



School monitors electronic communications

by Arjun Thakkar

Since the Mobile Learning Initiative introduced iPads and allowed device usage on campus, students have wondered if the administration is watching everything they browse.

Some students have expressed concerns regarding their privacy while using devices. One particular concern revolves around what purpose device certificates serve. Students downloaded these at iPad Orientation freshman year. Since some suspected the certificate tracked usage, they deleted it.

Senior Miles Purcell isn't concerned about being monitored. "If no one talked about [monitoring], it probably wouldn't cross my mind at all. I only really think about it when I'm not doing my work, but even then it's not a major concern of mine," said Purcell.

According to Network Manager Richard Williams, this certificate, titled the Secure Socket Layer (SSL), acts as a security measure for the network to determine which devices should be trusted.

He also noted that removing the certificate would cause communication issues with the system. "The device will no longer be viewed as trusted, which causes problems for [the technology department] staff while remotely deploying apps."

The question of whether or not students are being watched is clarified in an IT video titled "iPad

Orientation – Monitoring," in which Chief Technology Officer Stephanie Helfand says, "New Trier reserves the right to monitor all electronic communications transmitted on its networks. Any messages relating to or in support of illegal activity may be reported to authorities."

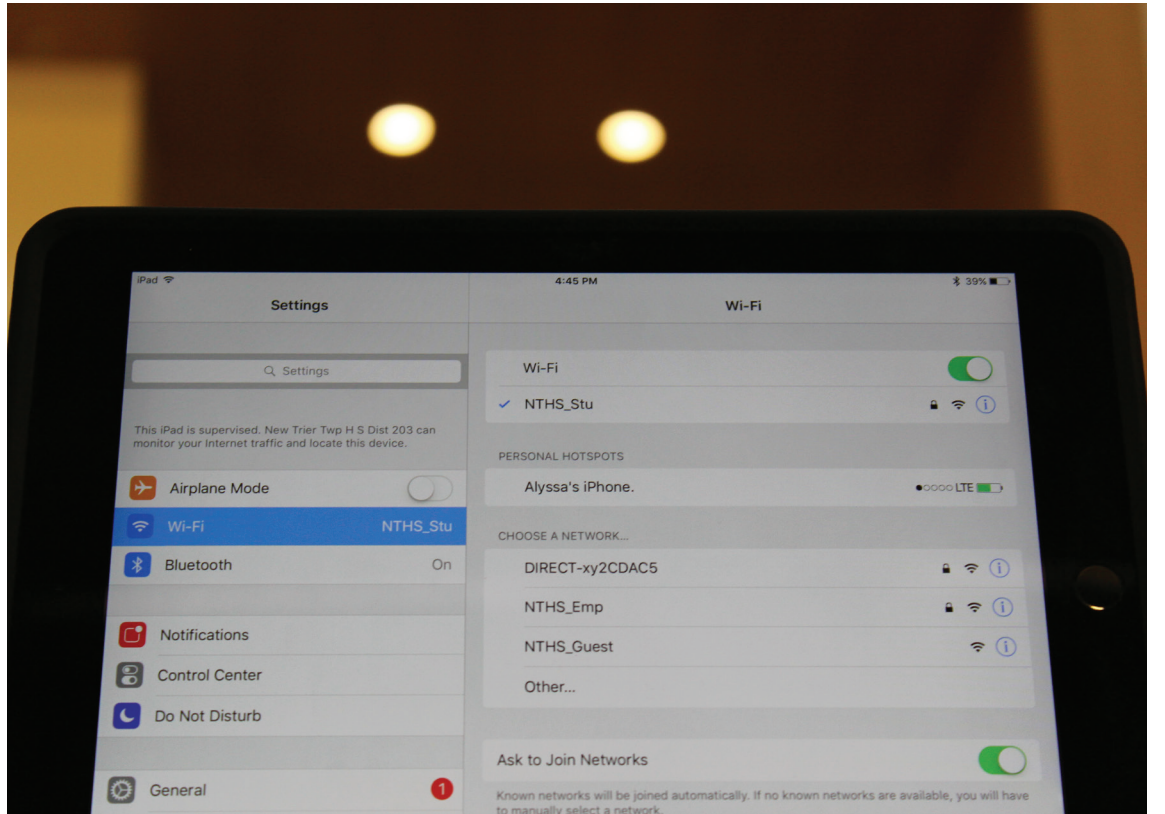
The same video explained that while there is not active monitoring of every single communication on the network, the tech department can review a student's messages if necessary.

"I sometimes get a little worried by some of the things my friends send, but I don't worry too much because I don't think the administration is monitoring that," said senior Zach Crispino.

This monitoring does have limits, as communications beyond campus on iPads cannot be monitored. However, "If a user leaves a previous browser session open and connects to NTHS network that internet traffic could potentially be logged because the page refresh request traffic traversed our network," said Williams.

In other words, should a student leave a page open and connect to New Trier's network, then that data might be tracked. The monitoring extends into social media such as Snapchat as well.

Sophomore Nadia Jaikaran expressed skepticism about the school's ability to monitor all activity. "As for Snapchat, I highly doubt they'll be able to monitor whatever is said or sent because the



When users connect to NTHS networks, they consent to being monitored by IT for security purposes | Pak/Kim

app promises to "delete" what's been delivered," she said.

Purcell expressed similar skepticism. "I don't think they can view everything we can see on our phones. It makes more sense for them to know what we're looking at based on cookies and search history when on school wi-fi," he said.

As a result of this monitoring, some students take measures in an attempt to preserve their privacy.

This can range from using a private VPN to using mobile data to avoid connecting to the network.

The common adage the school uses is that "technology is a privilege, not a right." This indicates that the use of devices, like computers, phones, and iPads, is permitted only if used properly. Improper use can be potentially dangerous for the school network and other students.

Crispino argued that a student

who abuses technology "hampers the learning environment" and thus the privilege should be revoked.

"For some, it can be invasive, but I personally don't have much of an issue with it because we are students, and as a school, they are doing their job by making sure what's happening on school property isn't harmful to others," said Jaikaran.

iPads have created a more efficient learning environment

by Stephanie Kim

Since the first iPads were piloted at New Trier in 2010, the school's one-to-one iPad program has definitely changed the way students and teachers learn and interact in the classroom, offering a stark contrast to school life before the widespread use of these personal devices.

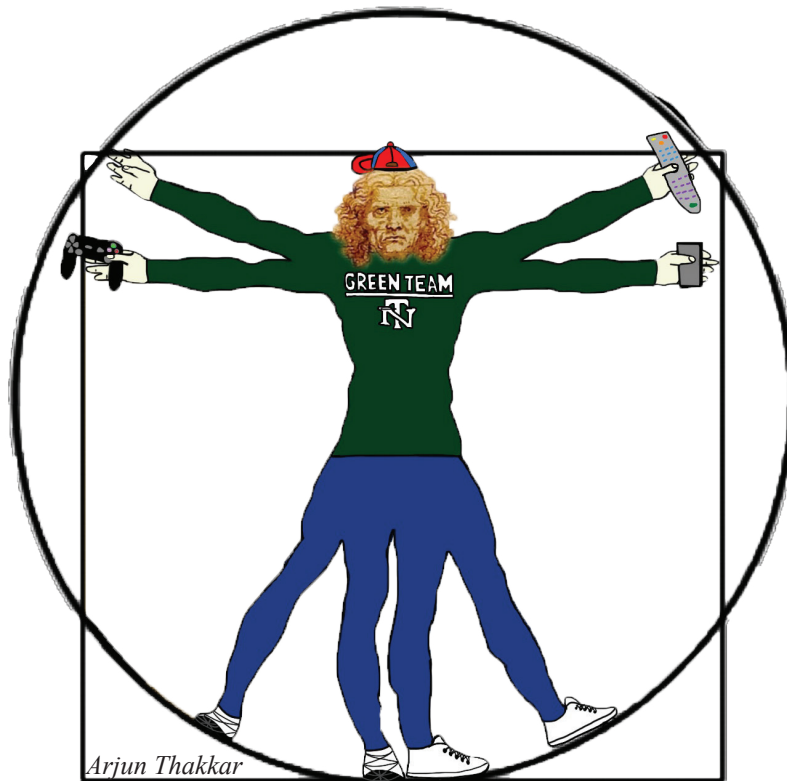
The Mobile Learning Initiative — the program that initiated personal iPad usage for students — was first launched on a small-scale. It was introduced among 3 teachers in the 2011–12 school year.

Over the next few years, iPads were gradually incorporated into more classrooms, with full implementation across 400 teachers occurring by the 2014–15 school year. The iPads serve mainly to help students in their academic endeavors both within and outside of school.

Many benefits have arisen with the utilization of iPads for all students. According to the Mobile Learning Initiative page on New Trier's website, the program allows for "emphasis on visual learning and presentation with instant recording, editing, and integration of audio and video... student access to the iPad in the classrooms of both pilot and non-pilot classes, [and] improved student organization and management of work and learning," among other capabilities.

The iPad's advantages are frequently at work in the classroom, where they've proven to make students' workflow more efficient and less tedious. It's particularly prominent with the labs conducted in science classrooms. Before the use of iPads, the process of gathering lab data was more tedious.

"A lot of times, the actual lab design had to have the ability to assess change. You would have some instrument [and] some quantifiable measurement that would be occurring, and then students would be recording it at certain periods of time," said science teacher Frank Salerno in reference to his classes. "You would have a timekeeper and [also] be watching some quantitative measure [like] a change in



volume or a change in count, and at certain intervals you would be recording the different data amounts and then you'd graph it."

The collection and subsequent displaying of data from labs has become noticeably less time-consuming and intensive with the introduction of the iPads, according to Salerno.

"The technology's an upgrade as far as data organization and ability to very quickly and conveniently see the data. Not only have science classrooms reaped the benefits of iPads, but so have many other courses. For math teacher Kyle Ogrodnik, using personal devices in class has made the work environment feel more flexible and open to taking risks compared to when devices weren't used. "Working with paper was more restrictive. With the iPads, it opens up the ability to make more mistakes," said Ogrodnik. "It helps me think about my role in class a little."

students making [these] mistakes. I'm not worried about [them] having this nice, clean notesheet at the end of the period. Those mistakes are part of the process now, which is important."

One of the most common advantages to having the iPad, though, is that teachers no longer have to make as many photocopies or print as many worksheets as they used to have to do before iPads, which both saves paper and having to store said worksheets.

"[The iPad has] helped save paper, so I feel good about that. It's helped save space, because you're holding on to less and you can put more things inside your device than you can [while] sitting at your desk or in [physical] files," said Spanish teacher Tonya Piscitello.

The ability to use the iPad saves not only time but stress, as well, especially because of the Canvas app.

"Not having to print opens up a lot of my time and [relieves] a lot of stress. It's

easy to just put stuff on canvas," explained Ogrodnik. "We'd often have issues with the copier. It'd be down, get jammed, or it wouldn't work some days. That changes your whole workflow for that day."

The transition to using iPads, however, was not always as smooth as it is now, especially when the school was still getting used to it. Often, the iPad was a distraction for students and teachers alike in class.

"It was more distracting when [the program] first started because I don't think students had fully understood how to manage having a device in front of them," said Piscitello. "I think the same went for teachers. They were still new to this idea, so it was hard for them to know how strict to be or how loose to be."

It was also tempting to overuse the iPad due to how interesting it was that these devices were being used in a school setting, according to Salerno.

"When it first came onto the scene a handful of years ago, there was no pressure on us to use it a certain way, but it was new and it was exciting," explained Salerno. "I don't know if I meant to or if it was subconscious, but I started using it for everything. [There] was kind of a pushing towards 'take your notes on here and everything will be organized.' I've since become more measured."

Class of 2011 alumna Kayla Ulrich, who had attended New Trier even before the release of the iPad, believes that the iPad would've made her day more efficient.

"It would have been nice to have books and materials on it instead of lugging books around," said Ulrich. "It [would've allowed] for quicker note-taking and email communication."

Despite the inevitability of being distracted by the Internet, using the iPads has proven to be worth it and continues to show potential as an indispensable tool.

"It's used to turn in homework, used for reading, used for in class communication — it's pretty much a part of everything," noted Piscitello.