

# Packetville Press

Newsletter for Parents

## Did you know?

There's a site dedicated to ensuring that women are fully represented in the influential world of information technology and computing?

The National Center for Women and Information Technology or NCWIT (<http://www.ncwit.org/what.mission.html>) tackles gender-related issues such as innovation and competitiveness, jobs, and social impact. The site includes a special section for K-12 schools, which provides guidelines related to role modeling, encouragement, recruitment, and classroom practices and pedagogy.

Check out *Women & IT in the News* for some great motivational stories for your students, and don't forget to introduce them to *Careers in IT* and NCWIT's *Digital Library*.

And you'll want to browse through NCWIT's blog. It's packed with articles and links that will help you lessen that great gender divide when it comes to IT careers.

*Don't forget the way to Packetville.*

## Think Differently

We read in the media that we need a new way of working with our children—that we should *think differently* about how girls and boys learn. For example, why aren't our girls taking the courses they need in mathematics, science, and technology at the pre-college and college levels that will qualify them to move into career opportunities in these fields? Why do so many of our boys turn off to school and learning?

As for the girls, research tells us that most continue to enter what have long been considered *women's occupations*. If they select computer-related fields, their jobs usually feature clerical or secretarial-type skills. According to the Women's College Coalition, Mount Holyoke College ([academic.org/surprise.html](http://academic.org/surprise.html)), "Girls begin to go underground with their talents and abilities sometime between fifth and ninth grades." One reason for going underground could be that boys demand more of our attention. Another reason seems to be how girls view themselves. At the age when they need to start concentrating on taking more difficult courses in math, science and tech, they are faced with peer pressure. While peer pressure can sometimes propel them into excellent career preparation, often preteen and teen peer pressure leads more toward traditional female roles.

As for the boys, they know that they are expected to do well. But if they don't pay attention, they won't get the foundation they need to move ahead. You understand how boys



love to fool around, showing off for each other and for the girls in their lives. They'll pay attention if something interests them and if they see a reason for taking on an activity.

As a parent, the good news is that you understand your children better than anyone. You know what is best for them. The problem is that you may not know how to get them excited about what you think they should be learning.

Why not think differently about your children and their learning? Maybe your son hates to do book reports but would love to do a made-on-the-computer video book report? Maybe your daughter discovers the *Engineer Girl* site and decides she's going to take advanced math? Maybe your children go to Packetville and learn that understanding how tech works is not so difficult? Maybe by thinking differently about their abilities they learn ...

## Helpful Sites

*Engineer Girl*

[www.engineergirl.org/](http://www.engineergirl.org/)

*Girls Go Tech*

[www.girlsgotech.org](http://www.girlsgotech.org)

*Raising Boys:*

[www.pbs.org/parents/raisingboys/school.html](http://www.pbs.org/parents/raisingboys/school.html)

*Practical Strategies for Working with Boys:*

[pbs.org/parents/raisingboys/school04.html](http://pbs.org/parents/raisingboys/school04.html)

*Boyhood Articles*

[www.boyhood.com.au/articles/document\\_view](http://www.boyhood.com.au/articles/document_view)

*TAP Junior: Encouraging Girls & Teens*

<http://cs-www.cs.yale.edu/homes/tap/tap-junior.html>

## What's new in Packetville as of Fall 2006?

- Lessons for **Penny's Search** are now available online. Use them to reinforce the learning in the Penny's Search game and to challenge the creative talents of your children. All Packetville lessons are tied to national technology standards and include resource materials and assessment ideas.
- You'll find the **Packetville Tour** a perfect quick guide to the site for you and your children. Download it in pdf format to hand out or put it to use online.
- **Ask Peter** has been updated with answers to your questions, and in the student sections of Packetville, the Internet IQ quiz is now interactive. Why not check your INet IQ?

# Global E-Learning

## *Preparing Tomorrow's Technology Leaders*

Consider:

1. Cisco's Packetville (for students ages 8-14) and Cisco's Networking Academy (for students in high school and college) are leading the way in global e-learning. Both are communities of learners who are on the path to the future—a future where their skills will be in demand.
2. Packetville offers students an excellent foundation both in understanding of the Internet and in learning about exciting careers in IT. It's packed with activities and content young people enjoy and is an ideal setting for encouraging girls to consider moving forward in curricular areas such as math, science, and technology. The Packet Riders and Hacker Busters of Packetville will be well prepared to move on into the more advanced learning in the Networking Academy.
3. The Networking Academy is designed to provide students with the Internet technology skills essential in a global economy. Academy curriculum features web-based content, online assessment, hands-on labs, instructor training and support, and preparation for industry standard certifications. Students in over 150 countries are studying Academy curriculum and over a million and a half students have entered the Academy since its inception in 1997.
4. Packetville and the Networking Academy are anytime, anywhere learning—what is needed to be competitive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Packetville

<http://www.cisco.com/go/packetville>

Networking Academy

<http://www.cisco.com/web/learning/netacad/index.html>



## Using Packetville at Home

Parents are invited to sign up for the Packetville site. It's free, and it gives you access to all five sections: Parents, Advisors, Educators, Hacker Busters (for ages 12-14) and Packet Riders (for ages 8-11). You'll want to explore all of the areas of the site to gather ideas about what your children can learn in Packetville and what resources will be of use to you.

In the Parents' section, you'll find information about the value of the program and details on how the Packetville materials target the International Society of Technology in Education's National Education Standards (ISTE-NETS).

From any of the sections in Packetville, you can link to the interactive games: *Peter Packet*, *Penny's Search*, and *Career Capture*. The game, *Peter Packet*, is designed to give children a good understanding of how messages travel through the Internet. They learn about packets, servers, routers, and wireless communication while solving problems that help people in other lands. *Penny's Search* expands their knowledge by immersing them in the worlds of a marine scientist, a veterinary researcher, and an independent hip-hop recording artist. In these worlds, they learn about MP3 files, satellite communication, file transfer, and women who use technology in their work. The third game in the Packetville library, *Career Capture*, expands their knowledge of technology-related careers and encourages girls to work toward these careers. In both *Penny's Search* and *Career Capture*, your children can use "game cameras" to snap pictures while they are playing the games and view them later in "game scrapbooks"

There's no signing up on Packetville for your children. They'll have access to the student areas and won't need a username or password. It's a good idea to have your children put the Packetville URL ([www.cisco.com/go/packetville](http://www.cisco.com/go/packetville)) into their Favorites or Bookmarks so that they won't have to worry about finding the Web address. While in Packetville, they can play the games and check out information in areas such as *Cool Techie News*, *Young Heroes*, and *Penny Says*.

The Activities' sections of the *Hacker Busters* and *Packet Riders* are places where your children can find additional activities related to technologies. They might want to, for example, test their *Internet IQ*, download Peter Packet's music, work with the images of the Packetville characters, test themselves on *Techie Terms*, or set up community service projects. If your children like drama and art, they can get started on the craft suggestions, create their own Packetville stickers, or put on Packetville's *Wildly Wireless Melodrama*. Packetville is packed with fun and loaded with information your children need to know.