

BACKGROUND

GIRLSCOOUTS AND TECHNOLOGY

Why It Matters

Although technology is one of the fastest growing industries with highly skilled workers in great demand, fewer women than men pursue technological careers. In spite of women's success in diverse areas of the workforce, studies show that many women still choose traditionally female occupations. Research suggests that the pattern begins in elementary school.

Young girls are precocious learners and take the lead developmentally—talking, reading, and writing earlier than boys. However, by the fifth grade, many girls experience a drop in self-esteem and shy away from new challenges in math and science. By high school, boys outnumber girls in advanced science and math classes, creating a disparity in skills required for success in technological fields.

Through programs that provide girls with mentors, positive role models, and access to computers and software, GSUSA is giving girls the skills and confidence they need to explore the evolving world of technology. As technology changes how we live, Girl Scouting is making sure that girls aren't left behind.

Program Activities

The Girl Scouts knows how to make learning exciting and fun. Many girls experience success with computers and technology through Girl Scouting and the following program activities:

- "Exploring Science & Technology" Leadership Institute offers Senior Girl Scouts a unique opportunity to participate in hands-on physics and computer experiments. The weeklong summer event is held at Douglass College in New Brunswick, N.J.
- A national partnership with science and technology museums, universities, and nature centers provides training for leaders on how to help Brownie Girl Scouts and Junior Girl Scouts earn badges and patches in science and technology subjects.
- The "Girls at the Center" program provides girls with hands-on science and technological experience at science institutions and at home. The project, funded by the National Science Foundation, Lockheed Martin, General Motors, and other organizations, currently operates at 31 sites nationwide.
- In 1998, funding from Lockheed Martin provided 25 Girl Scout councils with grants to develop science, math, and technology projects.

Did you know...

- That in 1994-95, only 28 percent of college graduates with degrees in computer science were women?
- That computer scientists, computer engineers, and systems analysts are in the fastest growing field of employment?
- That Eileen Collins, the first female space shuttle commander, was a Girl Scout?

History

If the Girl Scouts' founder, Juliette Gordon Low, were alive today, she would probably be surfing the Web, creating her own Web sites, recruiting Girl Scouts online, and visiting chat rooms. Low was a consummate explorer who, given the opportunity, would have embraced modern technology in her quest for knowledge and new experiences.

In fact, even at the beginning of this century, when women's opportunities were limited, Low led a full and active life. She traveled extensively and pursued a myriad of interests. When she founded the Girl Scouts in 1912, Low encouraged girls to follow her lead and explore the world outside the home. She prepared girls for professional work in art, science, and business.

Over the years, the organization has continued to help girls reach their full potential, extending Low's vision into the computer age. In 1997, the Girl Scouts launched its Just for Girls Web site (www.girlscouts.org/girls), and began offering badges in computer technology through the Internet. Even traditional Girl Scout activities, such as camping and arts and crafts, have been augmented with computer-related activities to better prepare girls for the 21st Century.

Girl Scout Positioning Statement

Girl Scouts is the world's preeminent organization dedicated solely to girls—all girls—where, in an accepting and nurturing environment, girls build character and skills for success in the real world. In partnership with committed adults, girls develop qualities that will serve them all their lives—like strong values, social conscience, and conviction about their own potential and self-worth. In Girl Scouts, girls discover the fun, friendship, and power of girls together. Through the many enriching experiences provided by Girl Scouting, they grow courageous and strong.

Girl Scouts. Where Girls Grow Strong.

Additional Resources

Girl Scouts can earn age-specific badges and patches in technology subjects, including: "Point, Click, Go," "Science in Action," "Ready for Tomorrow," "Computer Fun," "Aerospace," "Exploring the Net," and "Computers in Everyday Life." In addition, the Just for Girls Web site (www.girlscouts.org/girls) provides up-to-date Girl Scout information and encourages girls to navigate the Internet for facts and fun.