

Packetville Press

Newsletter for Parents

Penny's Tips

Download the Games

It's a good idea to download the Packetville games to the computers you use. This will help you avoid problems related to Internet speed and access.

Open the Games

If you download the games to your desktop, you will find folders labeled Peter Packet and Penny Packet. Depending on the browser you use, click on *index.html* or *default.html* to start the games.

Learning Materials

You may want to look at the resources available in the **Instructors & Administrators** section of Packetville. These resources will give you fun and creative ideas for working on the Packetville content with your children. For example, the lessons will give you ideas about what questions to ask your children after they've played a Packetville game. Just sign in as an educator to use these materials. At this time, you'll need to enter a different e-mail address and password than the one you use for your Parent account, but soon there will only be one password needed for all the adult sections of Packetville.

Special Advisor Section

The Packetville staff is developing a Club Advisor section of Packetville.

Go Girls...

In the game *Penny's Search*, Penny Packet and her friend Nicole Wong represent any girls who think learning about computers and the Internet is boring. Though they may enjoy communicating through the Internet and know how to use computers for a variety of projects, technology is not usually one of their main interests.

Penny's Search challenges girls to think of computer-related careers in new ways as they learn how an independent recording artist, a marine biologist, and a veterinary researcher depend on computers and the Internet to get their jobs done. Each episode in *Penny's Search* features a successful woman who uses technology in an interesting and important way in her career. Girls learn

that many careers they may not think of as technology-related are now highly dependent on computer and Internet knowledge and skills.

Penny's Search is in a prelude to the game *Career Capture*, which goes into greater detail about computer and Internet-related careers. One of the goals of these two games is to encourage girls to consider career paths in the areas of mathematics, science, and technology.

The games demonstrate that careers in information technology (IT) and engineering, for example, can be exciting and rewarding and may be in fields as diverse as medicine, architecture, music, art, teaching, design, video, space science, and environmental science, to name a few.

And Boys...

The games *Penny's Search* and *Career Capture* are not just for girls. Though the games highlight women who use technology in their careers, the content is also appropriate for boys. After all, girls and boys both enjoy playing *Peter Packet*.



Think Tech!

While learning about ways that people use the

Internet in *Penny's Search*, your children will review the content covered in the *Peter Packet* game, such as servers, routers, and wireless communication. They'll also be introduced to new Internet tools such as video streaming, MP3 files, satellite uploads, File Transfer Protocol (FTM), Electro-magnetic Interference (EMI), Packet Internet Groper (PING), and Web Crawlers. 🐼

Packetville Previews....

The Packetville staff is working on some exciting updates that will be coming to Packetville in 2006:

- Lessons and resources for Penny's Search and Career Capture
- Activities especially designed for girls
- A separate section for Club Advisors
- Single password and username access to all areas of Packetville

Game-Based Learning

Game-based learning is fast moving, interactive, multidisciplinary, effective, engaging, and fun. Instant feedback offers rewards to motivate progress; while sound, graphics, and text provide multi-sensory input. Packetville games are designed to support learning for kids of all ages.

Educational games encourage learners to progress from linear learning to multi-dimensional learning that challenges players on multiple levels. Your children can master the concepts covered in a game at their own pace and can complete the activities however they choose.

Education games and computer-assisted learning have come a long way since they were first introduced. In the early days of computer games, software like *Oregon Trail*, *Lemonade Stand*, and *Slam Dunk Math* captured the attention of students, parents, and educators. Other types of games and phases of computer-assisted instruction were so boring that the general opinion of educational games and computer learning activities began to decline.

As video games became more popular, many felt that they were too violent and lacked an educational component. But those who looked more closely found that well-developed educational video games encouraged interaction and cooperation. The content could be engaging without being violent, and children enjoyed working together on the games. There was also evidence that standardized test scores rose for those engaged in game-based learning.

Just watch a group of adults being sorted into Hogwarts' houses by the *Sorting Hat* game on a PDA or a child taking on the challenges of a computer game. The enthusiasm and concentration are obvious. It's the same with a well-designed educational game.

Games have made their way onto computers, the Internet, and tiny digital devices that are increasingly popular among kids. They've invaded classrooms from preschool through graduate school and homes to provide enrichment and entertainment.



There are games on the market that allow kids to communicate with each other, games that teach dancing and a multitude of other skills, and games like *Peter Packet* and *Penny's Search* that inspire learning.

The first Packetville game, *Peter Packet*, was created for Bring Your Daughter to Work Day at Cisco Systems®, and the game was so well received that news of it spread. The result was the development of additional games similar to *Peter Packet* and a growing interactive learning community for students, educators, parents, and club advisors. The resources available in Packetville span the curriculum from technology to social studies to the arts. Besides that,

they're fun! 🐶

A few terms...

Crosstalk

Signals that cross over from adjacent wires and interfere with data

Firewall

Software that prevents or filters access to a network; helps keep a network secure

File Transfer Protocol (FTP)

The most common way people transfer files between computers

Latency

Delay between transfer and receipt of data

MP3

A way to compress audio files so that they are small enough to transfer over the Internet

Send us your suggestions....

If you have ideas for Packetville content or suggestions to help the Packetville staff improve the site resources, please send a message through the Ask Peter tool. Ask Peter is provided for educators, club advisors, parents, and school administrators. It is not an area for children.

