Dear Colleagues:

It's an exciting season here at the Cooney Center, from the launch of the 2016 National STEM Video Game Challenge to the historic FCC vote to ensure affordable Internet access for low-income families. As we documented in our recent report *Opportunity for All?*, supporting those who are under-connected has never been more important to ensure the success of low-income students and families; we commend the FCC for this important step forward.

Find the latest from the Cooney Center on our blog, and follow us on Facebook and Twitter for more updates.

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**FCC Votes to Expand Lifeline Program**

On February 3, the Joan Ganz Cooney Center and Rutgers University co-hosted a Digital Equity Forum at New America in Washington, D.C. to highlight the importance of ensuring Internet access for families with school-age children with remarks from FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler.

In March, the FCC voted in favor of modernizing the federal Lifeline program to include broadband access for low-income families. Read the response from Sarah Morris, Senior Counsel for New America's Open Technology Institute and Vikki Katz, Senior Research Scientist for the Cooney Center, on the necessity of *Building a Digital Lifeline for America's Families*.

"Education disrupts poverty, and technology helps enable, enhance, and support the education students need. If we are ignoring students and families who need Internet access the most, we are failing in our education and community policies."

— Jaime Casap, *The Internet Is For All of Us*

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**Registration for the 2016 National STEM Video Game Challenge is now open!**

Now in its fifth year, the 2016 STEM Challenge is open for submissions from U.S. students in grades five through twelve. Learn more about the STEM Challenge. »

Follow along with this year's challenge on the STEM Challenge Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Help us spread the word by using the #STEMChallenge16 when you post.

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**STEM Challenge Winner Attends the White House Science Fair**

From gravity-defying platform games to science puzzles loaded with informative trivia, previous winners of the National STEM Video Game Challenge never cease to amaze. Olivia Thomas, who won last year's High School Gamestar Mechanic award, was invited to attend the White House Science Fair this week and present her winning game design. Learn more. »
Designing a Reading Experience for a Digital Age

How do you update a traditional fairytale like Goldilocks for young readers of a digital age? Software developer Nosy Crow has a great approach to designing reading experiences for children that both allows them to explore on their own or enjoy together with a parent. [Learn more.]

Connect with Kate Wilson, Managing Director at Nosy Crow, and learn more about children’s literacy in a digital age during this year’s Dust or Magic Highlights retreat. Use the code DUSTMAGIC for $100 off. [Register now.]

Watch the Tap, Click, Read Webinar

In a March 29 webinar presented by EdWeb and Common Sense Education, Michael Levine and Lisa Guernsey, authors of *Tap, Click, Read: Growing Readers in a World of Screens*, discussed how educators and parents can help children grow into strong, passionate readers skilled at using media and technology of all kinds—print, digital, and everything in between. Educators can take a brief quiz following the video to receive a CE certificate via email. [Watch the recorded webinar.]

More From the Cooney Center Blog

**Diversity in Children’s Media Matters**

Research shows that media plays an important role in shaping self-concept and identity, which makes having a diverse range of characters in the media that children interact with extremely important. [Learn more.]

**Tech Is Tech, but Teachers Are Artists**

We invited our colleagues at Common Sense Media to tell us more about Graphite, which aims to help educators find high quality apps for students by criteria such as platform, subject areas, grade levels, and skills. [Learn more.]

**Can Playful Learning Prepare Kids to Be Better Global Citizens?**

Senior Fellow Jordan Shapiro is exploring the way digital learning games and new interactive information technologies can be implemented by parents and educators to promote equality, inclusivity, identity, tolerance, and global citizenship. [Learn more.]

Opportunity for All? Infographic

Despite the challenges that many families experience when it comes to affording Internet access, few benefit from the discounted services available to low-income families. [View the full infographic.]
Team News

As the 2016-2017 Cooney Center Fellowship call draws to a close, current Fellow Elisabeth McClure stopped by the blog to discuss how her fellowship has been a dream come true, while past Cooney Center Fellow Jason Yip reflected on the lasting impact of his fellowship research.

We’re excited to welcome Katy Svehaug as Web and Content Associate for the Cooney Center.

Finally, we hope you’ll join us in congratulating Briana Pressey, our research manager, on her decision to attend USC Annenberg’s School of Communication’s PhD program!

What We’re Reading

- Parent Success Resource Guides via The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
- To Ensure a Right Start, We Need Digital Equity via Common Sense Media
- When Kids + Screens = Happiness via Bright
- French, Spanish, German... Java? Making Coding Count As A Foreign Language via NPR

Buzz-Worthy Bit

“There’s nothing wrong with enjoying [print] books, but it’s dangerous to demonize reading on devices. E-books open up a whole new world of access.”

— Overheard in this month’s Tap, Click, Read webinar chat

We hope that you will join us as an active contributor and a member of our growing community on the web and on Facebook and Twitter as we partner with foundations, policy, industry, and academic leaders to advance learning in our digital age!