Middle School Curriculum Proposal

PROPOSED COURSE NAME: Digital Communications

OLD COURSE NAME (if applicable) N/A

SUBMITTED BY: Michael Wesbecher

Underline the Appropriate Item: New Course/Major revision to an existing course

Implementation Date: Fall 2014

Person(s) who will write the Curriculum: Michael Wesbecher

Respond to the following:

Duration: Semester

Open to: All students in grades 7/8

Prerequisites: NONE

Pass/Fail Option: NO

Level(s): Grades 7 and 8

Where does this course fit into department sequence?
This course will focus on the digital communications tools which are prevalent in the middle of the second decade of the 21st century – including blogging, podcasting, e-portfolios, concept mapping, digital photography, geographic information systems, and 3D modeling software. Our current courses in the business department do a good job of teaching students the skills needed to use more established electronic communication tools – word processing programs, electronic presentations, spreadsheets, desktop publishing tools, but they do not really touch on the tools that this course will utilize.

In addition, while some of these tools are being used as parts of units of study in the content area courses, there is currently no course that focuses exclusively on the proper use of these tools. Therefore, this course will represent something entirely new to the North Boone School district.

What is the potential impact of this course on other department offerings?
This course allows students to experience more than one computer course option at the Middle School level. It helps open up other possibilities for students to broaden their experiences and talents. In addition, the success of this course may open up future possibilities for additional course offerings.

Course Description (Consult the Program of Studies as a model)
Digital Communications is a course that will combine visual art theories, computer applications, and business techniques to empower students with the ability to analyze, critique, and create digital projects. As a result of this course, students will learn to be responsible digital citizens.

This course will educate students about their role in digital citizenship through the following themes: responsible ethical participation in online communities, the creation of a digital identity, the ethics of appropriation in terms of authorship and ownership of digital works.

Special Notes (i.e., extended periods, team teaching, etc.)
None

RATIONALE, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES
1.   Course Rationale
     1.   What is the evidence of student need for this course?
     The students at our school are digital natives. They live in this world of podcasts, blogs, digital media, and 3D online environments. With that fact established; the question naturally arises as to why we need a course in this area. The answer to that question is quite simple. While our students understand the mechanics of using this technology, many of them do not understand the implications of using it. This course will address these implications. Some of the key questions to be answered will include:
1.   What does it mean to be a good online citizen?
2.   What is the proper etiquette for participation in an online academic/professional community vs. a strictly social community?
3.   How do you organize information in the digital age?
4.   Why should everyone have an electronic portfolio in the second decade of the 21st century?
5.   How do we identify ourselves in the online world?
6.   What is the role that media and images play in our society?
7.   How do the established rules of design apply in the digital age?
8.   What are the ethical implications of the reusing/remixing culture that exists in 21st century online culture?
     1.   What departmental needs/goals would this course meet?
     This course represents a niche which is not currently being met. As stated already, the business education department is currently not addressing the questions to be answered in this course on any type of systematic basis. In addition, most of our students are already using at least some of the technology that will be the focus of this course. Therefore, there is a need to teach students the proper use of an implications of using this technology.
     2.   What institutional needs/goals would this course meet?
     As stated previously, this course will address the need for a greater variety in exploratory course offerings at North Boone Middle School.

9.   Course Objectives: What will each student learn and know?
     The following concepts will be taught in this course.
1.   Students will understand and be able to demonstrate the norms of participation in the online classroom as well as the general online community.

2.	Create originals works documenting school, community, or local events.
3.	Describe and illustrate a concept using modeling, simulation, or concept mapping software.
4.	Explain the need for an electronic portfolio
5.	Integrate a variety of file types in order to create an electronic portfolio
6.	Reflect on their own work
7.	Demonstrate a variety of photographic techniques in the production of portraits, landscapes, and abstract works
8.	Digitally manipulate images using photo editing software
9.	Participate in a cooperative learning project in an online community
10.	Use collaborative online authoring techniques in order to explore curriculum content from different perspectives with other students
11.	Design in a 3D online environment
**12.	What types of instructional strategies will be used in the class?**
Each unit will be designed around a different form of digital communication or a topic related to digital communication. Unit 1 will be devoted to participation in online communities. In this unit, students will establish a Google + Blogger account. This account will be used as a forum for completing "bell ringer" activities, exit passes, and discussing general classroom happenings. It will also be used to host podcasts created in Audacity. These podcasts will consist of more than just discussions of classroom activities. They will also include book chats and a series of discussions of organizational skills needed by younger students (Example: 6th grade students entering 7th grade)

Unit 2 will be entitled Digital Modeling and Mapping. In this unit, students will use Prezi in order to digitally outline or map out an idea. In addition, they will use it to create a "how to" using images, text, and video.

Unit 3 will be devoted to the topic of electronic portfolios. Students will set up an academic portfolio in Weebly. This portfolio will be used throughout the course not only as a repository of student work, but also as a forum for reflection on the work and the work process.

Unit 4 will be entitled Digital Self Expression. In this unit, students will complete a variety of different types of assignments in which they demonstrate the proper use of a digital camera and digital imaging software.

Unit 5 will be entitled Exploring the World Digitally. This unit will build on the skills learned in previous units as students use digital mapping software (Google Earth) in order to create an annotated geographic tour related to historic or current events. This tour will include photographs that illustrate the significance of a place and text annotations. During the course of the unit, students will set up a collaborative discussion board in Google Groups in order to encourage research and discussion, as well as to gain different perspectives and information as they create their tours. In addition to the outcomes already described, students will complete this unit with a better understanding of the role that media and images play in influencing events in our society.

Unit 6 will be entitled Designing in a 3D Environment. In this unit, students will use Google Sketchup in order to learn how to design a structure or environment that could conceivably be

created in the physical world. Projects to be completed include designing the exterior of a house, a building, and an interior room within a house.

13. **What types of assessment procedures will be used? How will the assessment be used to guide instruction?**

As stated already, each unit will have as its theme, a different form of digital communication or a topic related to digital communication. In units 1, 3, and 5 students will have to demonstrate proper online behavior to succeed in addition to meeting the stated objectives of the projects for the unit. Projects in the other three units will be completed individually, but will be informed by feedback from other students and the teacher via the blog that students will establish at the beginning of the course. In addition, time will be built into the course for reflection. As always, prior to starting a project, students will be given direct instruction and guided practice in order to give them the tools needed in order to successfully complete the project.

14. **List resources needed and approximate costs to implement this course. Include staff development, materials, textbooks, additional staff, equipment, technology resources, facilities, and fees.**

Software Needed:
The software needed for this course should not cost the district any additional money as the sites to be used are all free to users or are software that the district is already using.

Google+ Blogger accounts
Audacity
Prezi
Adobe Photoshop
Weebly
Google Earth
Google Sketchup

Hardware Needed:
This hardware would also be used in the Multimedia technology course. The following information is also included in the proposal for that course.
Sony Handycam HDR-CX240 camcorder with Flash Card ($229.99 x 10 = $2,299.90) Prices from CDW-G (CDW Part: 3235649)
Cyber Acoustics CVL 1064rb Microphone ($9.97 x 32 = $319.04) Prices from CDW-G (CDW Part: 3034153)

Budget:

Product	Cost
Software	$0
Sony Handycam HDR-CX240	$2,299.90
Cyber Acoustics CVL 1064rb Microphone	$319.04
Total	$2,618.94

Include any additional information pertinent to your course.
See attached syllabus for more in-depth description of units of study.