

Pointers For Parents

Online Community Encourages Kids' Creativity

(NAPSA)—Scott, a Downingtown, Pa. middle school student, walked into class one day to a pleasant surprise. His technical education teacher instructed the class to use a fun, online collaborative game to further its classroom experience. Less than a year later, the phenomenon has spread through the school like wildfire. According to Scott and his mother, the use of technology and fun online destinations has had a positive effect on Scott's academic performance and now leave him with the dream of one day working in the online entertainment industry.

Much like Scott's teacher, many educators and parents are leveraging online tools and technology to encourage their kids' imagination and growth.

Online Tools

A free, online building game and community gives kids the opportunity to be creative and encourages them to leverage their skills to build personalized spaces populated with characters, vehicles, homes, high-rise buildings, pirate ships and even major landmarks such as Mt. Rushmore and the White House. Kids employ basic math, programming and physics knowledge to create one-of-a-kind games, avatars and online interactive spaces. In fact, virtually everything in this infinite playground is designed and constructed by its young members.

How It Works

Each player starts by creating an avatar and giving it an identity. Players can then explore the site and interact with others by chatting, playing games or collaborating on projects. They also get a piece of undeveloped "real estate" along with a virtual toolbox with which to design and build anything they can imagine—be it a navigable



Math and physics are fun when children become architects of their own worlds.

skyscraper, a working helicopter, a giant pinball machine, a multi-player capture the flag game or some other, yet-to-be-dreamed-up object or activity. By playing the games and building cool things, members can earn specialty badges as well as in-game virtual currency. They can use the currency to shop the online catalog to purchase avatar clothing and accessories.

School Projects

A recent internal survey of players and their parents found a correlation between students who use the system for school projects and the subsequent improvements of their academic grades. According to members, the Roblox game has been used for such school projects as:

- Building a replica of the Gold Rush of California
- Re-creating the Cuban Revolution
- Developing a virtual diorama for Veterans Day
- Demonstrating the big bang theory
- Illustrating the anatomy of the body.

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