

Herald Sun

LEARN

digital divas in fashion

RAYMOND HO

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TEENAGE girls have embraced social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook, but they still shun careers in IT.

To get them interested, Swinburne University IT experts are helping a secondary school run a girls-only computer club called Digital Divas.

Belinda Donaldson, 14, is enjoying the year-8 elective at Brentwood Secondary College.

``We started off making an online menu for a fitness club. You could apply it to anything," she says. ``I'm doing it for fun now, but I might think about a career involving IT when I'm older."

Swinburne University of Technology's Women in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) group was awarded a Telematics Trust Grant to start the initiative.

Swinburne's Faculty of ICT senior lecturer Catherine Lang says it's important that girls see how IT relates to their interests.

``Many teenage girls who are interested in beauty and fashion are image conscious," Lang says. ``We try to capture these issues by showing them the role that IT has in the creation of beauty ads."

A 2007 State Government study of year 9-12 students found almost 40 per cent of males were interested in working in the ICT industry compared with just 11 per cent of females.

``IT can be a lucrative career, but a lot of girls are shutting doors unnecessarily because they think that IT is a geeky profession," Lang says.

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