



ISASA

WEEKLY BULLETIN

3 TO 10 APRIL 2009

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMMUNICATIONS	2
• Positions Vacant Service on the ISASA Website	2
CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS	2
• Independent Schools Sports Coordinators Conference	2
• Social Science Conference 2009	2
• Orff Africa Workshops	3
ARTICLES OF INTEREST	3
• Schools Can't Ignore Technology	3
• Boys Who are Gifted are More Likely to Play Dumb	3
• Escape from the E-mail Monster	3
WEBSITES OF INTEREST	7
• Teacher Professional Development	7

COMMUNICATIONS

- **Positions Vacant Service on the ISASA Website**

Currently, all email applications received for positions advertised on the ISASA site are sent to an initial address (apply@isasa.org). Unsolicited commercial mail and other irrelevant emails are removed and genuine applications forwarded to schools. However, due to the increasing volume of applications it has become administratively difficult to screen every application.

ISASA has therefore decided to revert to inclusion of email links in our website advertisements so that applications can be sent directly to schools.

We are aware that our website is scanned regularly by both automated “spambots” and salespeople looking for school email contacts. We therefore encourage schools, wherever possible, to use a generic email address in their job advertisements. Please do not use your head’s direct email address!

Schools that have a single email address are also encouraged to set up a separate webmail address (Gmail, Hotmail, etc.) specifically for job applications. This has the added advantage of being able to preview emails before downloading them.

Please contact Simon Lee at the ISASA offices with any questions regarding the Positions Vacant service.

Contact: Simon Lee. Tel: 011 648 1331, Email: simonl@isasa.org

CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

- **Independent Schools Sports Coordinators Conference**

Cornwall Hill College is hosting the 3rd Independent Schools Sports Coordinators Conference from 14 to 17 July 2009 for all Sports Coordinators and Phys Ed Teachers.

The Conference has been a great success in 2007 as well as 2008. The Conference provides great opportunities for the sports coordinators and Phys Ed teachers to share information and ideas on how to build and enhance school sports for the future, with latest trends and coaching philosophies and how to make it part of the coaches and athletes skill and Life development.

A [Conference Information Flyer](#) is available on the ISASA website.

Contact: Liesel van Zyl. Tel: 083 373 9818, Email: lieselvanzyl@absamail.co.za

- **Social Science Conference 2009**

St Andrew’s School for Girls in Senderwood, Bedfordview will host a Social Sciences Conference on 29 and 30 May 2009.

This conference is aimed at Social Science and Science teachers teaching Grades 4-7. It has been designed with an environmental theme in mind but offers talks that can relate to any classroom. The two

day conference will include key note speakers, workshops and site visits. Closing date for registration is Friday 15 May 2009.

A [☞ Programme and Registration Form](#) is available on the ISASA website.

Contact: St Andrew's School for Girls. Tel: 011 453 9408, Email: bvanniekerk@standrews.co.za

- **Orff Africa Workshops**

Orff Africa is offering exciting Winter workshops with Janet Greene, who is coming to us all the way from California, USA. If you are teaching Pre-Primary children, or Grades 1-3, then these workshops are for YOU!

We are proud to be offering our workshops in three cities this year – Johannesburg, Cape Town and East London – so choose the one that suits you best. Please note, when you are booking for the workshops, that there are different contact people in the different cities, so read the flyers carefully. It'll be great to see you there!

The [☞ Orff Workshop Flyers](#) are available for download from the ISASA website.

Contact: Please see the relevant flyer for your city.

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

- **Schools Can't Ignore Technology**

Students aren't learning to apply the vast technological tools at their disposal to their learning because they often are asked to turn off such devices in class, according to the *Speak Up* National Research Project's annual report. Schools should tap students' technological expertise and ask for their help in applying technology to school, the report recommends.

The full article is available on the [☞ Education Week](#) website.

- **Boys Who are Gifted are More Likely to Play Dumb**

British children who are gifted intentionally fall behind in school to avoid bullying, according to an education professor's research on 12- and 13-year-olds in nine schools. Boys in particular were under more pressure to "dumb down" to become popular, which may partly account for the perceived gender gap.

The full article is available on the [☞ Guardian](#) website.

- **Escape from the E-mail Monster**

For many of us, email is a waking nightmare. But by breaking a few bad habits and using alternative forms of communication wisely, we can put the email monster to sleep.

Like many people I know, I find that email consumes at least 30 percent of my workday, sometimes more. Yet, I've never been formally taught how to effectively write and manage email. What gives?

In school, we learn about the French and Indian War and how to find the volume of a cylinder. But when it comes to practical knowledge like how to safely drive a car or how to obtain a mortgage loan without falling into financial ruin, we're given a bare minimum of advice (stop at stop signs, try to get a low interest rate) before being thrown into the fire.

The same goes with our bloated inboxes. My email-management habits are a mix of mental idiosyncrasies and a handful of organizational tricks in Outlook that I've stumbled upon through sheer luck; yours are probably about the same.

It's a wonder any of us ever gets anything done.

In a survey on corporate email use conducted by tech research firm The Radicati Group in 2008, respondents said they spent an average of 25 percent of their day on email, sending 38 messages and receiving 102 messages per day. Sound familiar?

Part of the problem is inefficient use of the platform – poor writing, poor organization and so forth – but another part is overuse. It helps to know how to use email adeptly, but it also helps to know when not to use email at all. Through a combination of better habits and smart use of alternative modes of communication, you can conquer your email demons and have more time to spend on real work.

Break Bad Habits

The first step toward better email productivity: Look at yourself and ask how much you are contributing to your own mess.

"It's what I call the 'Natural Law of Email': the more you send, the more you get," says Chris Bonney, vice president of client services at Vanguard Technology and blogger on email management. "Consider how many people you're sending an email to. If you're sending one email to five people, you're opening yourself up to five potential responses."

And you can count on most of those five responses. "What we have discovered in our research is what's called the boomerang principle," says Tim Burress, president and senior vice president of training at Cohesive Knowledge Solutions and co-author of *The Hamster Revolution: How to Manage your Email before it Manages You*. "Email has a rate of return to the sender of 60 percent, so for every five emails you send out, three come back."

Simple math will tell you that 60 percent of zero is zero, so is the answer to your problems just to stop sending email altogether? Sadly, no. That might not stop email from coming to you anyway, and it also might get you fired. Rather, Burress says the answer is rooted in both how an email is written and if it's written at all. We get so many responses, he says, "because generally we type vague, confusing, action-buried-at-the-bottom, misleading, incomplete, unnecessary messages, and people are confused by it, and so they reply, 'Bob, what are you talking about?'"

Burress stresses that email must be written with the receiver, not the sender, in mind. What makes sense to you might not make sense to your recipient. This frame of mind begs three questions: Is it needed? Is it appropriate? Is it targeted?

Because email is so fast, easy, and light on resources, we tend to skip these questions, Burress says. He contrasts current email writing style with that of typed, printed business letters from the days before the internet. "Old letters were shorter, and the very first sentence was always the main point of the letter," he says. The style that used to be taught in business books was "ABC," for Action, Background, and Close. "Today, in email, the close is at the top, then there's a long background, and then at the end is what the reader needs," says Burress.

Of course, we write poor emails because we have so many to answer and we answer them in a hurry, but then those ineffective messages beget more responses that fill our inboxes anew. This is why Bonney recommends turning off the automatic notification that pops up when new email arrives and saving designated periods of the day to devote attention to email.

This is vital because humans aren't as good at multitasking as they like to think they are. "Every time we switch gears in our brain, we're wasting valuable time," says Bonney. "We've become accustomed to being interrupted, but every time we're interrupted, we buffer those with relatively significant switching time."

To reduce distractions, Bonney recommends keeping different types of email separate by maintaining three email accounts: one for work, one personal, and one "inbound only", which should be used for anything you sign up for or buy online. That way any marketing emails and reading material don't clog your work or personal inboxes and can be perused at your leisure.

Equal Email Understanding

Of course, once you've cleaned up your email habits, it would be nice if your colleagues would follow suit.

Bonney says employers should establish simple guidelines, like "always have a subject line" and "be discriminating in who you send to," as well as the 25-word rule (i.e., if your message is fewer than 25 words like "Thanks, Betty!" for example - don't bother sending it).

Co-workers should also have a common understanding about the "To" and "CC" fields, such as the former being designated for recipients whose responses are needed and the latter for those whose aren't. Burress says a lot of unnecessary email is generated because "many people think there's no difference" between the two.

However, beware making drastic, blanket changes in regard to such a widely used business tool. Burress says one company he worked with instituted no-email Fridays. It didn't take long for staff to learn how to use the "delayed-send" option in their email programmes, meaning they would still spend Friday writing responses to email but would then set all of their emails to send at 12:01 a.m. It caused the company's server to crash, he says.

Find the Best Alternatives

That story suggests that, rather than creating restrictions, the opposite approach may be best: In the face of a river of communications, open up as many channels as possible and allow it to flow wherever it may.

This is the approach toward instant messaging (IM) taken by Becky Granger, CAE, director of information technology and member services at EDUCAUSE. More than half of the organization's staff uses IM every day for brief questions and discussions.

"Because we don't have a staff mandate that you will do this, it's just sort of grown organically, and unlike email, it's being used by the people who want to use it because they find it more effective," Granger says. "So, we haven't mandated anything, but we don't block it and we don't tell them they can't do it."

Many of the various free IM services can link into each other, meaning EDUCAUSE staff members can use whichever software they prefer. An alternate approach is to install the same programme on all users' computers at an organization. At the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources, staff use Trillian for IM, says Jason Heydasch, IT support specialist. Heydasch estimates that about three quarters of CUPA-HR staff actively use IM, sparing themselves a great deal of email.

"I would probably get 30 percent more email if I didn't have instant messenger available, because there's a number of quick questions that people just want an answer to, a brief answer, which they may not be inclined to send an email about," he says.

The obvious downside of IM is the distraction factor, says Granger. "Everybody works differently, and for some people this is a huge distraction because they have a hard time focusing anyway," she says. "I have some staff who know that they can't have IM on, because if they have IM on they're not going to be able to focus on their job."

This is where an organization must trust its employees to manage their own work habits wisely. "Senior staff here and the directors, including the CEO, put a great amount of faith in their employees. Our jobs are getting done," says Heydasch. "Yeah, some conversations will come up like 'Hey, lunch is ready. Let's get out of here.' Certain conversations like that are inevitable, they're bound to come up, but you're not going to find that much different than the telephone. If we didn't have IM available, someone could be calling me and taking up my time, but at least with instant messaging I can multitask."

Get Group Discussion Out of Email

Email can be quite useful for communications that centre on ongoing tasks or projects, but this is also where it seems to spiral out of control most quickly. "The notorious problem with emailing documents around was making sure everyone had the same versions and making sure all the edits were made before sending out another version," says Bob Rich, CAE, assistant secretary, strategic planning and evaluation, at the American Chemical Society.

Thankfully, email's heyday as the leading project-management communication tool may be coming to a close with the advent of collaborative software platforms that allow multiple users to share and edit information in a central location.

ACS has found success with its volunteer committees using collaborative software such as SharePoint and CollectiveX, says Rich. "For task-focused groups, it works really well. People can post shared documents related to the project. It hasn't replaced the need to have meetings or have conference calls, but what it has done is make our conference calls much more efficient," he says.

ACS has even used wikis for the development and evaluation of its strategic plan. The committee that wrote the latest version used Google Documents to make edits and changes. One member could make a change at 10 p.m., for instance, and another could make an edit at 7 a.m. the next day, all to the same centrally hosted document, says Rich. Now, the completed strategic plan has been rolled out with a discussion forum on the ACS website that links into "ACS Communities," which Rich calls "a LinkedIn for chemists."

Collaborative project sites and social networking platforms can complement each other nicely, but for both, the biggest challenge is driving adoption. "Unless you have compelling content that people want to keep coming back to, you're not going to get a lot of eyeballs on the things you want them to talk about," says Rich. Some wiki platforms have the capability for users to sign up for alert emails that notify them about new additions or changes, but this defeats part of the purpose of using them: to reduce email.

Moreover, the realm of wikis is still fairly new. "I thought by now we'd be further advanced in how easy they are to use," says Jenny Levine, internet development specialist and strategy guide at the American Library Association, where more than 100 wikis and blogs for committee and project management were rolled out more than a year ago. "The greatest disadvantage to me is that there's still a learning-curve burden on the user, and because of that participation is not as level as it should be."

Despite these difficulties, Chris Bonney says project work can be a way to "start small" in shifting how you and your colleagues communicate. "It's an opportunity to say 'Here are the rules for email.' When you make a change among five people, they see the power of the new rules, and then they can take that out into other projects."

Don't Forget...

Of course, any discussion about alternatives to email cannot ignore two tried-and-true devices: the telephone and face-to-face discussion. Both remain quite effective modes of communication. In deciding when to talk instead of type, Tim Burrell offers two small pieces of advice:

- Email does not convey emotions, so never say no or discuss a controversy in an email.
- Look for clues of availability and try to get people from one-way communication to two-way. If you send an email and receive a response within a few minutes, chances are the responder is at his or her desk.
- Pick up the phone, visit in person, or at least send an IM, if you can.

Whatever methods you choose, don't expect to make an email revolution overnight. Remember, all of our email habits have been developed through years of daily inbox interaction. "Your inbox is a reflection of who you are," says Bonney. "If you have a mess around you, how do you expect to bring a different mindset to your inbox?"

By Joe Romini, managing editor, newsletters, for ASAE & The Center for Association Leadership. Reprinted by ISASA with permission, copyright March 2009, ASAE & The Center, Washington, DC.

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WEBSITES OF INTEREST

• Teacher Professional Development

Websites for Teachers – Teacher Professional Development Sourcebook, a new magazine from Education Week, recommends these websites as good sources of materials for teachers.

☞ [Wiki-Teacher](#). Created by the Clark County Schools in Nevada but open to all, this website features K-8 lesson and unit plans that are searchable by topic, level, and textbook. There are also short video clips.

☞ [Teach-nology](#). This site has 28,000 free lesson plans for K-12 teachers and a variety of tips, printable worksheets, and games for all subjects.

☞ [Curriki](#). This site has searchable collections of math, science, language arts, and social studies lesson plans and activities for all grades. Teachers can also contribute resources.

From: "Web Sites to Know" by Liana Heitin in Teacher Professional Development Sourcebook, Spring 2009.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SAHISA GOVERNANCE	2
• SAHISA Council	2
• SAHISA Executive	2
• SAHISA Regional Chairs	2
MEMBERSHIP	2
• SAHISA Membership and the SAHISA/ISASA Conference	2
STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES	3
• SAHISA Website	3
ARTICLE OF INTEREST	3
• South Africa: Future of Nation Depends On an Urgent Rescue of Schools	3
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	3
• Klingenstein Heads of Schools Programme	3
GENERAL	4
• Child Protection Week 25 -31 May 2009	4
• "Get It Right"	4
• Quote of the Week	4

SAHISA GOVERNANCE

- **SAHISA Council**

The SAHISA Council is the highest policy-making body of SAHISA. It determines the general policy of SAHISA within the ISASA Constitution, the allocation of its budget and the direction and control of its affairs.

The SAHISA Council meets three times per year and holds its Annual General Meeting (AGM) at the SAHISA/ISASA Conference.

- **SAHISA Executive**

The SAHISA Executive Committee is the executive body of SAHISA responsible for managing the affairs of SAHISA and overseeing implementation of policy by the SAHISA Council.

The Executive Committee meets four times per year, usually before and between SAHISA Council meetings.

- **SAHISA Regional Chairs**

The Regional Chairs' role on the SAHISA Council is to represent regional views at the Council.

As with the ISASA structures, it is in the regions that participative democracy takes place and the regional committee must ensure that this happens. The duties of care and skill mean that when the SAHISA Regional Chair reports back to the Region, the decisions of SAHISA Council are conveyed with an explanation of why the decisions were taken in the light of the arguments presented, and not personal views.

MEMBERSHIP

- **SAHISA Membership and the SAHISA/ISASA Conference**

Heads that wish to attend the ISASA/SAHISA conference need to please ensure that they are SAHISA members. Please note that the conference is for heads of schools and not deputy heads. New heads, or heads who are not yet members of SAHISA, are encouraged to make application for SAHISA membership as soon as possible.

Any head of an ISASA member school may now apply to become a member of SAHISA without the need for two letters of reference. There are no cost implications to joining the association but there is a great deal to be gained from networking with other heads at SAHISA conferences and workshops.

If you require an application form to be emailed to you, please contact Jenny Mundell, the SAHISA secretary. The forms need to be returned by the end of April 2009. New applications will be presented to the SAHISA National Council at the next meeting, on 12th May 2009.

Should you have any membership queries – please contact Jenny Mundell.

Contact: Jenny Mundell. Tel: 011 648 1331, Email: jennym@isasa.org

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES

- **SAHISA Website**

One of the strategic imperatives discussed at SAHISA Council meeting – was “Raising the profile of SAHISA”. It is with this in mind, that after much local and international research, an initial outline of the SAHISA website has been drafted.

The website promises to be relevant, interactive and dynamic.

1. If you have any powerful speeches, wonderful articles, photographs of colleagues, inspirational leadership advice or know of any relevant Regional, National or International conferences please forward this information to Jenny as soon as possible.
2. If Heads have articles pertaining to leadership it would be appreciated if the articles can be emailed to Jenny to either be circulated in the *Weekly Bulletin* or loaded onto the SAHISA website.
3. Please will SAHISA Council members, past SAHISA Chairs and each current SAHISA member send Jenny a high resolution digital photo of themselves for loading onto the SAHISA website. Please send the photo in jpeg format, 300 dpi and it must please be 100mm at the shortest edge.

Photos must please be sent to Jenny with your full name and details of your current school, if applicable.

Contact: Jenny Mundell. Tel: 011 648 1331, Email: jennym@isasa.org

ARTICLE OF INTEREST

- **South Africa: Future of Nation Depends On an Urgent Rescue of Schools**

In Business Day – 27 March 2009 – David Wylde, recently retired Head of St Andrew’s, Grahamstown has penned an article entitled “South Africa: Future of Nation Depends on an Urgent Rescue of Schools.”

Mr Wylde makes an “an appeal to the government to introduce an urgent, focused, properly resourced “Marshall Plan” for education. Make education a national priority. Inject capital into it by rearranging other priorities and encouraging corporate social investment into schools.”

The full article is available on the [Business Day](#) website.

A response by Tom Clarke, Head of Parktown Boys, is also available on the [Business Day](#) website.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- **Klingenstein Heads of Schools Programme**

The Klingenstein Heads of Schools Programme, invites twenty Heads, from around the world for two weeks of in-depth study and reflection among professional colleagues.

The course starts in late January and Heads examine a wide variety of educational issues and international policies. A group of prominent speakers address topical issues confronting independent school educators.

Heads are urged to make application to Klingenstein and are reminded that the closing date for applications is 1 May 2009.

Application forms can be obtained through www.klingenstein.org

GENERAL

- **Child Protection Week 25 -31 May 2009**

During Child protection week, we, as school leaders, should encourage our schools to work toward ensuring the safety, the rights and the living conditions of the children of our country. Let us join together to ensure that we build communities that protect all our children from any form of abuse, neglect and other social ills.

Last year schools acknowledged Child Protection week in many ways – some raised funds for relevant charities, whilst others hosted events to bring about greater awareness. Let us know what you plan to do and we would also love some photos and submissions for inclusion on the SAHISA website. Please email these to Jenny Mundell.

- **“Get It Right”**

We try to “get it right” and communicate information that you can trust.

If we have neglected to communicate any relevant details or if you would like to contribute to the SAHISA Weekly Bulletin, please email Jenny Mundell.

Contact: Jenny Mundell. Tel: 011 648 1331, Email: jennym@isasa.org

- **Quote of the Week**

"Leadership is not magnetic personality, that can just as well be a glib tongue. It is not "making friends and influencing people", that is flattery. Leadership is lifting a person's vision to higher sights, the raising of a person's performance to a higher standard, the building of a personality beyond its normal limitations."

— Peter F. Drucker

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