

# Computers & Kids

## NEWS

Volume 6, Issue 4

April 2009

COMPUTER  
EXPLORERS

## Explore the World of Children and Pets!

Have you ever met a preschooler who didn't want a pet? Even children who already have a pet can usually name a few more they would like! Before refusing the next request (at the thought of cleaning out one more hamster cage, aquarium, or litter box), parents should know what a great learning opportunity pets offer children!

According to the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, positive relationships with pets contribute to children's self-esteem, self-confidence, and the development of trusting relationships with people. Pets can be the safe recipients of children's secrets. Pets teach children life lessons about birth, illness, accidents and even death and bereavement. Pets provide a connection with nature. And most importantly, pets teach children respect for other living things.

### Do Your Pet Research!

The Internet is filled with advice for families who are contemplating getting a pet.

- The Wondertime site offers suggestions for appropriate pets for children, including low-maintenance betta fish and surprisingly safe rats! (<http://wondertime.go.com/life-at-home/pets/>).
- A list of safety tips and animals for families with young children to avoid is offered at the Centers for Disease Control website ([www.cdc.gov/HEALTHYPETS/child.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/HEALTHYPETS/child.htm)).
- The Humane Society sponsors a great site where children can learn more about pets and many other animals ([www.kindnews.org/](http://www.kindnews.org/)).

### Start with a Virtual Pet!

If, for whatever good reason, your family cannot take on a new member right now, several virtual pet websites might appease your child temporarily. Each of the sites, including the popular Webkinz, is discussed in one article at the Little Kids Games Online website ([www.littlekidsgamesonline.com/virtual-pets-for-kids.html](http://www.littlekidsgamesonline.com/virtual-pets-for-kids.html)). Shidonni is a great website where children can actually create their own animal drawing and then watch it come to life and incorporate it into an environment, games, printables, and more. ([www2.shidonni.com/s/default.htm?af=shidonnihome](http://www2.shidonni.com/s/default.htm?af=shidonnihome)).

The screenshot shows a website with the title "Amazing Incredible Dogs". It features several articles with small images of dogs. The articles include: "How many eyelids does a dog have?", "Do I have because that think like a human?", "Albino dogs", "Do they or false dogs can tell if someone has cancer by sniffing their breath?", "Can any people be a police dog?", "What is the world's longest dog tongue?", "Is a dog smart enough to dial 911?", and "How long can a dog live?". There are also search bars and navigation elements visible on the page.

### Make a Difference with Pets!

Help your animal loving school-aged child participate in community service projects that work to educate people and protect animals. See "Start a Youth Club" at the Human Society site ([www.humanesocietyyouth.org/](http://www.humanesocietyyouth.org/)) for more information on how you and your child can start a club at your child's school that brings children with a love for animals together.

## Buckleitner Box

Dear Parents,

The recent American International Toy Fair had thousands of new goodies on display, a few jumped out that you'll want to know about, especially if you care about giving children a hands-on experience with programming and robotics.

Owi featured an expansion of button-cell powered robots zipping all over the place. First released in 2006, these two-inch long bugs can sense light and touch. Some can even be steered with a tiny, two channel remote control ([www.robotkitsdirect.com](http://www.robotkitsdirect.com)).

Snaptricity is a make-your-own kit from Elenco designed to provide a hands-on experience with circuits; it's one of many electronics kits offered by Elenco targeting schools and homes ([www.elenco.com](http://www.elenco.com)).

While there wasn't much new at LEGO, it is worth noting that the LEGO Mindstorms kits have been tweaked: the 2009 edition comes with three motors, color and light intensity, a sound editor, and a slightly higher price (up to \$280).

Finally, try out Irwin-Toy's very fun I-Top, which has an internal compass that counts its revolutions ([www.irwintoy.com](http://www.irwintoy.com)).

Don't forget to check out this month's LittleClickers to find out how many eyelids a dog has! Happy Spring!

Warren Buckleitner, PhD, Editor  
Children's Technology Review

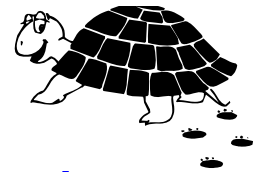
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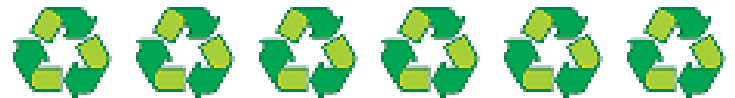
### Thank You!



For Helping Celebrate CT's Birthday!



For Supporting our Go Green Effort!



This is our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and we want to say Thank you for your support. CT is the 25 year old COMPUTERTOTS Turtle mascot and he has been delighting students for years with hands-on active learning.

25 years ago many thought we were crazy to be using the computer as a teaching tool with preschoolers. Over the years we have added school-age skill based classes, after school and summer camps and most recently classes for adults and seniors. Classes are now offered for those ages 3-103 – No Kidding!!

Our technology education tool kit has expanded well beyond the computer to include digital microscopes and cameras, building materials from LEGO® and K'NEX®, robotics, movie making, GPS, and video game design & animation.

Have you seen the Podcasts on our website? The students did a great job! Check out their work at: [COMPUTEREXPLORERS.COM/HUDSON](http://COMPUTEREXPLORERS.COM/HUDSON)



Did you receive our electronic newsletter last month? It was our first and this marks our last hardcopy newsletter. Not only are we saving resources by not printing but we're teaching our students the importance of the 3R's, recycle, reuse, and reduce. Not the same reading, writing and arithmetic we grew up with, but equally important today. With an electronic newsletter you are simply a click away from informative links and child friendly sites such as Little Clickers.

- **YES**, what did you think? What features would you like to see monthly? Internet safety? Great family friendly places to go and expand your child's mind with hands-on activities? New technology trends and terminology? Please let us know at: [Contact Us](#)
- **NO**, we must not have your email address. To add your name to our list please send us an email at [Newsletter Signup](#).

### HELP WANTED

We're expanding and looking for additional **PART TIME** technology teachers. Early childhood Ed or Elementary Ed degree preferred. Experience with children required. If you are interested in one of the positions listed below please email resume to [Christina](#).

- [Preschool COMPUTERTOTS Teacher](#) for western Orange County, 3 mornings per week required.
- [After School TechStars Teacher](#) in Southern Dutchess County Mon/Tues/Wed this spring.
- [Summer Camp TechStars Teacher](#) in Southern Dutchess for 7 weeks July 6<sup>th</sup> – August 21<sup>st</sup>.

Teaching experience and a basic understanding or comfort level with computers and technology is required. Materials & Curriculum Provided.



Have you heard of **Mid-Hudson Family on the Go**? It's a FREE resource listing where Families Find Fun! Pick one up at your local supermarket, library or daycare. Use the *Family Go-To Place Passport* sent home with your child and enter the monthly drawings for a prize package – one winner each for Dutchess, Orange and Ulster Counties. Good Luck and have fun!

Looking for summer camp ideas, check out our classes at [Technology Camps](#). More are being added so check back in a week. If your school, church or community center is interested in adding a tech program for a day or week, please let us know at [Camp Info](#).