



Panel Summary: Look What I Made! Youth and the Great Things They're Up to Online

Moderator: Holly Hawkins, FOSI

Panelists: Sarah Elwell, McKinley Technology High School; Benjamin McAfee, My Campus Health; Tina Ornduff, Computer Science First Program, Google; Dan Stein, Department of Homeland Security

Overview: A discussion about the exciting and innovative things young people are creating online.

Screen time is no longer just a passive activity. Youth are using technology to create, develop and learn. During this breakout session our panelists focused on what is being done to encourage students to use tech for innovative purposes. They also talked about the need for improvement and greater tools to help students reach their full potential online.

Earlier in the day FOSI showed a video highlighting an app that was designed and created by a group of McKinley Tech students. Moderator Holly Hawkins opened the panel by praising the video and the accomplishments of the students. The discussion progressed into what it takes to enable students to have the opportunity to create something such as an app. The discussion kept returning to the greater question of "Do we have the tools and resources in place to take advantage of kids who are interested in computer science?"

Our panelists talked about how we encourage kids to participate in activities such as soccer or ballet. Parents drive them to practices and games, schools put out money for equipment and maintaining playing fields, but are they providing the same resources to kids who want to be active in computer science? Tina Ornduff from Google suggested that the problem is that we are looking at technology as a separate thing that kids are doing, but instead we need to start asking "This kid is into soccer, what can he create with tech that will further his love of soccer?" We need to start teaching kids that tech can compliment their passions and interests.

One student from The School Without Walls in DC, spoke up and shared that he has been giving the opportunity to create an app via the resources available to him through his school. He is able to take a laptop home with him. He went on to say that his twin sister attends a different school in the area and that she is not given the same privilege because taking home devices is only available to honor students.

Another audience member spoke up, as an educator at a local school, she shared that one of the ways that she encouraged kids to develop an interest in computer science was that she let students teach her and show her how to use new aspects of technology. Sarah Elwell, from McKinley Tech agreed with this approach and echoed that one of the best things educators can do when it comes to tech is let going having to be the leader in the room and let kids step up and show the teacher and their peers new ways to use technology.

The conclusion was that education has come along way in terms of computer science, but it still needs to evolve, we need to do more to encourage youth to use Tech to create, we need to do more to provide them with resources and tools.