

**Title of Session:** TrackStar  
**Moderator:** Erica Schaapveld  
**Title of File:** 20050606trackstar  
**Date:** June 6, 2005

Room: Hot Tub Conference Room

**BJB2:** Before we begin, a reminder to detach your chat window

**SusanR** . o O ( looking forward to the session )

**BJB2** . o O ( go to the ACTIONS menu in the top right of the chat window )

**MargaretTK** joined the room.

**BJB2:** we usually start discussions in Tapped In with introductions

**EricaS:** Oh, that's better. Thanks BJ!

**BJB2:** please tell us where you are located and what you teach or hope to teach

**BJB2:** I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania

**GailH:** I am Gail Hoskins. I am Outreach Coordinator for Eisenhower National Clearinghouse (ENC), located in Columbus, OH. In my life before ENC I was a high school math teacher and K-12 math coordinator.

**BJB2:** Introductions will give Erica a better feel for who her audience is

**GailTi:** Hello everyone. I work for the School of Ed at the U of Kansas. I'm luckily enough to work with Erica

**SusanR:** K to 8 teacher in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

**AnnettaE:** I am a junior/high school teacher in Louisiana

**EricaS:** Gail Tiemann and I work for an education consortia. I am the Project Coordinator for the 4Teachers team, which includes TrackStar.

**BJB2** looks around the room...anyone else?

**AnnettaE:** I'm a district-wide special ed librarian in Louisiana

**BJB2:** welcome, Margaret!

**EricaS:** That's wonderful! I'm working on my MLS right now.

**AnnettaE:** hello to all

**BJB2** hands the virtual floor over to Erica

**JeffC:** I'm Jeff Cooper, Tapped In Helpdesk in Oregon. Education Technology Specialist (currently looking for work). I highly recommend Trackstar.

**MargaretTK:** That's fantastic, Erica

**EmilyW:** I am a recent college grad and web designer

**EricaS:** Thanks BJ! This is a very informal chat about TrackStar. Are all of you fans already? If so do you all want to share how you've used it?

**MargaretTK:** Yes

**SusanR:** I use Trackstar extensively for my K to 3+ Great Resources sessions here at TI

**AnnettaE:** i have mainly used it in my science classes

**SusanR:** . o O ( a dedicated user )

**GailH:** I use it by going to tracks that Sue creates for her PK-3+ Tapped In event. I have registered with Trackstar. I hope to begin using it. I am here to learn more about that.

**EmilyW:** I used it to find resources

**GailTi:** Cool

**AnnettaE:** it has been a while since I have used it until here recently.. I had to do one for an edtc. class

**EricaS:** Those are all great. As you may already know the current version of TrackStar is on its 4th update and we love hearing what you all think. Do any of you have specific questions you'd like to ask or comments?

**EmilyW:** (I compile lists of educational websites to share with others)

**GailH:** Yes.

**AnnettaE:** yes

**EricaS:** It's a great tool for resource lists.

**SusanR:** Will it remain a FREE service for educators?

**GailH:** I am interested in knowing more about the future of the free R\*TEC and HPR\*TEC resources like TrackStar. I followed the link to the page <http://trackstar.4teachers.org/trackstar/index.jsp?futureDetail=true>, but what else can you tell me. By the way ON that page, I tried to go to the link <http://rtec.org/eval> to provide feedback and it is dead url. Is TrackStar going to still be around, given all the funding issues of so many projects?

**EricaS:** For the free question, yes, we are hoping it will remain free always. We are currently writing more grants to get additional funding.

**MargaretTK:** I like it for staff development. Some staff need to be kept on a short leash to be successful.

**EricaS:** We know that it will be free for at least another two to three years, I believe.

**AnnettaE:** I created a track yesterday, when I checked to make sure it was working I had a problem. two of my pages jump out of trackstar.. Can this be fixed?

**MargaretTK:** Is RubiStar affiliated with TrackStar?

**EricaS:** I'll get that dead link fixed. As for funding that's about all I can say for sure. Gail and I are hard at work with the grant writing.

**GailH:** I really really like Susan Roseman's events at Tapped In for PK-3+ Great Resources. She always provides a track. When I search at TrackStar I find her older ones -- but many of the recent ones don't seem to show up. Why is that?

**EricaS:** Certain Web sites, like your first link, have a special code written in them

**EricaS:** that makes them jump out of frames. That is why this is happening. Since we cannot change their code, we have to find loop holes. You will have to enter your site in the editing mode and do one of two things. First, you can move that link to the very last link so you can still use it. You will just have to tell the children what your annotations were for that link.

**EricaS:** Second, you can find a replacement link and not use this one. You may also choose to just use the Text only version of TrackStar.

**SusanR:** I still have 6 tracks waiting for approval.

**EricaS:** Yes, RubiStar is part of 4Teachers.org just like TrackStar is.

**SusanR:** I do rely on them, they keep my sessions focused.

**GailTi** thinks we have a little addiction to "stars"

**AnnettaE**: thank you:)

**EricaS**: Sometimes it takes us two weeks to three months to review a Track in TrackStar due to the vast numbers made each day. Her Tracks should show up in a search after they have been reviewed.

**TammyO** joined the room.

**BJB2**: more like a fan club, Gail

**BJB2**: Hi, Tammy. Welcome

**AnnettaE**: TrackStar is a great:)

**EricaS**: Thanks!

**SusanR** will wait patiently.

**GailH**: It seems like way more than six -- is that all, Sue?

**GailH**: Can you tell there is a bit of a Sue fan club too?

**GailTi**: And rightly so!!

**MargaretTK**: I took an online tech class this spring & really got into RubiStar. I created some rubrics for my friend & she used them to very quickly grade 5 classes of end of the year projects.

**SusanR**: I will check it out, Gail!

**GailH**: I use her tracks like I do a web page -- to share with others.

**EricaS**: Wow! Six? Have they been created in the last three months?

**SusanR**: one moment..

**GailTi**: That's so great Gail

**SusanR**: since April, Erica

**EricaS**: Did you all get the pun on the word Track? The reason it was created was to keep people on "track" while surfing the Internet, especially students.

**GailH:** There are 32 here:

<http://trackstar.4teachers.org/trackstar/ts/searchByAuthor.do?keywords=roseman>

**GailH** . o O ( I never thought of that. )

**GailH** . o O ( Teachers in a professional development event sometimes need that too! )

**SusanR:** Gail is right on track with my Tracks!

**EricaS:** Yes, Susan they should be reviewed in the next few weeks...or maybe tomorrow if you send an email to [request@trackstar.4teachers.org](mailto:request@trackstar.4teachers.org) it's the least I can do to thank you for attending tonight.

**AnnettaE:** Trackstar makes it easier to monitor students on the web

**MargaretTK:** Yeah--seems appropriate. We do need to let our charges loose so they can become competent searchers, but we also need to deliver content efficiently.

**EmilyW:** I don't understand how students use trackstar

**SusanR:** Thank you, Erica

**JeffC:** One downside to Trackstar is that the resulting URL is quite long. I use <http://snipurl.com> for redirects to Trackstar sites... example: <http://snurl.com/collaboration> ... that way... it's easy for students to get there.

**MargaretTK:** That was my idea also, Gail

**EricaS:** Spoken like a true librarian Margaret!

**SusanR:** I also redirect using snipurl

**MargaretTK:** Thanks

**GailTi:** Wow, I've never heard of snipurl.. good idea!

**MargaretTK:** Have you also tried "Make a Shorter Link"?

**EricaS:** Once you create a Track you are assigned an id number. Your students can access the Track and go through the links you've provided them. You can also include annotations to guide them along or questions for them to answer at each Web site.

**EricaS:** I haven't heard of any of those..I'll definitely check them out.

**JeffC:** Registration at snipurl is free... and it keeps track of sites you redirect. I used to use tinyurl... but it doesn't keep track of links. Backtracking to Emily's question...

teachers use Trackstar as a way of organizing web searches... indeed... you can create a Webquest through Trackstar. Trackstar links are also searchable.

**GailH:** I tend to avoid those b/c I use Teleport Pro to make simulations of the pages I have created and for use in professional development events. So redirects are a big negative to me. I find the url of the basic track not too long -- (the one for the view in frames is too long to use much).

**SusanR:** <http://snipurl.com/yearend>

**EmilyW:** the one complaint I have about trackstar and I know this probably can't get fixed, but there are many broken links on tracks

**EricaS:** Yes, you should use the url of the Track Description page not the View in Frames or Text pages to keep it short.

**EricaS:** I know! My biggest complaint too!

**EricaS:** We rely on authors to update their Tracks but many don't.

**EricaS:** We are trying to find a way to have an automated checker that would search the entire database.

**GailH:** That is always an issue with any web page. And some are created more for a specific event anyway, aren't they?

**AnnettaE:** yes, they are

**EmilyW:** As a web designer, that is a big issue for me

**EricaS:** The problem is that some links look like they are working but they are actually going to other new sites with the same domain name and different content.

**AnnettaE:** can any user update a track?

**EricaS:** Can't be completely passed off to the machines yet, unfortunately!

**DavidWe** joined the room.

**GailH:** I create web pages as virtual handouts for any event that I do at a conference, but at the bottom, I say that it is just that (event specific) and that while the page will stay up, I am not offering lifetime maintenance of the links. It is better than no handout.

**EricaS:** No, but you can email us and we'll fix the Track or place it on hold and notify the author.

**SusanR:** That's ambitious, Erica

**MargaretTK:** I have an ambitious project for next fall. I am suppose to correlated Louisiana's new comprehensive curriculum with our newly adopted math series. In several places, the correlation ain't too good, so I'll need to follow up with web sites. I suppose TrackStar would be a great way to organize them.

**DavidWe** hears math...

**EricaS:** That would be a very good use, Margaret

**JeffC** hears "math" too...

**DavidWe** smiles

**GailH:** When would you suggest that TrackStar would be better than just doing a web page in traditional way -- can you compare the merits?

**EricaS:** Web pages are great if you have a lot of content to cover

**MargaretTK:** Yes, I'm not a math person, but I guess I'll be one next year, at least for K-6

**EricaS:** If there's just a few links (15ish) then TrackStar would take the hassle from you.

**DavidWe** and Gail and Jeff can support you there, Margaret

**EmilyW** is a math person

**EricaS:** Also, the Track is published on our server so you don't need a domain name and you aren't being charged for online space.

**JeffC:** 1) Trackstar is easier to create than a webpage 2) Using frames it allows teachers to quickly and easily give assignments and notes for certain pages 3) For the most part, Trackstar keeps students within the Trackstar frame (although there are times it opens a second window). 4) Trackstar is searchable, so you can find other tracks on subject areas you are interested in.

**MargaretTK:** Thanks so much. My supervisor is really looking forward to this. Great to know I have someone to call on. I will definitely call on you all.

**EricaS:** Well said Jeff! I wanted to let you all know that we have a new addition in TrackStar. It's called Track Talk and it's a new posting forum for fans of TrackStar.

**GailH:** I also think that it is good PR-ing of the person who does it.

**JeffC:** <http://tracktalk.4teachers.org/>

**EricaS:** Track Talk is located at <http://tracktalk.4teachers.org>

**EricaS:** Jeff beat me to it!

**GailTi** is excited about the big reveal!

**SusanR:** Teachers can have a page up and running within 15 minutes; time is of the essence with most classroom teachers

**EricaS:** Have you been there?

**GailH:** Yes -- today.

**SusanR:** Yes, I registered, Erica

**JeffC:** Yes... I'm registered... just haven't posted to the Forum yet... excellent idea.

**GailTi:** Rock ON!!

**EricaS:** Thanks! We're hoping it takes off.

**GailH** . o O ( I wish all the audiences I worked with were as engaged as all of us are at this. )

**EricaS:** We thought it'd be wonderful to create a learning community for TrackStar people.

**GailTi:** We're counting on folks like all of you!

**JeffC** wonders if the people from HRPTEC, the other regionals, and ENC can't get together and figure out a way to get a grant for all the wonderful work they do. It's a shame that you have to battle it out to keep in existence.

**EricaS:** Now matter where we go we always find fans and we wanted to connect you all together.

**EricaS:** Tell me again where ENC is located?

**GailTi** nods

**BJB2** . o O ( holding sessions in Tapped In is another way to connect with users )

**SusanR:** amalgamation..a great idea

**BJB2:** [www.enc.org](http://www.enc.org)

**EricaS:** Yes, I'm a new huge fan of Tapped In.

**GailTi:** Absolutely, BJ, and we want to stay involved in TI

**EricaS:** Love that word - amalgamation!

**BJB2** smiles happily

**EricaS:** I'm sorry. I meant what state is ENC located in?

**GailH:** ENC is in Columbus OH -- but is a national resource -- not state specific.

**GailTi:** Erica, do we have a place for tips like the SNIPURL idea?

**EricaS:** Yes, in the feedback area.

**JeffC:** I could add that to the Tracktalk Forum if you like Gail...

**GailTi:** Awesome, that would to GREAT.

**GailTi:** Drum roll... would that be our first post??

**EricaS:** Yes!

**JeffC:** Not the first...

**EmilyW** thinks it will be

**EricaS:** Oh?

**EmilyW:** (first reply)

**GailTi:** We should refer folks back to tapped in for TrackStar sessions too Erica.

**JeffC:** Well... the first \*response\*... would you like me to put it in Presentation?

**EricaS:** Are you all attending the TI fest? We're having a session there also about all the tools we have. There's many more where TrackStar came from.

**JeffC** thinks that it would be excellent if Gail and Erica made it back here July 20th for the Tapped In Festival.

**EricaS:** I linked to TI already and said what a great place it was.

**DavidWe** agrees with Jeff

**SusanR:** excellent idea, Jeff

**GailTi:** If you guys have feedback on the forums, please please let us know.

**BJB2:** Gail and Erica are already on the festival schedule

**BJB2** . o O ( we're hoping they will do a regular monthly discussion in TI )

**EricaS:** We're calling our session ALTEC All-Stars

**EricaS:** Have you all used other tools besides RubiStar and TrackStar? Ever been to [altec.org](http://altec.org) or [4teachers.org](http://4teachers.org)?

**SusanR:** I have used the calendar, casa notes...

**EricaS:** Great!

**GailH** . o O ( I wouldn't have know that ALTEC all-stars was about TrackStar. Will there be blurbs added soon to help people with knowledge gaps like mine? )

**EricaS:** We have some more in the works. Summary Star, Data Docker, Persuasive Star (still working on the name).

**AnnettaE:** I have used marcopolo at an intech.

**EricaS:** I think the blurb I sent to BJ explains. Is that right BJ?

**SusanR:** the average classroom teacher w

**BJB2:** I never got the blurb, Erica

**EricaS:** Yes, MarcoPolo is a good resource for teachers.

**EricaS:** Ah! I'll send it again tomorrow.

**AnnettaE:** it has been awhile since I have been there

**SusanR:** the average classroom teacher would have a complete toolkit if she/he used all the tools available at 4teachers

**GailTi:** the reorg of the 4teachers site it nice

**EricaS:** Thanks! That took a long time and the help of a good team.

**SusanR:** I liked the old PBL checklists

**EricaS:** I have one of my students creating an example unit that shows how all the tools of 4Teachers could go into the plan and integration.

**AnnettaE:** there are so many tools available

**EricaS:** The PBL checklists from about six years ago or the ones that are currently up?

**GailH:** I am not familiar with much of what you are talking about, but I will look around sometime.

**GailTi:** we have a LOT of fun at work...

**SusanR:** from six years ago

**EricaS:** I didn't really get to see those. I'm been working at ALTEC/HPRTEC for almost five years now.

**SusanR:** I started using the tools six years ago when I was an Educational Tech Integrator

**EricaS:** Is the school year over for everyone?

**BJB2:** another two weeks for me

**SusanR:** where are the offices of Trackstar

**MargaretTK:** Yep. We even finished before Memorial Day

**GailH:** ALTEC, the Advanced Learning Technologies in Education Consortia -- it is in KS. I have been learning that.

**AnnettaE:** yes, at work, but I am talking summer classes to finish my Masters

**EricaS:** Yes, we are housed at the University of Kansas in Lawrence.

**GailTi:** School of Education..

**EmilyW:** how many people work at altec?

**AnnettaE:** That is how I found out about this wonderful website--through a class

**GailTi:** I don't know how many staff.. we have many many many college students

**EricaS:** Margaret, are you a librarian in a school? Do you use any of the 4Teachers tools to work with Special Ed students? Have you seen Equity Index?

**GailTi:** I think I heard 35 people work there?

**GailH:** I have been exploring the tools -- new to me. The interfaces are very appealing! That is so very important.

**MargaretTK:** I've signed up for another instructional technology online class starting in a month & a LEH class on women & the Civil War.

**EricaS:** I think 35 is about right.

**GailTi:** We have some industrial designers that specialize in user-centered design.. very helpful for UI.

**EmilyW:** you mean instructional?

**GailTi:** Nope, industrial.

**EricaS:** Yes, plus we go out into schools and let teachers and students give us feedback before we publish anything.

**GailTi:** There's an Industrial Design professor at KU who works with Human Computer Interaction stuff..

**GailTi:** Yup, lots of user-feedback

**MargaretTK:** I'm based district wide, so I don't work directly with students. I'm going to check out those tools. Thank goodness for transcripts

**EricaS:** I know!

**EricaS:** QuizStar is one of my favorite tools. You can upload movies, images, and audio to quizzes. Kids love it!

**EricaS:** We have a lot of college classes (KU) using it too.

**SusanR:** Have you got a good example of a Quizstar, Erica

**GailH:** I think there should be a TrackStar about the tools.

**EricaS:** Yes, you have to go in as a student and search for a class. Then you can search by my last name Schaapveld to see some examples.

**EricaS:** That's a good idea Gail.

**SusanR:** will do, Erica

**GailTi:** I'm always amazed at the diversity of topics in TrackStar.. and I'm a newbie

**JeffC:** I just posted to Tracktalk regarding Snipurl. <http://snurl.com/tracktalk1>

**GailTi** applauds

**EricaS:** The spelling of my last name is also a good reason for transcripts

**EricaS:** Multi-tasker!

**MargaretTK:** Well, at least we know it's probably you. I'm not the only Kleinpeter "Trackie"

**EricaS:** Ha!

**GailTi:** "Trackie" oh that is so cool. I can't wait to share that tomorrow!

**EricaS:** In our last few minutes I wanted to thank you all for attending this evening. Does anyone have any more questions on TrackStar while you can get the inside tip?

**EricaS:** Do any of you present on TrackStar?

**GailH** . o O ( Susan does, without trying. )

**EricaS:** If so we can send you goodies for your presentations if you send us an email in advance.

**EricaS:** Free goodies!

**SusanR:** virtual handouts

**EricaS:** I can send virtual handouts or boxes to a physical address.

**AnnettaE:** thank you for having me in this chat, I have learned a lot about TrackStar

**GailTi:** Thanks Annetta

**EricaS:** I'll send you some info tomorrow. Would you also be interested in some blurbs on what the other tools are?

**EricaS:** Thanks Annetta!

**GailTi:** Erica, maybe we need a page/group on TI too

**EricaS:** Maybe not 300 of everything but I could send you a sampling of the goodies?

**BJB2** waves goodnight.

**EricaS:** Thanks again to you all for attending.

**BJB2:** Thanks, Erica and Gail

**GailTi:** Good night BJ.

**AnnettaE:** thank you