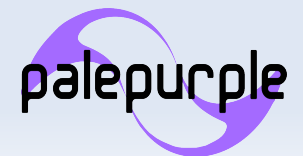


Alternative Advocacy - Taking it to the schools

Katherine Goodwin : PalePurple
<http://www.palepurple.co.uk> / <http://www.codepoets.co.uk>



Advocacy

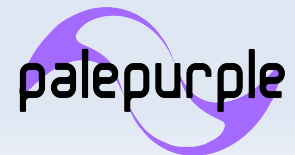
- Like to contribute to the community
- Last year's talk starting my brain running
- Help in a way that makes use of my skills
- and addresses my particular grievances with the wider IT community

My aims

- Promoting software development as a career and hobby
- Encouraging women into computing
- Showing boys that women can succeed in computing
- Improving the quality of software development teaching in schools

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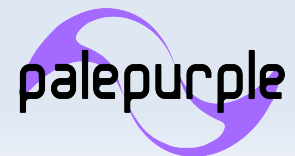
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Promoting Software Development as a career

Reducing numbers of CS and related
students at University
Poor quality of graduates
Who knows what to expect?

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Encouraging Women

- Few visible women at school level
- Little to encourage girls to give computing a try
- Combating traditional attitude of teenage boys

What Could I do?

- Teaching experience
- Whole range of teaching notes
- Control over my own time
- Demonstrate by example

Getting Stuck In

- Approaching local high school offering
 - to talk at careers events
 - to run an after school programming class
- And waiting....
- And chasing...
- And waiting....

Getting Organised

- Finally got a pretty eager reply in the positive
- Came in to visit school and look at setup

Network Problems

- Typical externally managed windows network throughout the school
- Administrator who was eager but not really experienced
- Heavily locked down computers
- Heavily restricted access to the outside world

Getting Linux in

- No problem in principle with Linux server
- Worried about security implications
- Access a problem
- Communication with school network a real problem

What we wanted / What we managed

- Nice network drive mounted over samba
- Access from school and home
- External access to webserver
- FTP to user areas on Linux box
- Access from within school network
- Trips to school for admin jobs

The Teaching

- IT teacher collected 11 “willing” volunteers
 - including 2 girls
- Intended to teach basic HTML /CSS and PHP
- No real end-point in mind initially

How?

- Followed my normal PHP training route
- Explain then do
- Used notes from training courses, modified with more explanation/examples
- Delivered through Moodle so they always had access to notes

Did It work?

- Mostly
- Everyone achieved something
- They particularly enjoyed HTML part
 - even though we stressed good design/CSS (courtesy of our HTML person)
- Numbers dwindled over the weeks

Knock-on effects

- Promote Linux and Firefox
 - Couple of interested students
 - Mostly very dismissive
 - Didn't push it
- Encouraged some to consider CS as a degree

What I did wrong

- Didn't plan far enough in advance
 - priorities
- Flow between sessions not good enough
 - jumped between PHP and HTML
- Some gaps between sessions
 - work has to come first

Coming to a Close

- 3 very enthusiastic boys
- Really interested, wanting to continue
- Me too tired!

More?

- Might try again when personal circumstances allow
- Might get one of my employees to do it
- Any volunteers?

Volunteers? Suggestions?

- Would be happy to share
 - teaching materials
 - experience
- Suggestions gratefully received from
 - students
 - parents
 - teachers / technicians