

Working for the Weekend

Google Summit draws over 400 in education to CHS

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COVENTRY — The 2015 Google Summit held over the weekend at Coventry High School got off to a great start as educators and administration mixed and mingled Saturday morning before education sessions began.

“I know this is going to be a great learning weekend because we can share what we know and support each other and thank you to our tech department who have been working very hard under the supervision of Jason Martin to make sure the building was ready for all we would need for the weekend,” said Dr. Lynne Burke, the district’s director of education technology. “Go learn, go create and go innovate!”

This is the first time the two-day event has been hosted by EdTech, held in Coventry. The summit featured multiple sessions with multiple topics per session to apply Google learning.

The first keynote speaker, Lisa Thumann, director of custom professional development for EdTech in New Jersey, addressed the crowd of 400-plus on the how-to’s of YouTube.

Thumann said times have certainly changed for technology from the baby boomer generation to where just watching television was enough, to Generation X, who in Thumann’s words, felt “misunderstood” to Generation Y who envisioned their world to be a 24/7 place to now, Generation C, who needs to know what’s going on constantly, mainly — she said — through YouTube.

She shared the story of her two teenage daughters, who got into YouTube for different reasons. Her younger daughter Anna wanted to learn more about a book series she was reading and she wanted to learn how to draw better while the older one, Emma, wants to be a YouTuber because she saw how many “hits” video blogger, Pewdiepie, was getting and once she learned how much money can be made, she wanted to do it too.

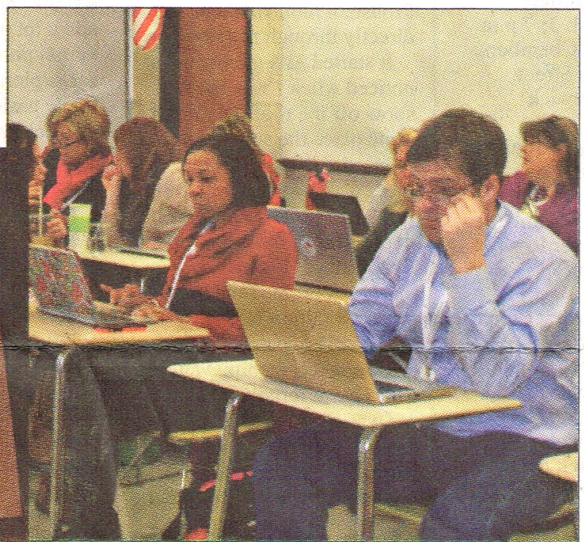
Instead of having a total meltdown over what her daughter may or may not do online, Thumann decided to do the research with her daughter to dig deeper to learn more about how people make millions through their videos.

“It used to be about the number of times someone clicked on the video but now it’s about how many seconds a video is



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ABOVE: Some of the 400-plus educators that were in attendance over the weekend await the start of the 2015 Google Summit at Coventry High School.



ABOVE: Teachers and administrators from throughout the region as well as some from other countries learned how to implement Google programs in their classrooms. LEFT: Dr. Lynne Burke, Coventry’s Director of Education Technology, addresses the crowd.

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actually watched, for one thing," she said. "We searched out how to get a channel and monetize but no one under 13 years old can legally do that."

Thumann also talked about copyright laws with her daughter as well and shared with her ways to be safe and the two have agreed to basic rules she has for her blog videos. She does create YouTube videos but has no channel of her own nor receives money.

"No videos get posted unless I see them first," Thumann said.

The point Thumann wanted to get across is for educators to have an open mind as they're taking their students through their lessons as something that can be done and learned about together.

Ann Marie Zaborski, a high school teacher from Narragansett, explained that her school district is hoping to go digital by the spring.

"We are in the process of moving to Google email for our email and Google classroom by September," she said. "I use Google classroom now and I know the basics but I want to be able to get more creative and do cooler things."

Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School Principal Dr. Arthur Lisi said it's a great opportunity for teachers to understand some of the tools, practices and apps to enhance student learning.

Nancy Pirmie, administrative assistant to the assistant superintendent at Chariho Regional High School, said she's excited over the one-on-one initiative from the high school down to the middle school and incorporating Google apps.

"We have a whole team here from Chariho and we're all spreading out to different sessions so we can come

together after and collaborate with each other," she said.

Caitlyn Majeika, a Narragansett teacher who attended a session called Connect and Collect, said her plan is to bring back her newly-acquired knowledge about Google platform and to be able to share these ideas in different ways.

Ryan Kanaczet, a sixth-grade teacher from Narragansett; and Steve Skaggs, from Stony Lane Elementary School in North Kingstown, worked on some research prior to their next session.

"I wanted to attend because the trends in education change so fast and I want to be up to speed to be ready for a more advanced classroom," Kanaczet said.

Skaggs said his school will be rolling out the Chromebooks next year so he's interested in getting a bit ahead of the game and having some knowledge.

"I'm learning the Google features because I'm the technology lead in my school," he said.

Sessions began Saturday morning and ran all day with a similar schedule Sunday.

Breakfast, snacks, drinks and lunch were provided by Panera Bread.

According to Ken Shelton, from the EdTech team, people came from as far away as Australia and as far north as Canada to participate in the summit and traveled a total of 27,000 miles to attend.

"We are thrilled to be here in Rhode Island for the first of many years of collaboration between Ed Tech and Rhode Island with a special thanks to Lynne Burke," Shelton said. "Lynne and I have been in regular communication to make sure the summit of is successful and transformative for all educators."



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ABOVE: Coventry School Committee members Kathy Patenaude (right) and Donna Kalunian got a jumpstart downloading notes after Lisa Thumann's presentation. BELOW: Teachers Ryan Kanaczet (from Narragansett) and Steve Skaggs (North Kingstown) were in attendance trying to get a leg up in the classroom.

