ARCS News

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Advancing Rural Computer Science

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Brought to you by The Center for Educational Partnerships at Old Dominion University

Announcements



Greetings and welcome to our June newsletter all about Ethics in Computing! We are pleased to announce that we recently received the **Virginia Mathematics and Science Coalition** *Programs that Work* Award on behalf of all of the educators who participated in the ARCS Program. Our partner, CodeVA has a few exciting happenings to share as well. They are offering a new digital and print publication for students, *Megabytes*. To get your free copy, go to **this link** and follow the instructions. For further details or tech support, please contact: **info@codevirginia.org**. **Click here** for information about the CodeVA Programming Institute to be held this summer both virtually and in-person.

We hope you have an amazing summer! It has been a pleasure working with you all!

The ARCS team

Concept Corner



Students today have an entire world in the palm of their hands - mobile devices provide access to a wealth of information and multiple methods of communication. Sometimes, however, communication can be unwanted, as in the case of cyberbullying.

The Cyberbullying Research Center in partnership with the Cartoon Network published a report about Tween Cyberbullying in 2020 which revealed that one in five (9-12 year-olds) have been victims of or witnesses to this activity. Barriers that students reported to combat cyberbullying included not knowing how to report it and being afraid of making it worse. **Click here** for the full report and recommendations. Being a victim of cyberbullying can result in emotional stress, lack of interest in school, running away, or even self-harm.

As an educator, there are many things you can do to help fight cyberbullying. In developmentally appropriate ways, talk with students about cyberbullying and how it is unacceptable. Discuss how it affects others. Remind students that cyberbullying does damage that bullies never see. Bring up examples, as it will help students to visualize the harm it does. They must understand the importance of addressing cyberbullying and its impact. Finally, make sure students know what to do when they witness it. They must seek help from a responsible adult, such as their parents, teachers, counselors, or administrators.

Pedagogy Pointers





Using Children's Books to Teach Ethics and Safety in Computer Use in K–5!

Teaching ethics in computing doesn't have to start with a keyboard, it can begin at the carpet during story-time. Picture books offer a natural and engaging way to help young learners explore big ideas like responsibility, kindness, and digital safety. When paired with thoughtful discussion and creative follow-up activities, children's literature becomes a powerful tool for building early digital citizenship. Here are a few recommended titles and classroom-ready strategies to try with your students!

***Chicken Clicking* by Jeanne Willis**

Focus: Online safety, trust, and digital responsibility

This cheeky story follows a curious chick who shops online and chats with strangers, until things take a surprising turn. It opens the door to conversations about personal information, safe choices, and asking adults for help.

- **Before reading:** Ask students what they already know about using the internet.
- **During reading:** Pause to ask, "What do you think Chicken should do?" or "Is this a safe choice?"
- **After reading:** Discuss what Chicken could have done differently. Reinforce the importance of talking to trusted adults.
- **Extension:** Have students create a "Dos and Don'ts of Online Safety" poster using drawings, magazine cut-outs, or digital tools.

***Once Upon a Time Online* by David Bedford**

Focus: Digital distractions, kindness, and responsibility

In this clever twist on classic fairy tales, familiar characters get tangled in their devices and forget their stories! It's a great launchpad for conversations about staying focused, being kind online, and knowing when to unplug.

- **Before reading:** Invite students to predict how fairy tale characters might use the internet.
- **During reading:** Ask, "What might happen if they stay online too long?"
- **After reading:** Reflect on good uses of technology and ways to take screen-time breaks.
- **Extension:** Let students write or draw their own version of a fairy tale where the hero learns how to use technology responsibly.

Computer Science in the Commonwealth

Canvas and GoOpenVA Contracts Extended

Virginia educators and students can continue to rely on Canvas and *GoOpenVA* as essential digital learning platforms through **June 30, 2026**.

Based on final budget decisions, Canvas, (LMS), will be provided to each Virginia public school division for an additional year at no cost. This extension ensures that schools can maintain continuity in their digital learning strategies without disruption. Divisions and schools can also import the VVA Outreach Program's free digital resources and develop their own courses and resources for local teachers to use in their classrooms.

The *GoOpenVA* platform, will also continue serving educators and students through **June of 2026.** This platform provides free access to quality instructional materials, fostering collaboration among educators statewide. The contract renewal underscores Virginia's commitment to access educational resources, allowing teachers to share and adapt materials that align with state standards.

Per the Virginia Education Update **Article:** 2025-18-228.

Engaging All Learners



This month, the ARCS newsletter is focusing on ethics in computing. Ethics refers to moral principles such as fairness, integrity, responsibility, and honesty, character traits that we strive to develop in all students. Computing ethics extends those attributes to behaviors that occur through digital tools such as computers, tablets, and cell phones. As we work toward establishing digital citizenship in our classrooms, we are obligated to ensure that our students apply these strategies to their online activity, celebrating those qualities that enhance diversity rather than using them to isolate, bully, or even threaten their peers – or inadvertently do things that may bring harm to themselves such as revealing personal information on a public website or app. Elementary-age students may seem young for such activities, but it is never too early to plant the seeds of online safety. **Click here** to review a brief article from kidshealth.org that outlines simple steps that teachers (and parents!) can take to begin the conversation on computing ethics.

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