



THE ALICE NEWSLETTER

LEARNING TO PROGRAM WITH ALICE

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 5

JULY 2006

All,
Here is our latest Alice e-newsletter.

TOPICS FOR THIS NEWSLETTER

- * Summary of Alice symposium at Duke
- * Alice on Linux
- * Teaching with Alice this fall?
- * A contest to name a new Alice + Java book
- * A request from teachers in Virginia Beach
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Summary of Alice Symposium at Duke

From June 19-21, more than 100 computer science educators from 86 schools, 26 states, and 2 foreign countries attended our Alice Symposium at Duke University. With partial support from Prentice Hall and the National



Science Foundation, attendees participated in many hands-on workshops on learning to use and teach with Alice, listened to (and presented) reports of

Alice usage in different settings, heard Owen Astrachan and Caitlin Kelleher give excellent keynote addresses, and got the opportunity to watch the local Durham Bulls lose 7-0 in a baseball game that probably wasn't as close as the final score indicated (though I am told

that the North Carolina beef barbecue at the game was outstanding). Based on initial feedback from attendees, we may plan to run another such symposium next year. The downside will be that without support, there is likely going to be a modest registration fee with the symposium. Details will be forthcoming in a future newsletter.

Alice on Linux

Alice has now been ported to Linux! It is freely available from:

http://www.alice.org/downloads/authoringtool/linux_readme.htm

The Alice development team is eagerly awaiting reports (good and bad) from folks trying Alice out on the many different flavors of Linux. If you are considering using Alice on Linux this fall, or just have a Linux PC on which you'd be willing to try to run Alice, please go ahead and give it a shot. Let us know how it goes (and please specify the distribution you are using).

Teaching with Alice this fall?



If you are going to be teaching with Alice this fall, as part of a college course (and this course has more than 20 students enrolled), and would be willing to help us examine the

effectiveness of Alice in the classroom by having your students complete a few surveys, please get in touch with us ASAP. We are running another semester as part of an NSF grant that we have received. If you have enough students who participate, we will be able to return to you specific results about your students which can be used, among other purposes, to argue for teaching with Alice in your course. We will be offering teachers a \$100 incentive if they have completed appropriate IRB paperwork and in whose class at least 15 students have completed all surveys.



Contest! Name the new Alice + Java book!

We have started writing an Alice + Java book. We have added Don Slater (also of CMU) to

the team, to help in the creation of this new book. The idea of this book is that it would be appropriate for use in a CS1 (or AP-CS) course. It will most likely continue to use the problem-solving approach we have used in the Learning to Program With Alice book. We expect to alternate presentation of material from Alice to Java and back. In our (to be signed) contract with Prentice Hall, they suggested a boring title for us. (At least, we thought it was boring.) We have decided to ask the Alice community for a title for our book. If you select the winning title, we will send you a signed (by all 4 authors) copy of the new book along with a mention in the acknowledgements section of the book (and a mention in this newsletter). This "contest" runs until we select a winning title. Please send your title suggestions to bconover@sju.edu.

A request from teachers in Virginia Beach

We have some assessment questions and would like to get some good responses from high school teachers currently using Alice. (and college professors as well)



From a high school teacher's perspective, listed below is what we typically use and could use input on the weight and/or use of each.

Grading categories typically are:

- Homework,
- Lab Assignments (done in class, shorter than a project),
- Quizzes (paper/pencil short answer),
- Projects (several class periods involving outside planning and in-class lab work)
- Tests (some may or may not use these as much, possibly a chapter or unit)
- Exam (based on a semester's work, typically 1/7 of semester average in our district)

Anyone willing to share how they use these and other assessment tools including the weight each carries would be very helpful.

Thanks,
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-- Please send your responses directly to Steve. Also indicate if you'd be interested in having him produce a summary of the responses for inclusion into a future Alice e-newsletter--

An Alice test bank



After receiving many requests, we are working on creating a test bank of questions to go along with the Learning to Program With Alice text. We expect that this test bank will be available by August 15, and will be available from:

<https://www.aliceprogramming.net/exams/exams.html>

We are planning to have one set of questions per chapter, and to make the questions available in Microsoft Word, Respondus, Blackboard, and WebCT formats. Please let us know if another format is desired. We are creating between 50-100 questions per chapter, ranging in difficulty from quite easy to quite challenging.

Enjoy the rest of your summer!

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