

New Technology that Helps

Chuck Barber, St. Charles Country Club



“Superintendents, I need some help for an article for MAGCS please. What it’s the best new tech, product, innovation for the golf course you’ve implemented or tried this year? Why? Thanks for your support”

This was the question I posted on Facebook to my friends and colleagues on July 23rd of 2013. The idea was to get superintendents involved in creating content in a fast, efficient way. Further, they are on

Facebook and Twitter all day long, receive constant updates on their phones and probably scroll through it before going to bed. As new questions present themselves I will indeed be posting more on Facebook and Twitter so I will continue to expect your full support. Got it? Full disclosure: I forced Matt Harstad and

John Gurke to reply. I know they have a strong online presence and but were being evasive.

Technology has changed so much and continues at a pace that is difficult for even the most technologically savvy among us to keep up with. How could we? According to Wikipedia: “ Moore’s law is the observation that, over the history of computing hardware, the number of transistors on integrated circuits doubles approximately every two years. The law is named after Intel co-founder Gordon E. Moore, who described the trend in his 1965 paper.” Technology is advancing, quickly, and we can’t keep up.



Scott White voted for his flashlight application on his cell phone for best technology at Mauh-Nah-Tee-See Golf Club.



Erwin McKone, CGCS defined tree removal as the best innovation this year at Briar Ridge CC that he has used.

Without getting more long-winded on the subject, I’ll get to the responses. Justin VanLanduit of Briarwood Country Club

had two ideas on the newest technology to save him time and money: TDR 300 moisture meters and GPS Sprayers. Justin goes on to note that the technologies aren't new, they've been around a few years. They're new technologies to him and to Briarwood. "We've been able to knock off about 15%-20% of sprayed area on fairways. It's better for the environment, better for the turf and better for the budget." It would seem that this technology is right for all the right reasons.

Tony Frandria at Glen View Club made mention of the TDR 300 moisture meter as well. This tool has really taken the turf world by storm in the last 3 years. "They've been a really useful tool for us. We've bought a couple more and have taught the hand water guys how to use them."

What about the innovations right in the palms of our hands? Scott White at Mauh-Nah-Tee-See Golf Club is enamored of the flashlight app on his smart phone. "No joke, I use it all the time at the club for goofy little stuff." I've seen this application used at St. Charles Country Club, the doctor's office, at home and virtually anywhere. I don't know if the flashlight industry is in immediate danger but I'd start looking at dumping stock now.



What would a technology article be without mention of Spectrum's TDR 300 Moisture Meter? Tony Frandria of Glen View Club uses them extensively.

Andy Wedge of Morris Country Club is, among many things, an innovator. The one thing he found to use this year that has really opened his eyes is Monkey Butt Paste. For those of you who know Andy this will require no explanation. For those of you who don't, I wouldn't recommend finding out why.

John Gukre, CGCS at Aurora Country Club had struggled for several years with algae and aquatic weeds in his irrigation pond. He was directed towards Valent's "Clipper" herbicide and has found just how good new technologies can be. "We use to have to clean the strainer after each irrigation cycle it would get so crammed full of debris. I've always battled a yucky looking irrigation pond until this year. One application about a month and a half ago and we are clean. No more clogged wye strainer. No more headache".

Scott Verdun found his smart phones and tablet computers, when coupled with Google Drive really made a huge difference in his everyday life. "I give my assistant access to the files, I can create job worksheets as well as all spray sheets and I can edit them from the course he then keeps the Google Drive open on



Google Drive is online file storage and computing (cloud) that enables users to share and collaborate on items together. You can place your daily task sheet on Google Drive and give your staff access to it, you and they can make changes to it, and everyone who has access sees those changes.

his desktop so it increases communication. It also puts what I want done in writing as opposed to me just saying it over the radio. Better efficiency and more effective in my opinion."

Justin VanLanduit echoes Scott's thoughts on the smart phone/Google Drive combination. "We've done the same thing here. Both have the application on our phones and easy to update files on the run."

Although I found it hard to believe that Erwin McKone of Briar



John Gurke, CGCS shared his success with Valent's herbicide Clipper.

Ridge Country Club only NOW found out the benefits of tree removal, that's the technology that has helped him the most in 2013. No, it's not new but sometimes the basic things are the best things. Dave Groelle, CGCS chimed in via Twitter citing his window air conditioner in his office helped him get by this summer.

Connor Healy, Assistant Superintendent at Conway (or Con-man) Farms likes the things he's discovered on Twitter this year. "Even though it isn't really new, I have learned a bunch from Twitter. So many useful ideas shared on a daily basis and in real time. It's awesome learning people's approaches on various topics both locally and nationally."

Technology: Some new, some old. Try to find what works for you and make it your own. @