



# THE ALICE NEWSLETTER

## LEARNING TO PROGRAM WITH ALICE

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MAY 2006

All,

Here is our latest Alice newsletter.

### TOPICS FOR THIS NEWSLETTER

- Duke Summer Alice Workshop
- CMU Summer Alice Institute
- A new Alice book
- Especially for high school teachers, the PAEMST
- Running Alice on the Intel Macs
- Classroom Experiences with Alice

### The Duke Summer Alice Workshop

The workshop is now full. Slightly over 100 teachers will be getting together for this 2 or 3-day event!



### The CMU Summer Alice Institute

The 2006 Alice Summer Institute at Carnegie Mellon University (running July 25-30) still has space available. Please go to:

<http://www.intro.cs.cmu.edu/alice-institute/>

The agenda is in progress and has not yet been posted. Please feel free to e-mail us for a copy if you need it quickly.

### A NEW Alice Book!

We have heard from many folks, who were interested in using out Learning to Program with Alice book as part of a computer literacy or other course. A concern was that the cost of the book, \$47, while not high for a stand-alone book, was too much to spend as a second book for a course, especially when the intended usage was only the first 3 or 4 chapters. Prentice Hall has listened to these complaints, and will be producing a short version of the book, to be available for shipment in June. The relevant information is: \*ISBN: 0-13-239775-7\* /Learning to Program with Alice, brief version/. While the price is not yet available, the first digit should be a 2. Please see

<http://vig.prenhall.com/catalog/academic/product/0,1144,0132397757,00.html> for more details. This book will consist of the first 3 chapters, section 3 from chapter 4, and section 1 from chapter 5 (along with the tutorials in the Appendix).



### Especially for high school teachers, the PAEMST

We have just returned from Washington DC, where we were one of 6 groups from all of the mathematics and science disciplines to present to the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) award winners. Each



state selects one mathematics teacher and one science teacher as "Teachers of the Year." In addition to receiving a check for \$10,000, the teacher and guest are flown to Washington DC, and wined and dined for a week (and they get to meet the president at the Rose Garden!). It was a lot of fun to have gotten the opportunity to give a presentation on Alice to these teachers, and we are very appreciative that the National Science Foundation considers our work with Alice to be of the best innovations the NSF is supporting.

The reason we are mentioning this event is that the PAEMST, (please see [www.paemst.org](http://www.paemst.org) <<http://www.paemst.org/>> ) is awarded every other year. In talking with the award winners, many of the states seem to prefer teachers who use technology as part of their lesson plans. (The grant application is primarily a taping of an innovative lesson plan.) We would think that an innovative Alice lesson would be very attractive to evaluators! Please feel free to contact us if you'd like more information, or check out the web site.

## Running Alice on the Intel Macs



Alice Version 2.0.6 does not run on the new Intel Macs. But, the recently available Alice Version 2.0.7 now does. If you are going to be teaching with Alice in a Mac lab, and that Mac lab is going to have the new Intel Macs, please go to: <http://www.alice.org/downloads/authoringtool/> to get the latest version of Alice for the Mac.

## Classroom experiences with Alice

Here's another testimonial:

*Steve,  
FYI: This year I only had 90 grade 10 students spread over 4 sections. We have just finished requests for next year and we have 6 full classes with an average of 31 students per class. This followed my introduction of Alice in the second of four terms earlier in the year.*

*Furthermore, the two Java courses following Alice (one in grade 10, the other in grade 11) have also doubled their numbers since half of the Alice students are going on. Historically the attrition rate is about 75%. My grade 12 numbers are down for next year but the doubled numbers in grade 11 should dramatically reverse grade 12 numbers the following year.*

*I have recommended that our graphics stream replace their grade 10 graphics course with Alice so they will have a larger base to draw upon in the future. It appears that the Alice course better appeals to the graphics students than does learning Illustrator.*

*Note also that my new fourth term grade 10 Java course (Horstmann's BIG JAVA, chapters 1-8) consists of students who took their first course in Java (Kjell Tutorials, excellent for syntax) and those who took it in Alice. A number of Alice students approached me and suggested that next time I speed up the conditional branching and loop chapters in Java as they already understood them from Alice, but the Java students have asked me to not speed up because they find the OOP stuff so very*



*new. The Alice students need only learn the Java syntax of OOP. The Alice students think OOP is just a “natural” way to program and can’t understand what all the fuss is about. It may be that one course in Alice is better preparation for OOP first Java than is a non-OOP preparation in Java itself.*

*Gerry Donaldson  
Sir Winston Churchill High School  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada.*



Regards,  
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