NEWS

PURDUE UNIVERSITY

SPIRIT

Editorial

The SPIRIT team was looking for a way to stay connected with our teachers, and thanks to the brilliance of SPIRIT Assistant, Melissa Weddle, the SPIRIT Newsletter was born! This monthly communication will be sent via email to all SPIRIT teachers as well as posted on the SPIRIT website. Each issue will contain regular features:

- Teachers in the Spotlight: Information about an interesting Alice/SPIRIT-related activity of at least one teacher from each of the previous summer programs. In this issue, the spotlight is on Bonita Adams (SPIRIT Class of 2008) and Nikki Craig (SPIRIT Class of 2009).
- Teacher Outreach: Report on a variety of outreach activities by SPIRIT teachers in spreading the word about SPIRIT and/or Alice, resulting in a teacher applying to SPIRIT. You'll learn about how a 2008 teacher brought a 2009 teacher to SPIRIT.
- Ask Alice: Questions about error messages that seem to come up as you use Alice with answers that explain the probable cause and suggested solution.
- Professional Development and Grant Opportunities: a list of current opportunities that may be of interest to teachers who want to extend their impact with additional education and/or (financial) support through grants.
- Additional News Items: SPIRIT will be launching an essay contest next month, so there is a preview of the contest for teachers who want to give their students a little more time planning their projects and related essays. Finally, just for fun, Melissa has shared a joke and initiated a riddle contest.

Let us know what you think about the content. If you have suggestions for additional or other features, please send them to me. If you've done something interesting or unique that you'd like to share through this newsletter, let us know and you could be in the spotlight for a future issue OR get an article published with your byline.

With best wishes,

Alka Harriger

For the SPIRIT team

Ask Alice By: Jessica Berger

Dear Alice,
Sometimes when I am working on an Alice world, I get an error message that reads, "The current method is not called by any events or by any other methods which might be called by any events." What on Earth does this mean and how can I get it to stop showing up?

--Frustrated in Freemont

Dear Frustrated,

I know the language in this error message makes it sound like I have been on the Ferris Wheel in the Amusement Park Gallery a few too many times, but let me break it down for you. First of all, remember the events are located in the upper-right corner of the Alice screen. In order for something to happen, there must be an event that controls it. The default is "When the world starts, do world.myfirstmethod." You can change this to play any other method so that when you press "play," that method will play. You can also make it play when you click on something with the mouse, press a button, etc. The error message occurs because you may have been working on a method in the editor window and then pressed play. This error message is simply a reminder that either you need to assign that method to an event of its own or place it within another method with an event (such as world.myfirstmethod) in order for it to be played. Hope this helps clear things up!

Your friend,
Alice

AlienQuestion Generator = Gaming Template By: Jane Nawrocki

Gaming is a way of life for today's schoolchildren. Today's students won't leave home without their own personal Game Boys, cell phones, and MP3 players. It was only a matter of time until digital games came to school. Quite simply, games motivate because they are fun. Additionally, games are versatile and can be effectively used to teach, review, and/or reinforce almost any subject or skill.

SpirIT 2009 participant Nikki Craig, a Computer Programming Instructor at Anthis Career Center with Fort Wayne Community Schools in Fort Wayne, Indiana, appreciates that, indeed, gaming is ingrained in students. Therefore, she has used her Alice skills to create several clever games to help her students.

The first game, set in outer space, is AlienQuestion Generator. Nikki describes this very clever Alice world as a "simple game that tests the user's knowledge of basic questions." She plans to use this game to test her students' understanding of the basic programming data types—string, integer, double. When asked what inspired her to create this particular world, Nikki replied "Students need to be reminded and given many opportunities to work with vocabulary terms and concepts. This [game] is just another study tool."
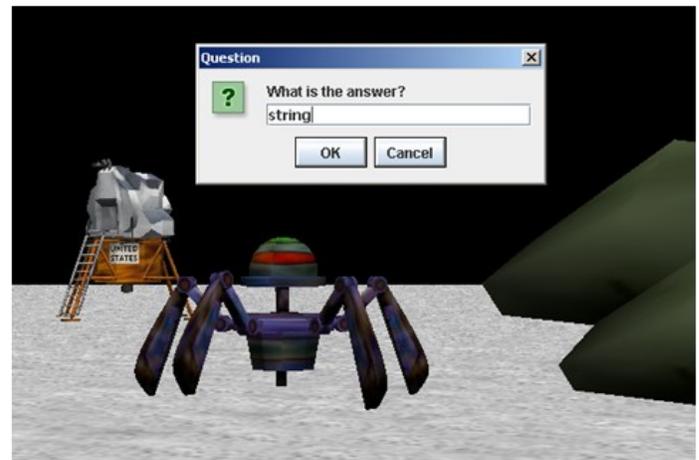
However, Nikki's AlienQuestion Generator game is much more than "... just another study tool." It is a game template that can be easily modified by any teacher to support instruction in his/her respective subject area. Nikki shared that "many instructors at her school had expressed a need for this type tool" and that she would "... like to instruct even non-Alice users how to adapt this [game] to their specific curriculum."

When asked if she had created any other Alice game templates, Nikki replied that she had designed a ball toss game. The objective is to move the ball closer and closer to a stack of balls by answering questions. The stack of balls collapses upon impact by the student ball. But, Nikki quickly added that her underlying objective is to have her students create game templates that can be used by the students' academic teachers.

Was the AlienQuestion Generator game a success with students? Absolutely! The students loved the 3-D animation of the space alien, the interactivity, and the cleverness of the game. They were 100% engaged. Was the AlienQuestion Generator game a success for Nikki, the teacher? Positively! When educational content is united with the fun of a game everyone wins.

Nikki's game template has been posted on SharePoint. You are invited to download a copy. If you have additional concerns, please contact Nikki at:

Nikki.Craig@fwcs.k12.in.us

Pictured above is a screen shot of Nikki Craig's AlienQuestion Generator.

Joke of the Month By: Melissa Weddle
(and www.rd.com/clean-jokes-and-laughs/computer-language-joke/article79770.html)

My husband, a computer-systems trouble-shooter, rode with me in my new car one afternoon. He had been working on a customer's computer all morning and was still tense from the session. When I stopped for a traffic light, I made sure to leave a safe distance from the stop line to keep oncoming drivers from hitting the car.

I couldn't help but laugh when my husband impatiently waved at me to move the car forward while saying, "Scroll up, honey."

¿¿¿¿ Mikel and Jessica ¿¿¿¿

Teacher Spotlight: Bonita Adams– IT Party Summer Camp By: Jane Nawrocki

"What's summer camp without a camp song?" asked Bonita Adams, 2008 SpirIT participant and Business teacher at Springfield High School in Holland, Ohio. It was three weeks before the IT Party Summer Camp began and Bonita and her committee (Jane Nawrocki, 2008 SpirIT participant) were finalizing plans for the camp.

The Alice camp idea was inspired by Bonita's participation in SpirIT 2008 at Purdue University. Additionally, this summer camp, designed for sixth through ninth grade students, was the focus of her graduate credit independent study class. For Bonita the camp would:

    Be a way to attract students to the classes and programs offered at Springfield High School;
    Be a fun way to introduce students to computing and technology careers;
    Attract young people who already spend hours on the computer; and,
    Provide young people with somewhere interesting to go.

At the next planning session Bonita, an accomplished playwright and a very creative teacher, presented the "Alice Family Camp Song." She had written technology-related lyrics to the tune of the Addams Family theme song—after all, wasn't Bonita's last name Adams? (The lyrics are printed at the end of this article.) The song became the center of several activities planned for the participants of the IT Party Summer Camp.

On day one of camp, given a basic Alice world, students made the characters sing (say) and dance to the Alice Family song.
Another day Jane and Bonita recorded each individual student singing the camp song. Students then added this recording to his/her day one world.
On yet another day, camp participants sat in a circle in a darkened room around a "flashlight campfire" roasting marshmallows and singing the Alice Family Camp Song, reviewing Alice constructs, and sharing stories from "Alice in Wonderland."

The last day of the IT Party Camp was a exactly that—a Tea Party for the camp participants, their families, and Springfield High School administrators. Of course, the students sang and a few even added dance moves to the now familiar Alice Family Camp Song. Then the invited guests and the students viewed a Movie Maker video of the best Alice worlds created during the week. Finally, the campers received awards and balloons for their creativity, their efforts, and their amazing Alice worlds. As the students gathered their belongings and left for home with their families, a few bits of the camp song could be heard.

This past July Bonita gave an excellent presentation highlighting the IT Party Camp at the Alice Symposium held on the campus of Duke University. As a result of her outstanding presentation, she has been invited to speak at the Ohio School Board and Administrator Conference in November. The central theme of This OSBA conference is "Reaching for Excellence and the Importance of Creativity."

Bonita certainly was right. "What's summer camp without a camp song?"

Bonita can be contacted at: BonitaAdams@slsmail.net

IT Party 2009 Campers

The Alice Family Camp Song (sung to the tune of the Addams Family theme song)
Written By: Bonita Adams
Springfield High School, Holland, IN

Da da da dum (snap snap)	It's easy to create one	Da da da dum (snap snap)
Da da da dum (snap snap)	An Alice World can be done	Da da da dum (snap snap)
Da da da dum	By adding simple objects	Da da da dum
Da da da dum	The Alice Family	Da da da dum
Da da da dum (snap snap)		Da da da dum (snap snap)
	Create a simple story	
Da da da dum (snap snap)	Or make a game for glory	With 3D animation
Da da da dum (snap snap)	Just drag and drop the objects	Programming innovation (Pro-gram-
Da da da dum	The Alice Family	ming In-o-va-tion)
Da da da dum		IT collaboration (I-T col-lab-o-ration)
Da da da dum (snap snap)		The Alice Family

Do You Have SPIRIT? Let's Hear it! By: Jessica Berger

How did you hear about SPIRIT? Was it though a mailing or something you saw at a conference? Did you hear about it from another teacher? One of the most effective ways we can reach other teachers and get them excited about the SPIRIT program and reaching girls with IT information is making a personal connection with another teacher.

I asked Dottie Henley (SPIRIT 2008) why she decided to talk to Justin Klyczek (SPIRIT 2009) about the program. Dottie said, "Purely selfish. I wanted students (two of my girls attended camp) and other teachers to learn Alice so we could help each other." She could see Justin's love for computers and thought he would be perfect since he teaches at both the middle school and high school level. She also thought that if Justin taught his students to use Alice in his middle school classes that she wouldn't have as much work to do because her students would come in already knowing about Alice. Justin has said he has greatly benefited from having another teacher in his building using Alice and that he really appreciated the personal invitation from Dottie to check out SPIRIT.

Remember, you too can help us find great teachers because you are in contact with great teachers every day.

Professional Development Opportunities By: Alka Harriger

Are you interested in extending the impact of what you've learned but need additional resources to make it happen? Think about writing a proposal to receive a grant to support your project. This section of the newsletter will share upcoming professional development and grant opportunities.

Professional Development Opportunities for High School Teachers

- The SPIRIT 2010 program will be offered in July 2010 (exact dates still being negotiated). Get your colleagues, counselors, and students thinking about applying now!

- Resources for professional development in literacy and technology integration are available at http://www.literacy.uconn.edu/prodev.htm.

- Texas Instruments offers different types of professional development opportunities for the math and science teacher through Teachers Teaching with Technology™ (T^3™). See http://education.ti.com/educationportal/sites/US/sectionHome/pd.html for various links.

Grants for High School Teachers

- Samsung's Four Seasons of Hope 2009 Education Essay Contest is open to legal residents of the 50 US & DC. Eligible minors should have a parent's or legal guardian's permission to enter. The contest will accept applications until 11:59 p.m. ET 11/1/09. Your school can win a share of the $1 million in prizes. To enter, you write a 100 word essay on a subject identified on the web page: http://www.fourseasonsofhope.com/us/4seasons_hope/education.jsp.

- The National Girls Collaborative Project, offers mini-grants http://www.ngcproject.org/mini-grant/index.cfm to girl-serving STEM-focused programs to support collaboration, address gaps and overlaps in service, and share promising practices. Mini-grant projects must relate to either informal learning or evaluation and assessment. Mini-grants are a small amount of seed funding and are not intended to fully fund entire projects. The maximum mini-grant award is $1000. These mini-grants are designed to build collaboration between existing programs and organizations in order to encourage girls to pursue STEM-related educational programs and careers. You must first register your program by using the link on the web page.

- The Toshiba Foundation offers grants for grades 7-12 science and math education. Small grants (<= $5000) are available on a rolling basis and applications accepted throughout the year. Larger grant requests are accepted either February 1 or August 1. Information and instructions are available at http://www.toshiba.com/tafpub/upload/page/100045/25964_Executive.pdf.

- The American Honda Foundation offers grants for youth education, specifically in the areas of STEM, the environment, job training and literacy. Organizations are limited to submitting ONE application in a 12-month period. The next submission deadline is November 1, but applications are accepted and evaluated quarterly. For more information or to begin your application, go to http://corporate.honda.com/america/philanthropy.aspx?id=ahf.

- A partnership between Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc. and the National Science Teachers Association, the Toyota TAPESTRY Grants for Science Teachers program offers grants to K–12 science teachers for innovative projects that enhance science education in the school and/or school district. Fifty large grants and a minimum of 20 mini-grants, totaling $550,000 in all, will be awarded this year. The application deadline is 11:59 pm EST on 1/18/2010. For more information, see http://www.nsta.org/pd/tapestry/guidelines.htm.

SPIRIT Essay Contest for Students By: Alka Harriger

Do you know a student who has played with Alice and that experience has impacted future career choices? Then pass the word about SPIRIT's Essay Contest for Students:

The SPIRIT team invites students in grades 6-12 that have used Alice and been impacted either directly or indirectly by the SPIRIT program to enter our essay contest. The essay must describe your connection to SPIRIT, what types of worlds you have created with Alice, and how that experience has changed your thinking about technology and your future career choices. You must also submit at least one Alice World (A2W file) that is discussed in your essay.

The entry period for submitting the essay and Alice World starts in November and ends on January 15, 2010. An essay template will be posted to the SPIRIT website when the submission period begins. Students must download and complete the template form and then submit it as a Word or PDF document, along with an accompanying Alice world. All submissions must be done using the online submission system that will be accessible from the SPIRIT website.

The SPIRIT team will select one winner who will be awarded a new iPod nano, in the winner's choice of color, provided by DelMar IT

All submissions become the property of SPIRIT. By submitting your entry to the contest you give SPIRIT the right to use, in whole or part, your name, essay, and Alice World in future publications and promotions.

Eligibility requirements: The SPIRIT contest is open to middle and high school students in good standing that are currently in grades 6-12 at the time of entry. Each applicant must explain his/her connection to SPIRIT**. Immediate family members of the SPIRIT team are not eligible to apply.

** If you aren't sure about whether your SPIRIT connection qualifies you for the contest, read the examples below for ideas of valid connections:

- I completed the SPIRIT summer program in July 2008
- My friend Tony X completed the SPIRIT program in July 2009 and showed Alice to me and I then learned Alice on my own
- My mom is a teacher who attended SPIRIT in July 2008.
- Mr. Smith, my Spanish teacher, attended SPIRIT in July 2009 and showed us how to use Alice in his class.
- My friend, Julie, is in Mr. Smith's Spanish class and she did a presentation in English class using Alice and I thought it looked fun, so I learned it on my own. (Mr. Smith attended SPIRIT in July 2009.)
- I babysit for the son of one of the SPIRIT instructors (Mrs. X) who told me about Alice and the contest. I think she went to SPIRIT in 2008.
- *(Read in "Valley Girl" voice)* Like, my Uncle's girlfriend's son's best friend is, like, my boyfriend, Slash, and he saw a YouTube video on the totally awesome SPIRIT site about, like, French animals, and since Slash is totally into French culture, we were like, "That is so cool." He used to be in this computer class with, like, Mrs. X, and was searching for, like, some more ideas of what to do with Alice for, like, his research on saving the entire world through skateboarding. He is so deep. (Mrs. X went to SPIRIT in, like, 2008.)

Riddles of the Month By: Melissa Weddle

Here's the deal… The person to correctly answer the most riddles by the end of the year (of before the last in-service) will receive a "special" prize from me. So email me your answers (mweddle@purdue.edu) and the answers to these will be in the next issue. And remember… **Cheaters never win!!!**

1. It is greater than God and more evil than the devil. The poor have it, the rich need it and if you eat it you'll die. What is it?
2. I never was, am always to be. No one ever saw me, nor ever will. And yet I am the confidence of all, To live and breath on this terrestrial ball. What am I?
3. What English word has three consecutive double letters?