill and practice” programs. There was very little available software for sale at the time. Superintendent Rahe turned him down. The equipment was not without expense and the idea stepped into unknown territory.

The special education teacher at the middle school (Barb Shane) was interested and had funds. So Jon purchased and set up two computers and wrote software to help her students. When they were not in use by the special education students, the gifted class borrowed the computers.

Soon, Superintendent Rahe called Jon into his office and explained that he would provide \$10,000 to fund equipment for the High School. This purchased 4 Apple II computers and a printer. Jon wrote programs for the English and Foreign Language classes. He also taught programming to student and staff and also taught evening school classes to adults.

The Middle school soon had a couple Commodore PET computers and next came a classroom of Radio Shack computers that was supervised by Phil Miekley. At the Elementary school students used a couple Commodore PET computers until a lab of Apple II computers was formed and supervised by Fred Dishon.

In the 1980s and 1990s things kept growing. Jon focused on staying with one computer company – Apple. Costs were kept lower and we were able to do things that other school districts were never able to do. The typing and business classes at the High School soon became computerized. More and more computers were purchased throughout the district. Mac computers started appearing and became part of Administration desks. The use of networking (at first Apple's LocalTalk™) started to grow and connection to the newest hit – The Internet – started.

In those early days, student records (schedules, grades, transcripts, etc.) were all done by sending paperwork to the HCCA data center across town and two weeks later they returned the printouts to the school. Jon Mauch used Apple equipment with one of the first hard drives by Corvus company to write the code to handle all of that in-house. Eventually when networking and computers advanced to the point that the HCCA data center allowed multi-user systems, from the school sites, Jon helped transfer that data back to the data center and helped train staff to operate the various systems they were responsible for.

By the time Jon retired in 2007, he had overseen the growth of computers to include well over 800 systems, wireless networking, fiber optic networking between the schools, networked phone systems, networked alarm and camera systems, several network servers, a dedicated web site server and advanced copy machine systems that were networked between the buildings. Students and parents had access to student records and teacher web sites from home and were kept informed by district listserv (mass email) systems.