

I want to participate in CSEdWeek, but am very busy!

It will only take a few minutes to do these activities and sign the pledge

<http://www.csedweek.org/forms/sign/pledge-step1>.

Who: You.

What: Participation in CSEd Week can be very simple. If you have five minutes, you can be a part of the effort. Here's how...

Introduce a young person to some basic programming tools developed by computer scientists at MIT and Carnegie Mellon. Scratch (<http://scratch.mit.edu/>) is a programming language that makes it easy to create interactive stories, animations, games, music, and art, and to share the creations on the web. Alice (<http://alice.org/>) is a teaching tool for introductory computing that uses 3-D graphics and a drag-and-drop interface to facilitate a more engaging, less frustrating first programming experience. Share these websites with young people you know and let them start experimenting! It could spark an interest and career in one of the country's most lucrative fields.

Take a look at some of the statistics that spell out the tremendous need for computer scientists. While the country struggles with unemployment figures, there are thousands of high-paying vacancies that are going unfilled in the computing industry. Computing in the Core has resources that discuss the opportunities in the field: <http://www.computinginthecore.org/impacts/jobs-in-computing>. Talk to your friends and neighbors about the issue and ask questions about courses offered at your local schools.

Think about computing and what it means to you, your family, your employer and your life. Engage your family, colleagues and community leaders in a conversation about how computing touches every person every day. But first, take a look at this fact sheet (http://c2485722.cdn.cloudfiles.rackspacecloud.com/Understanding_Terms_CinC_final.pdf) to learn about how the discussion around computer science in K-12 education can be confused with the use of technology to teach and learn, or learning to use computers. They are very different endeavors.

Share your concerns about K-12 computer science education with your elected officials by using any of the sample communications provided in the CSEd Week Event Planning toolkit (<http://www.csedweek.org/site/page/event-planning-toolkit>). Computer science education advocates are working on the local, state and federal levels to address policy issues that marginalize computer science's presence in the nation's schools.

Why: Computing is a key driver of economic growth and societal change. Many of the most exciting and best paying jobs in the STEM fields require knowledge of computer science, but far too few students have the opportunity to explore the field or take engaging and rigorous computer science courses. In addition, the absence of computer science in our schools means that students often don't know about the exciting and lucrative fields and the opportunities it presents those who pursue it. Ensuring access to quality K-12 computer science education is crucial to America's competitiveness in the 21st Century.

Don't forget to record your efforts with CSEd Week! Even the five minute ones! Sign up for the pledge and get more ideas and resources at www.csedweek.org.