

## **WHAT HAS BEEN RESTRICTED AND WHY?**

Please understand that the restrictions put into place on student laptops this year were not easy decisions, and we regret that we had to take this course in the first place. However, in the interest of keeping an academic focus for the laptops, reducing family conflicts over excessive non-academic activities, and minimizing unnecessary wear on the laptops, we have had to limit some features on the iBooks/MacBooks. Below is a brief summary of what has been done and reasons for the restriction.

**User-installed applications** – In the course of the school year, teachers and/or students will discover a particularly useful utility or software application that relates to a school project. At such times, it is very convenient to have everyone simply download it to his/her laptop for immediate use. On the other hand, this same capability is ripe for misuse by rampant downloading of games, peer-to-peer file-sharing programs, and other clearly non-academic and unauthorized software – much of which results in technical issues that consume precious hours of staff time. Consequently, the laptops are now configured to disallow the launching of non-Shoreline applications.

**iChat and other IM clients** – this decision was especially difficult as these chat clients are very efficient tools for easy distribution and sharing of documents and other files between teachers and students. These benefits are offset, sadly, by the distraction of excessive chatting during instructional time at school and during study time at home. It is unfortunate that staff and students must now use more cumbersome methods of sharing documents and files.

**DVD Player not enabled** – like the above examples, the occasional convenience of being able to play instructional DVDs on one's laptop is outweighed by the far more common occurrence using it for personal entertainment purposes of viewing commercial movies. DVD Player will still play non-copy-protected DVDs, but will not play commercially encrypted formats. In the event of a valid educational need to use this program, a teacher may request that the restriction be removed for the duration of a project.

**iSight camera disconnected** – the placement of this camera at the top-center of the display reveals its primary function of enabling video chats versus suitability for most other photographic purposes. Besides the distraction factor, the main reason for disabling the camera is that widespread bandwidth-intensive video chatting would place a tremendous burden on our district network, thereby degrading the performance of our network for more academically essential tasks. Both iBooks and MacBooks will still function perfectly with other digital cameras and camcorders.

**GarageBand loops and instrument files** – this was simply a practical necessity given that the district technicians had the enormous task of imaging over 5000 laptops this summer. The GarageBand files are very large, and even a modest collection of them would have nearly doubled the imaging time for each laptop. In the case of students who

need to use GarageBand for a specific class – for example, vocal and instrumental music – accommodations can be made for these files to be installed.

**Remote control device for Front Row** – these did not ship with multi-pack bundles of MacBooks we ordered. In any case, this is a purely entertainment feature with countless possibilities for mischief.

**“Student cannot change login password”** – another tough call, but it came down to the fact that this presented more problems than solutions. Routine maintenance and troubleshooting by technical staff was slowed down greatly by having to reset passwords just to access the student’s desktop. In addition, much tech support time was spent dealing with situations of “I forgot my password” or “My brother changed it”.

**“Audio won’t play on web media files”** – actually, this is one that has been reported by a few students since the laptop rollout and was not implemented by the district. Our initial investigation of these reported problems indicates that this loss of audio may be due to an incompatibility of certain media formats with Macintosh software and/or installed plugins. Different web sites use a variety of proprietary methods for displaying their audio/video files. Our tests found these instances to be rare and limited to a small number of video formats. Most mainstream sites offer multiple video formats so users can choose the one that performs best on their system.

**Dashboard disabled** – most widgets simply duplicate services already available via software or the web; disabling the Dashboard function prevents downloading of game-related and other nonessential widgets.