Preface

We are stuck with technology when what we really want is just stuff that works.

—Douglas Adams (2002), *The Salmon of Doubt*

Beware the Four Horsemen of the Information Apocalypse: terrorists, drug dealers, kidnappers, and child pornographers. Seems like you can scare any public into allowing the government to do anything with those four.

—Bruce Scheier (2005), *Computer Crime Hype*

Technology has created a whole new realm of decision-making challenges, and as the quotes above indicate, technology is not the tame, managed tool that it was envisioned to be. Instead, technology is handheld and room-sized, invisibly available or connected with a wire, person to person or device to device. To make sense of our world, we create rules that are the basis of all policies and procedures. Technology policies and procedures often suffer from being too limiting or too nebulous, both of which are almost impossible to enforce. What do we as educators do to protect our students and staff members from the "four horsemen" that Bruce Scheier mentioned and still use technology to get the job of teaching and learning done, which is supported by Douglas Adams' quote?

RATIONALE

As a school district administrator for one of the largest school districts in the United States, I realized that the questions arriving on my desk were being heard around the country. Whether at conferences, through e-mail queries, during presentations, or written about in instructional technology publications, building useful—and effective—technology policies and procedures is a major source of concern for schools and districts.

This book is the result of my work with students, parents, teachers, and administrators as we struggled with the emergence of technology as an essential classroom resource. Just like desks, school buildings, and cafeterias, technology is no longer a luxury but has become an essential resource throughout schools and district offices. The regulation of technology must be a top priority with many districts, because students and teachers are finding ways to use technology that are not supporting the core business of teaching and learning. Creating solid, useful, and simple policies and procedures is a time-consuming process, and this book provides guidance to streamline the process and make the development of policies and procedures as simple as possible.

AUDIENCE AND APPROACH

Principals, administrators, and technology team members are the key audience for this book because these members of the school community either struggle with students and parents to enforce the rules and implement the policies. With this in hand, you will be able to construct instructional technology policies and procedures that are consistent with the school and district resources and supported by the school community.

For administrators, this text will prepare you for the immediate future of technology in your school. Considering the types of challenges that administrators already face with cell phones and student-developed Web pages, there are practical suggestions for keeping your school within legal guidelines and ethical boundaries. There are also many short, clear descriptions of the types of technology you might be implementing in your school. Another component that might make your job a little easier is a clear review of the legal implications of school technology use, especially when challenged by parents or staff members on their rights when using school equipment. I have included tips for protecting your technology investment and practical guidelines for implementing instructional technology policies and procedures in your school or district.

For technology team members, this book will provide leadership ideas to help you create a community of learning through technology, instead of an "electronic lockdown" where students and staff members feel restricted. As guardians of the school technology, your expanding role is essential to schools and districts, because your role allows teachers to connect rich resources to the learning process. This book's approach is to help you think through the policy development and implementation process thoroughly, avoiding costly pitfalls that jeopardize student and staff success. You can use this text to prepare for discussions around student data privacy, contribute the policy-making process, or communicate existing policies and procedures to the school community.

ORGANIZATION AND RESOURCES

This text is organized with an initial emphasis on the importance of school technology policies and then the cast of school characters who will be part of the policy development process. The following chapters present practical steps and resources on the fundamental topics being discussed in schools around the country. These topics include data privacy, investment protection, acceptable use policies (commonly referred to as AUPs), Internet use. A discussion on the implementation of school technology policies and procedures follows, and the book concludes with an optimistic look at emerging technology.

An additional Resources section of the text provides more specific guidance on some policies and procedures your school or district might need to develop or implement. AUPs, Internet access policies, and school Web page guidelines are presented in easy-to-follow outlines.

If you are reading this book with a specific emphasis in mind, this topical guideline might be useful:

Content Area	Ch 1	Ch 2	Ch 3	Ch 4	Ch 5	Ch 6	Ch 7	Ch 8
Why school technology policies are important	X	X		X				
Who should be involved in school technology policy development		X					X	
Who should be involved in school technology policy implementation							X	X
Protecting student data	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Developing AUPs					X			
Defining the gaps in instructional technology policies and procedures	X		X	X	X			X
Describing the roles that technology team members play in policy activities		X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Another resource in this book that you may find useful are the critical chapter questions at the beginning of each chapter along with the chapter focus. If you are looking for specific content areas, these questions are consistent with the *essential* questions many teachers use to focus class lessons. These questions are also the specific areas of concern to many school districts around the country and might be useful when you are having discussions around technology policies and procedures in your own school or district.

Finally, it is important to know that a book like this may only serve to raise more questions. If nothing else, administrators and technology team members in schools and districts will be better prepared to answer the questions that are emerging throughout the world regarding computer use and technology management in the school setting. This text was never meant to answer all of the questions because so many of the answers depend on the readers' circumstances, such as school district positions, interactions with the school community, and funding levels for both school and district. Instead, the goal of writing a resource like this was to open the door to teaching and learning in a safer, more effective way through the appropriate use of technology. Much like Douglas Adams' sentiment, "stuff that works" in education should have a lasting impact for future generations, which is why discussions about the safe and wise use of technology for schools is so important.