

Alice from Google meets Brentwood's Digital Divas



Friday October 31st (Alice Boxhall in centre of picture with lanyard)

Google software engineer, Alice Boxhall visited the Digital Divas students at Brentwood Secondary College today, who ironically are working on storyboard programming using the Alice Programming language.

Alice's visit was to provide an insight into a "Day in the Life" of a woman in ICT in the twenty-first century. The Digital Divas have been visited by several other women in ICT, Megan Wilson from Oracle and Claire Pell from Netstart. The students are using the information for the presentations to create their own product to dispel the myths that IT careers are only for males.

Research indicates that the perception of an ICT career being predominantly programming oriented is alive and well in the minds of school students. To combat this incorrect stereotype, this girls-only computer elective, Digital Divas is being trialled at Brentwood this year. The dual focus aim is to connect school students to current IT university students, as well as to show them examples of women working in varied IT careers through guest speaker spots. Students from the Women in ICT group of Swinburne University of Technology are facilitators and work in the classroom with the secondary school teacher, Ms Anna Crow..

The elective format allows for continuity in confidence development of the students. Materials are being developed that align with Curriculum Learning objectives proposed for students of this age and make use of some Web 2 applications. This trial is sponsored by a Telematics Trust Grant and is co-ordinated by Dr Catherine Lang of Swinburne's Faculty of ICT.

Lang, in combination with Associate Professor Julie Fisher of Monash University, Dr Annemieke Craig of Deakin University and Associate Professor Helen Forgasz also of Monash was successful in gaining a competitive national ARC grant to continue the current trial for the next three years and roll it out to other schools.