



THE ALICE NEWSLETTER

LEARNING TO PROGRAM WITH ALICE

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All,

We hope that you are enjoying the nearing of the end for this academic year, and the beginnings of summer. We cannot believe it, but the Alice educators group has just climbed over 2000 teachers! Thank you all for your contributions, and please enjoy this e-newsletter.

Regards,
Wanda and Steve

Space Still Available at the Alice Institute

CarnegieMellon

We have heard from many of the summer Alice workshops that they are, unfortunately, at or over capacity. Wanda informs me that there is still some space available at the Alice Institute, and

that if you are interested, you should go ahead and register. Below is her note to me:

"Carnegie Mellon will host the 2009 Alice Institute for interested high school and college instructors, June 21 - June 26.

June 21st is the arrival date. This institute is a hands-on workshop that will make use of both Alice 2.2 and Alice 3

programming environments. Workshop participants will receive a complimentary textbook and the latest versions

of Alice 2.2 and Alice 3. To register for the workshop, please visit <http://www.intro.cs.cmu.edu/alice-institute/> "

And there are also some seats left in the ACTIVATE workshops at Carnegie Mellon this summer. These workshops are sponsored by NSF-ITEST and registration and travel expenses are covered for participants. The ACTIVATE workshops are for high school STEM teachers in WV, PA, OH, and western MD. The workshops are scheduled for:

- Computing with Alice (July 6-9, 2009)
- Computational Thinking (July 10-13, 2009)
- Java Programming for Math and Science (July 14-17, 2009)

For more information, see <http://www.cs.cmu.edu/activate>



Media Computation

Barb Ericson, Wanda and Steve have a new book coming out combining Alice and Media Computation (http://www.amazon.com/Exploring-Wonderland-Alice-Media-Computation/dp/0136001599/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1241207633&sr=8-1) Mark Guzdial (who also happens to be Barb Ericson's husband) shares the following about some Media Computation workshops this summer:

"Georgia Computes! (<http://www.gacomputes.org>) is offering a series of workshops this summer on Media Computation and Engaging Approaches to First Courses. All these workshops are FREE to attendees, with travel stipends (\$200/person) and room and meals included, as well as a CD with all software.

- * May 26-28, 2009 Workshop on "Media Computation" at Harvey Mudd College in Claremont, CA hosted by Mike Erlinger

- * June 1-2, 2009 Workshop on "Engaging First Courses" at Wayne State University in Detroit, MI, hosted by Monica Brockmeyer

- * July 29-31, 2009 Workshop on "Media Computation at Northwest Missouri University's Liberty Center in Liberty, MO hosted by Carol Spradling and Dean Sanders

- * August 3-4, 2009 Workshop on "Engaging First Courses" at Georgia Tech in Atlanta.

- * August 5-7, 2009 Workshop on "Media Computation" at Georgia Tech in Atlanta.

To register for any of these workshops, please email Felicia Auzla (fauzla@cc.gatech.edu) with the information listed at

<http://home.cc.gatech.edu/gacomputes>.

Brief Description of Workshops

- * Introduction to Media Computation Workshop (funded by NSF CCLI Program): This workshop will introduce faculty to teaching with the Media Computation approach. We will cover introduction to computing in Python (updated for the new Second Edition book) and in Java, and data structures in Java, using an approach that emphasizes relevance and creativity. We're adding a brief introduction to Alice + Media Computation.

- * Engaging First Courses Workshop (funded by NSF BPC Program): A whirlwind introduction to FIVE new approaches for teaching introductory courses in computing that engage students and help to broaden participation in computing: (1) Introduction to Media Computation in Python, (2) and in Java, (3) Introduction to Data Structures with Media Computation in Java, (4) Introduction to Engineering Computing using MATLAB, and (5) Introduction to Computing using Robotics in Python."



A Touching Story from One of Our Alice ITEST Teachers

Maxine Woolsey, the co-coordinator for our Alice ITEST project at the University of Mississippi, shares this lovely story from one of the teachers who attended three works of professional development as part of our ITEST grant last summer. Because I do not have permission directly from the teachers, I have anonymized the names:

"I have taught 3 days of Alice to Mrs. Smith's 6th grade gifted classes, the entire 7th grade through their keyboarding classes and to one section of about 30 8th graders via their Social Studies class. The keyboarding teacher, Mrs. Jones, has incorporated Alice into her curriculum. A social studies teacher who teaches both 7th and 8th grades, Ms. Jackson, has had her students animate Japanese myths in 7th grade and an American folktales in 8th grade via Alice. In addition, I taught Alice to an autistic student who proved to be very adept. He initiated contact with his peers for the very first time in his life because he wanted to show them the games he had created. He left the library and again initiated contact with his peers to show them his games. For this student, Alice has been a therapy tool for his unlocking his autism."

I have seen pictures of this student discussing with his classmates how he built a game of Pong in Alice, and was very moved.



An Award for One of Our Growing Number Of Alice Teachers

Don Slater shares with us this letter he recently received:

" I hope to finally meet you this summer at the workshop, but just in case I do not - I wanted to write to tell you that because of Storytelling Alice I have been recognized by the International Reading Association as the Eastern Regional Winner of the IRA Award for Reading and Technology.



International Reading Association
The World's Leading Organization of Literacy Professionals

I am being recognized for how I use Alice in my classroom. But I

never would have learned about Alice had I not caught a one minute segment on the radio where I heard someone say, 'Brick walls are

Links

aliceprogramming.net
Helpful information on Teaching with Alice (course calendars, lectures, labs, assignments, exams, solutions, etc.)

alice.org
Download Alice, Alice community

visualization.sju.edu
The Center for Visualization website. Archive of past newsletters; listing of grants; useful information for users

there for a reason, they let us prove how badly we want something.' And had those words not touched me so deeply in that fleeting moment, I never would have found The Last Lecture on Youtube and watched the entire thing where I heard Randy Pausch talking about Alice and its spinoff - Storytelling Alice. And I never would have dreamed of actually being able to bring a program like Alice to my students had Carnegie Melon University not offered it free to anyone.

So, while my name is neatly printed on the certificate I received from the International Reading Association, the recognition really goes to Mr. Pausch, the students who created the program, Caitlin Kelleher who took it to another level, you and the entire Alice team who keep it going now.

I don't know how I could ever show my appreciation, but I will start with a simple - Thank you.

*Sincerely,
Tiffany A. Dorris, Reading Specialist
Bermudian Springs School District"*

Alice in the Netherlands

We just received the following note (I have slightly modified the English) from Els van Tol:

"Last wednesday, I did gave the presentation at the NIOC conference, for a group about 25 participants. The reactions on the workshop were all very positive, also for the new version. Not only the secondary education, but also the higher education, and universities are interested in Alice. The next plans are to setup a dutch website for sharing dutch-teaching materials (<http://www.alice3d.nl> not yet up and running).

The fontys hoge school (higher education) has developed a module for the interaction between alic and the NXT lego mindstorms robot. Also an interesting subject. So, lots is going on here in the Netherlands.

*Best regards,
Els van Tol"*

Online Basic Introduction to Alice

Frank Ackermann shares with us the following:



"In order to boost computer science enrollment Montana Tech of the University of Montana is offering an on-campus two day computer camp. As preparation for this camp, students can earn scholarship credits by completing on-line assignments. One of these assignments is a basic introduction to Alice. It can be found at http://cs.mtech.edu/Mod3/m3_01.htm."

A. Frank Ackermann, PhD

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Cool Alice content in Texas

Phyllis Tedford (Phyllis.Tedford@tamucc.edu) shares with us a description of several events she's done with local schools in Corpus Christi.

"At Texas A&M University Corpus Christi (TAMUCC), we are constantly trying to think of creative ways to recruit students into computer science. We're finding that we have to reach out to the local student population earlier and in a more proactive manner to get them to consider CS as a field of study. To that end, we've recently had two outreach programs that appear to help with our effort to pique the interest of students.

The first program involves going to several of the local elementary schools during their 'Science Day.' The schools have groups from local industry, TAMUCC, and government organizations such as the Coast Guard and the Forest Service visit the school to provide information and demonstrations about some of the careers available in scientific fields. Several of my students and I attend to provide hands-on demonstrations using Storytelling Alice. We generally restrict the classes that participate to fourth- and fifth-graders with each group having between 30 and 40 minutes to 'play.' We have done 2 visits this spring. Both have been rollicking successes! I spend approximately 3 minutes briefly showing the students how to set up a world and how to

Contact Us

- Recommend a colleague to the Alice Newsletter
- Share your success stories with other users
- Upcoming events / plans using Alice
- Comments, corrections or omissions

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get the objects to move. After that brief intro, we turn them loose to create whatever type of world they want. Some of the worlds they can come up with in less than 40 minutes are amazing. What's even more impressive is that a fair number (usually about 10-20%) ask how they can get Alice to put on their computers at home! Since this program just started with one school last year, it's a little early to tell how much of a long-term impact it will have. But, for now, it certainly seems to make a big impression on the elementary students who participate.

The second program, which has just started this year, involves CS students from TAMUCC visiting Miller High School in Corpus Christi to participate in a "mini-programming competition" during the class time of the high school's 5 Business Image Management and Multimedia classes. The teacher, Derek Villanueva, attended the Alice Institute last summer and is using Alice in all 5 sections of the BIMM class. He contacted me about having



some of my students come visit his classes in an effort to allow his students an opportunity to meet and interact with college students. After some brain storming, we came up with the mini-competition idea. So, on March 27, 10 TAMUCC students and I visited Miller High School. The idea was to break the class up into teams of 2 to 5 people and present each class with a 'challenge' or problem. Each team would have 1 TAMUCC student and 1 to 4 Miller students, depending on the class size. Once the teams were made and the problem described, the teams had approximately 30 minutes to create and implement a solution. The problems included criteria such as 'create a world that contains a programmer-defined world- or class-level method' and "create a world that uses at least one function call." At the end of the 30 minutes, Derek showed the completed worlds to the whole class. He and I were the 'judges' and decided which program was the best. In some cases, we awarded two first-place prizes one for creativity and one for technical complexity. The winning team(s) then got their choice of 2 GB thumb drives, Whataburger gift certificates (Whataburger, for those who don't know, is a Texas-based hamburger joint that beats MacDonald's coming and going), or t-shirts from either Miller High School or the CS Club at TAMUCC. Again, this was a great success! The students worked well together and came up with creative and, often, funny solutions. Derek tells me the students are interested in making this an annual event. We're certainly going to try! Again, it's too early to tell if this will impact how many Miller students will major in computer science if and when they go to college. But it certainly shows potential!"

Alice 3 en Español

Steven Huss-Lederman is working with people involved in education in Mexico to make Alice 3 more appropriate for use in Hispanic/Latino/Latina educational settings. The first step will be translation of the Alice 3 program into Spanish this summer. The next step will be inclusion of appropriate cultural artifacts. The final step is to try to produce an open source textbook.

His efforts will be in English and Spanish versions. Others are welcome to be involved in this effort and also making it available in additional languages. The hope is that being free, easy to customize for various educational settings, and easy to adapt to local cultural norms will make Alice use more straightforward for a wider community. If you have ideas or interests in these efforts, please contact Steve at huss@beloit.edu

Alice and Simulation: A Request for Information



Beth Simon (beth.simon@gmail.com) would like to know if any of you have been using Alice to do simulations. Please contact her directly if you have been.

"We're very interested in finding out about possible options for sciency/simultion based Alice projects and what people might have done and what resources are there to support such things..."

*Thinking of everything from modeling psychology experiments, genetics stuff, diffusion of chemicals in
Do you have any references I can follow?"*

Beth

Beth Simon, CSE Department UC San Diego 858-534-5419

Alice, CS1 and Teams: A Request for Information

Qin Ding (dingq@ecu.edu) asks us:

We are currently teaching Alice for Introduction to Computer Science for non-majors at East Carolina University and we are in the planning of teaching Alice in our CS1 equivalent class (we are putting together a proposal now). Would folks who are using Alice in CS1 be willing to get in touch with me, to let me know details about their course?



Also, I have been trying to have my students doing team work using Alice in our Introduction to Computer Science course for non-majors.

Most students enjoy team work, but one challenge is, not being able to simply copying one Alice world into the other, how can the team members integrate their work in an efficient and effective way? I am aware of the fact that Alice allows to import and export certain components. Does anyone have any experience using those import/export features (the saving out and reusing of individual classes) and any other features/approaches that might be suitable for team work?

*Thanks,
Qin*



The CS & IT Symposium

Barb Conover reminds me that I haven't announced the CS&IT Symposium in June. I'll be giving an Alice talk, and there will be lots of other high-quality computing presentations targeting K-12 teaching.

Here is the blurb about this one-day conference in Washington DC (immediately before NECC):

The *2009 Computer Science and Information Technology (CSIT) Symposium* is an annual conference for Computer Science and Information Technology teachers sponsored by the *Computer Science Teachers Association* (CSTA). CSIT 09 will take place Saturday, June 27, 2009 at the Renaissance Hotel in Washington, DC, in conjunction with NECC, the National Educational Computing Conference.

This full-day event features concurrent and general sessions that focus on critical issues, including:

- Flash Animation
- Inheritance, Polymorphism & Interfaces
- Web Design: A Ticket into Your Students' Worlds
- Attracting and Retaining Women in CS
- Partnering with Local Colleges to Get Grants
- Bridging the Great Divide Between University and K-12: Why Everyone Matters

And many more! (See <http://www.csitsymposium.org/> for the full agenda.)

This is an excellent opportunity to network with colleagues, earn eight professional development seat hours, attend interesting and relevant sessions, enjoy a relaxing lunch, and clean-up on product giveaways

REGISTER NOW for this outstanding event at:

<http://www.csitsymposium.org/>.

The cost of registration is \$40.00 Enrollment is limited, so please complete and submit your online registration no later than June 15, 2009.

If you have any questions, please e-mail Barbara Conover at:

bconover@sju.edu <<mailto:bconover@sju.edu>>

See you in DC!



Reduced / Free Admission To Sun's JavaOne Conference

As many of you know, Sun has become one of the sponsors of the Alice project. One of the side benefits is that we get information about certain special "deals" that are available. Thus, I am sharing with you the following e-mail from Jessie Orquina (Jessica.Orquina@Sun.COM) at Sun. Please feel free to e-mail her with any questions you might have

"The JavaOne conference brings together developers, technology enthusiasts, students, educators, and industry luminaries from around the world. It's your chance to learn, share, and network with this vast —and growing — technology community. Packages are available for faculty/staff (http://java.sun.com/javaone/2009/students_and_educators/index.jsp#educators) and students (http://java.sun.com/javaone/2009/students_and_educators/index.jsp#students) taking a minimum of 6 to 8 units. This offer applies only to accredited nonprofit institutions of learning. You must be at least 18 years old to participate."

There is an indication about availability for high school students/educators at the site

(http://java.sun.com/javaone/2009/students_and_educators/index.jsp), and I'd recommend e-mailing Jessie if you might be located close enough to the Bay area June 2-5. Wanda will be there, but Steve will be at CISSE that week.

Don't miss the Alice Symposium June 17th, Duke University!

To register for Symposium, go to <http://macs.sju.edu/alice/>
Contact bconover@sju.edu for more info!

Regards,
Wanda and Steve

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