Talking to Young Women about Computing

dot | diva
What We’re Doing Isn’t Working

- How can we reverse the trend?
- Lots of projects reach out to girls
- Where’s the disconnect?
• The Dot Diva / New Image for Computing (NIC) initiative is sponsored by WGBH, one of the oldest and most accomplished producers of public media, and the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), the world's oldest and largest educational and scientific computing society.

• Dot Diva's mission is to create an exciting and positive image of computing for high school girls. Our ultimate goal is to transform the negative perception of computing held by teen girls.
Voice of our audience

- Nationwide Survey 12/08
- 1406 college-bound teens ages 13–17
- Topics: Subject and Career attributes

- Nationwide Survey 7/09
- 1000 college-bound girls
- Topics: Messaging
Computing as a Career

- Boys (74%) think computing is a very good or good choice.
- Only 32% of girls ranked it as a very good or good choice, with no significant difference in ethnicity.
Generally, the image of CS conveys that it is:

- **Not** a field that is helping humanity
- **Not** creative
- **Not** collaborative
- Boring!
Word Association

technology
boring
software
math
programming
typing
They Get The Messages We Send

What CS Folk Say:
- Coding
- Algorithms
- Logic
- Software
- Programming

What Girls Hear:
What Teens Want from a Career

- Doing work that you find interesting: 80% (Girls: 77%) vs. Boys: 80%
- Being passionate about your job: 64% (Girls: 78%) vs. Boys: 78%
- Being able to spend time with your family: 54% (Girls: 53%) vs. Boys: 47%
- Having the power to do good and doing work that makes a difference: 46% (Girls: 47%) vs. Boys: 48%
- Having job security: 47% (Girls: 46%) vs. Boys: 44%
- Having the power to make things happen: 46% (Girls: 44%) vs. Boys: 44%
- Earning a high salary: 50% (Girls: 47%) vs. Boys: 39%
- Working in a field with lots of job opportunities: 39% (Girls: 39%) vs. Boys: 38%
- Having an opportunity to express yourself creatively: 35% (Girls: 39%)}
• **Break Code** is all about getting beneath the surface and behind the scenes of everyday technologies.

• **Hit Start** is all about creating the future you love. Hit Start to build, learn and connect with a community of professional women.

• Become a **DotDiva**. We’re the next generation of women in computing, designing a better future. DotDiva is about amazing young women coming together to share groundbreaking work and inspire each other to fashion the world we want to live in.
Messages that Resonate

• Young women with the power and the passion to make a difference.

• Women who believe in the potential of computing to build a better world.
What is the end goal?

• It’s not about the process
• It’s not about minimizing the work or effort involved
• It’s about focusing on the end goal
  • Creating a new technology
  • Inventing the next great tool
  • Helping others
Typical Images

Computer Science

Medicine

Which do you think a young woman would rather do?
Careers that would engage girls include:

- Developing technology to protect people and the environment
- Contributing to the creation of tools that help rescuers in

CS 10K Principles

“Computing enables innovation in other fields including science, social science, humanities, arts, medicine, engineering, and business.”
Key Attributes

• Dot Divas are Creative
  – Music Apps
  – Movie Animation
• Dot Divas Connect People
  – Media that brings people together
• Dot Divas Change the World
  – Saving lives
  – Protecting the environment
Real Dot Divas: Story Telling

- Emily Lovell: Interactive Crafts
- Maitland Lederer: Guitar Hero
- Amy Kukulya: Roboticist
- Guari Nanda: Clocky
- Irene Ross: Data Visualization
What's Your Passion?

We take computing and apply it to what we love—whether it's art or astronomy, fashion or social justice.

My passion is...
Results We Can Use

- Market-tested messages
- National outreach and multimedia resources
- Far-reaching and diverse coalition of partners
- Tested and appealing image of computing
Summary

- Know your audience
- Listen
- Broaden the image of computing through an interdisciplinary approach
- Tell the real stories