

New Zealand Future Problem Solving Programme
Practice Problem #1 - 1999-2000
Junior Division Future Scene - Fads

From the Maquire Centre of Learning Student Electronic Newspaper: September 14, 2035 – "All the Fads Fit to Follow".

We students at the Yr 1 - 13 Maquire Centre of Learning are in our second week of Term Two. The new fads are everywhere. Holographic technology has produced many entertainment products. Holograms are three-dimensional projections. Holographic technology has encouraged the development of numerous entertainment products. In the 1990's chatter rings and then virtual pets were hot items. The fads passed as fads do, but they combined in a big comeback last spring in the form of holographic virtual beanie babies. They covered desks and computers in May, but I've seen only a few in the lower grades this week.

A new kind of hologram is here this fall. Two recent movies featured the actors wearing hologram images on their clothes and skin. Four weeks ago, local stores and E-malls started selling the pocket computers that produce the holograms. They were an instant hit with Maquire students. Students are wearing monsters, flowers, and favorite movies stars on their foreheads, arms and shirts these days. There are many different plug-ins for the computers so you can have different images. Some students are covered with images. I've heard rumors that some of our teachers are not very pleased with the new look. The school may place limits on our holograms. Remember, you read this E-news flash here first!

We are seeing the hottest new clothes fad on Centre, too. These are made from Prism, a new fiber that changes color as the light changes. This results in clothing that changes colors while you wear it. Halls and classrooms at Maquire look like they are full of moving rainbows. Many students also project holographic images over their bright clothing.

The holographic computers and the Prism clothing are expensive. The companies that make the products are very pleased with their profits. I have learned that many companies now send out "scouts" to schools like Maquire. We are familiar with scouts from colleges who recruit our academically and athletically gifted students. But these company scouts recruit the high school students who are the first to pick up the newest fad and who are followed by the other students. These trendsetters, while still in high school, are paid well for the leads they provide the companies.

Fads are fun and give us something to talk about. But, what makes us choose a fad? How does a fad start? Is it because we see something advertised? Is it because a popular student chooses it, and we want to be like them? Is it just because we really like something new? What do you think about fads?

Gather a few friends together and discuss the challenges presented to us by fads. Those of you who are FPSers should generate a list of challenges and concerns. Identify the challenge that most interests you and phrase it as an underlying problem. Generate a list of suggestions to meet that challenge. We'll publish all the responses in future issues of the Maquire "E-News".