Tech News

Tech Club Gallery

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I'd like to see Tech Club kids sharing their work in the Spring Hill Tech Club gallery. To share your work, here are the essential steps:

- Get a user id on the scratch.mit.edu website. This requires parental permission. (Parents, the site is a pretty safe one—kids can't send or receive private messages, the forums are monitored, and there is quick response to inappropriate content.
- Tell me your user id. This will allow me to add you to my "friends" list, as only users on that list can add to the Spring Hill Tech Club gallery.
- When you have an animation, drawing, or game to share, use the "Share!" button in scratch. This is a lot like saving the program, but it saves it on the scratch.mit.edu server, not locally. You need to know your scratch id and your password to do the sharing.
- Go to the Spring Hill SchoolTech Club Gallery at http://scratch.mit.edu/galleries/view/290 and login, so that the "add my projects" button appears. Then you can add your project to the gallery.

Browse through the games in the gallery—many were written by Graham over the summer. When you find a game you like, download it and try to read the code to figure out how the programmer made it work.

New sprites

A lot of times game and animation programmers want new costumes and backgrounds for their creations. One way to get these is to draw them, but some of us lack the drawing skill with the built-in editor in scratch to create the sprites we want.

There are other ways to get new sprites. One is to take images off the web. This is easy to do (using Google image search to find the pictures you want), but could result in copyright violations. Although it is unlikely that a kid would get in trouble for including a picture in a scratch video that is distributed for free, copying without permission is a bad practice.

A better way to create a new sprite is to create your own image, either by drawing or photographing. I will bring my camera to Tech Club, and I can scan things at home, posting the resulting images as "projects" on the Tech Club Gallery.

A digital photograph can be edited with cheap software (like Photoshop Elements or GIMPshop) to clean up the image, change the size, and make parts transparent. A drawing can be scanned or photographed, then edited the same way.

I find it useful to do the rescaling of images in Photoshop Elements, rather than in scratch, since it has better algorithms for doing the scaling. I can also use the "sharpen" filter to make the image crisper after scaling it down.

xkcd.com *Warning: this comic occasionally contains strong language (which may be unsuitable for children), unusual humor (which may be unsuitable for adults), and advanced mathematics (which may be unsuitable for liberal-arts majors).* {quote from the author]