

**Title of Session:** FIRST Robotics  
**Moderator:** Patricia Chen  
**Title of File:** 20060523robotics  
**Date:** May 23, 2006

Room: FIRST Robotics Group (K-12)

**PatriciaCh:** did you open the link to the ABC news on Boston Regional and FIRST

**NancyJK:** Hello David

**PatriciaCh** waves hello

**DavidWe:** Nice piece on the News Hour with Jim Lehrer about FIRST Robotics last week

**MarieMS** wave

**DavidWe** . o O ( week\* )

**BJB2:** Pat, did you put up a link to the NewsHour story?

**PatriciaCh:** I missed that ....I was at the school board meeting

**NancyJK:** I believe I watched some of it with David.

**BJB2:** probably archived by now

**PatriciaCh:** I sent a link that was sent by Marc Hodosh...Boston Regional

**PatriciaCh:** <http://bostonfirst.org/BostonFIRSTonABCtelevision.wmv>

**PatriciaCh:** try this one

**MarieMS:** So ladies, since it's just us - can we discuss something that's really troubling me regarding RCU?

**PatriciaCh:** yes...

**MarieMS:** OOOPS - and gentlemen

**NancyJK:** I am "listening".

**MarieMS:** The issue is traction with the high school girls. - I have professional women out the ears ready to help - but no real traction from the students

**MarieMS:** How do we get girls who are interested in the football team, the latest tv shows, etc. to WANT to take the help we offer them

**NancyJK:** I am beginning to think that face-to-face interaction is what they have to have.

**MarieMS:** interesting...

**NancyJK:** I heard students say today that the internet is impersonal and they consider anything done on the computer impersonal.

**PatriciaCh:** With this age group.....face to face works better.....online...works for social only ...it seems that way ...

**NancyJK:** But even the social interaction is not reality-based. At least I think I heard them right.

**NancyJK:** It was a conversation between the Resource Officer at my school with students in my classroom about Myspace.

**BJB2:** what you need to do is get a membership in MySpace!

**NancyJK:** Myspace is a place for them to write their fantasies and stuff.

**PatriciaCh:** true.....the instant messaging to them is like....using a phone...aside from that.....Internet is not real...look at my space

**PatriciaCh:** MySpace....is off limits to us...at least in my district...

**NancyJK:** But I wonder about the imming being "real" to them. They use phones as if there was no tomorrow.

**NancyJK:** There was a small story on tv tonight about an Illinois school that will not allow any of their students to be on Myspace or they will be expelled.

**MarieMS:** I joined myspace - all I get are solicitations to join dating groups! - I'm single but....

**PatriciaCh:** they do both.....at least for my middle schoolers.....

**BJB2:** here's your opportunity to model some appropriate behavior and a learning situation, Marie

**DavidWe** smiles

**MarieMS** smiles

**PatriciaCh:** myspace .....I checked it out ...curious ...to see what the hype was...it is like a pick up "virtual" bar

**BJB2:** can you invite any of the girls to be your buddy?

**DavidWe:** Well, they do give you online resources, right?

**BJB2:** some is, Pat, but it's like anything else...it's what you use it for

**PatriciaCh:** yes.....some of the postings are scary...

**BJB2:** . o O ( and how you use it )

**MarieMS:** I'm just having fun here - so bear with me - could we have a presence on my space for the SMART kids! infiltrate myspace with gracious professionalism!

**PatriciaCh:** why not....

**NancyJK:** Good Question. I could ask the Resource Officer.

**BJB2** smiles happily. You have to meet kids on their turf to engage them

**PatriciaCh:** but ...check to be safe.....I know many kids ...use it...

**MarieMS:** BJ - interesting - meet them on their turf - how astitute - so, is that where we need to make a mark? - should we be "hosting" a network of positive reinforcement on myspace? Does anyone have a comment on that?

**BJB2:** Jeff Cooper, a Tapped In helpdesk volunteer has been doing that for several weeks

**PatriciaCh:** what has Jeff learned?

**DavidWe** tries to catch up with the conversation

**BJB2:** that the MySpace community is like any other community...good, bad

**DavidWe** agrees

**DavidWe:** Yes

**DavidWe:** There's nothing magic about the Internet, except the magic of the Internet

**DavidWe:** People can do bad things; people can do good things, just as in real life

**MarieMS** marie wonders if it's like any other community that has influence points

**DavidWe** smiles

**PatriciaCh:** how do we get around ....some district policy that prohibits students getting on myspace

**BJB2:** even from home?

**DavidWe:** How do you prevent underage people from drinking, smoking, taking drugs, driving too fast, etc?

**DavidWe** . o O ( or for that matter, people OF age )

**BJB2** agrees with David

**DavidWe:** There's no magic bullet

**DavidWe:** Education is a very good shot, but doesn't always hit the mark

**PatriciaCh:** as a teacher.....I have to be careful....even like ordering a drink in a restaurant.....I live in a small community...

**DavidWe:** You aren't allowed to order a drink in a restaurant, Patricia?

**BJB2:** Pat, you do have to be careful that you don't put any naked pictures of yourself up in myspace

**DavidWe** smiles

**PatriciaCh:** I don't put pictures in any thing....

**BJB2:** or post messages like "call Pat for a good time"

**DavidWe:** If you never go outside, you will never get run over by a truck - I WANT to go outside

**DavidWe** looks both ways before crossing the street

**DavidWe** . o O ( Common sense rules )

**PatriciaCh:** it is call Pat for more homework

**NancyJK:** Remember we are supposed to be setting good examples for mankind.

**BJB2** laughs...I'll bet you get a lot of calls!

**NancyJK:** whoops, womenkind??? personkind?????

**BJB2:** people

**PatriciaCh:** LOL....with a few more days left of school....I have kids asking why there is no homework....poor kids....overworked....

**NancyJK:** auuuuh, that will work, thank you

**NancyJK:** few more days.....auch....

**JeffC** joined the room.

**JeffC** waves

**BJB2** waves hi to Jeff

**PatriciaCh** waves back

**JeffC:** Bj asked me to come on over and help you get set up at myspace... is that what you want to do?

**MarieMS:** So, if I were to summarize from a "how to connect with them" perspective I hear two elements - one is face to face and two is a positive influence on myspace

**DavidWe** nods

**MarieMS** waves

**PatriciaCh** smiles

**JeffC:** I think the more positive influences we can add at myspace the better. There are 80 million users there now.

**MarieMS:** All - I think if we talk about myspace we need a strategy before we establish a presence

**DavidWe:** Marie, you can go into the bank and make deposits and withdrawals

**NancyJK:** I have not been there. Is it safe for my computer? Do hackers or crackers go there to get into computers????

**DavidWe:** You can also go in to the bank and try to rob it

**DavidWe:** I use banks

**JeffC:** My strategy for you in a nutshell: 1) Create individual accounts there. 2) Create a Robotics group (pick someone to be a moderator) 3) Think about how to add friends individually, and draw them into the group.

**DavidWe** is curious WHY is FIRST Robotics exploring using MySpace

**NancyJK:** How can we be sure we have "good" people?

**MarieMS** to affect the culture

**PatriciaCh:** you don't...

**JeffC:** Nancy, there are indeed people who will try and get your password... just like they do with your bank info and ebay/paypal info (phishing)... I can tell you how they do that, but if you are not exploring a bunch of profiles there, you don't have to worry about it.

**NancyJK:** okay, thanks for the lesson

**MarieMS:** so we need a STRONG strategy one that stands tall against onslaught - a community of 10 really dedicated individuals who don't degenerate into defensive or offensive behavior

**NancyJK:** wow, it might be hard to not be defensive....

**PatriciaCh:** does Kristen use myspace?

**NancyJK:** I don't know. She might, as she did comment about it the other day. But she isn't here to ask.

**JeffC:** You might want to post to Discussion here and find out who has myspace accounts... my guess most of the K-12 students here already have them. Indeed, I'd be surprised if there wasn't already a Robotics group (or ten) at myspace.

**MarieMS:** And so that says - we establish a network of 10 strong and influential women - in FIRST - beyond FIRST - who are articulate (online) around what we have to offer and build a positive community from there.....????

**PatriciaCh:** I asked Tiff...she has an account ...but doesn't use it....but she knows of many FIRST groups in myspace...

**JeffC:** exactly

**JeffC:** I'm thinking that maybe the group you want to form there would be some sort of hub for those other groups.

**NancyJK:** You never know.....as long as we set a good example for people....and if good stuff can be documented perhaps school boards will not make it against the school code to go to My space.

**JeffC:** get them a place to get together... of course... there is already the FIRST discussion board, this place, etc.

**DavidWe** heads back to Reception

**DavidWe** left the room.

**SallyVa** joined the room.

**JeffC:** MySpace is pretty dead in K-12 schools now... and it will be a long time coming until schools open it up.

**BJB2:** Hi, Sally

**NancyJK:** Hello everyone.

**PatriciaCh:** hello

**SallyVa:** Hello, I'm just getting used to this site.

**SallyVa:** What is Robotics about?

**PatriciaCh:** we are talking about how to connect with the students in cyberspace

**SallyVa:** Wow

**PatriciaCh:** robotics....is about inspiring students to study math and science

**JeffC:** Corinne... check my private messages to you... I need help with password info.

**SallyVa:** What level are we talking about?

**PatriciaCh:** <http://www.usfirst.org/>

**PatriciaCh:** check out this site...this is the home page

**SallyVa:** Well all, I do like this site and will be back, but need to get out now. Thanks for all the help. This old gal is beginning to feel better.

**PatriciaCh:** we meet every other week

**JeffC:** good job sally

**SallyVa** left the room (signed off).

**MarieMS**: Hi ladies and gents - had to leave for a few mins. to get some sustenance.

**JeffC**: ok... I plan on heading to K to 3 Resources

**JeffC**: I'm willing to help set up anything you want at MySpace.

**BJB2**: thanks for your input, Jeff

**JeffC** waves bye (will be in K to 3 Resources)

**JeffC** left the room.

**RobynN** joined the room.

**BJB2**: hi, Robyn!

**RobynN**: Hi all...sorry I'm late, went to a young friend's student art show

**NancyJK**: hello Robyn

**MarieMS** waves

**PatriciaCh** waves

**RobynN**: Hi Nancy - would you mind telling Kristen that I got the check from UNH

**NancyJK**: I visited a school art show last night. These young people are sooooooooooooo talented!

**RobynN**: Hi Marie, Pat, BJ

**NancyJK**: I will let her know. Glad it worked.

**RobynN**: yes, our neighbor is extremely talented, especially in sculpture, she'll be going to art show next year

**PatriciaCh**: what have we decided??

**NancyJK**: Glad you took that the right way. It is hard to tell with this method of "talking"

**MarieMS**: Hi ladies - I've had to go "in and out" due to other commitments



**PatriciaCh:** I thought you would be multi=tasking

**MarieMS:** ah yes, 'tis the story of my life - I know you can appreciate!

**RobynN:** btw, what are we decided

**RobynN:** btw, what are we deciding on?

**NancyJK:** I am also multi tasking...2 hours during the school week at night is a big chunk of time for me.

**NancyJK:** We were discussing rather or not to have a robotic space on My space

**RobynN:** hmmm

**RobynN:** Myspace scares me

**PatriciaCh:** yes...our resource offices spoke to kids about it.....off limits

**BJB2:** MySpace has gotten a LOT of bad press...some deserved and some not

**NancyJK:** I had a resource officer in my room today that talked about it. I will try to ask him what he thinks about trying to have a positive or gracious professionalism attitude on it.

**PatriciaCh:** quite true

**RobynN:** seems like I am in space now...lol

**BJB2:** the problem is that kids need to be TAUGHT appropriate and safe online behavior

**BJB2:** and have that behavior modeled for them, not banned

**RobynN:** this is very true, BJ

**PatriciaCh:** that is the hard part.....some of them cannot even act correctly in school....

**RobynN:** we had a situation like that when we traveled to Atlanta, we went down with another team on a bus

**BJB2:** and who models that behavior for them, Pat?

**PatriciaCh:** I am hoping their parents....I try my best....but in 2 days....I am no longer their teacher....I am history as they say

**RobynN:** the other team's parents made inappropriate comments regarding class and race....some of the kids were embarrassed, but the ones whose parents commented made similar stupid statements

**NancyJK:** We can only do the best we can do with the time we have. Maybe they will remember.

**PatriciaCh:** Parents model good behavior

**PatriciaCh:** that was ...what I was referring to...

**NancyJK:** Always, "your father or mother's child".....

**NancyJK:** No matter what kids say, they are a small model of their parents.

**PatriciaCh:** yes they are.....

**MarieMS:** And so, can I take us back for a moment. -- we need a message the kids care about, a voice they can hear and a mechanism they can hear it through

**RobynN:** did you read the thread on Chief Delphi about an article posted on cnn.com

**MarieMS:** I question how we are executing on every level for our constituents - High School girls. That said - we have so many women who want to help!

**MarieMS** Robyn - part of it by not all

**RobynN:** it concerned Sec'y of Education Margaret Spelling's distress that more young women are not staying in science and math classes

**NancyJK:** ladies, the boys are failing in reading .....what can we do about that?

**RobynN:** I wrote to Secretary Spelling suggesting that she look into FIRST as part of school curricula or at least as a co-curricular activity

**NancyJK:** Boys are not choosing to go to college.....what can we do about that???

**PatriciaCh:** to make an impact.....you have to be there in person.....talking to the kids

**MarieMS:** Ah yes - someone sent it to me

**NancyJK:** A great idea, Robyn!!!

**RobynN:** yes, it ended up being a two page letter

**NancyJK:** We were hoping to get the NH governor to do something similar here

**NancyJK:** But it is on hold for now.

**RobynN:** we are attempting to work with our county's superintendent to make our team's work co-curricular

**RobynN:** and maybe use it to drive some classes

**PatriciaCh:** how?

**RobynN:** I also made contact with someone here, Marie, who is involved in Scouts and discussed the idea we had about using the girls on our team to help the GS's with their badges and patches

**RobynN:** well, Pat...when our kids got excited about the problem of trajectory, they didn't know how to figure out the best way to go, so they asked the physics teacher to explain...and that led a class discussion

**RobynN:** I'm hoping to get a girls VEX team started for next season

**NancyJK:** Isn't it amazing how some things just come together sometimes!?

**PatriciaCh:** that is a great idea

**PatriciaCh:** I suggested to Kevin...that he help the Brownies to get their badges as a way to attract girls to the FLL

**RobynN:** there was a big STEM mentors meeting at our school last week so we had the opportunity to network with a lot of good people...and had two robots working so it gave us lots to talk about

**RobynN:** I agree, Pat, I think that's a great way to get the girls involved

**RobynN:** Marie, is there any chance of finding a PR firm who could help us get the word out?

**PatriciaCh:** it is hard to inspire these young kids.....parents do not always inspire their kids at all...

**RobynN:** I am surprised, Pat, at how many parents do little to inspire their kids

**RobynN:** seems like they expect schools and teachers to do it all

**MarieMS:** Robyn - good question - I have a friend in the film industry - and also may be able to do something with HP or SWE

**RobynN:** I was just thinking about what you asked...we need a catchy slogan and maybe get space in mags that girls read or in places they go

**MarieMS:** In the meantime - CWIT has a film you can use as does CISCO. I'll check with CISCO how to get theirs to you - they LOVE visibility

**RobynN:** plus maybe classroom materials for bulletin boards, stuff for guidance counselors

**MarieMS:** Robyn - right on!

**RobynN:** I have made contact with Anne Spence here at University of Maryland Baltimore county, which is not far away. She is interested in helping, at least locally

**NancyJK:** The RCU newsletter on the shelf in the school library????

**PatriciaCh:** SWE.....has a mentoring program in the winter.....you may be able to get someone to come in

**RobynN:** I like it, Nancy

**RobynN:** how about sending copies to the principals of schools around the country

**RobynN:** get them to contact us when they see what it's all about

**MarieMS:** What a fabulous idea

**NancyJK:** This would take some funding .....

**PatriciaCh:** also mention the scholarship money to them

**RobynN:** we'd have to back it up, though, by making direct contact with girls....the kids will probably be the driving force

**NancyJK:** So....could we start with the schools that already have teams? FLL, VEX, FRC???

**RobynN:** hey...another brainstorm....can we get Weekly Reader to do a story about FIRST or FLL (depending on age level) and specifically about girls getting involved?

**NancyJK:** Perhaps, FIRST would have an idea of how to send something out to all those teams???

**PatriciaCh:** that is a wonderful idea

**NancyJK:** You guys are just bubbling with ideas tonight.

**RobynN:** Maybe FIRST could help with PR as well, and distribute it to existing teams...

**RobynN:** I once personally experienced the power of a Weekly Reader story, back in my pre-children days when I worked for the National Park Service

**RobynN:** an article was written about the possibility of a highway tunnel being built under the Mall and coming out behind the Lincoln Memorial....I worked in the office of the director of the DC National Parks....we got thousands of letters from kids protesting that the Mall shouldn't be touched

**PatriciaCh:** what about other magazines that targets high school girls

**RobynN:** Young Miss (YM)? Seventeen?

**RobynN:** Maybe we could get Seventeen to run an article

**RobynN:** I think their editors may be interested in helping

**RobynN:** we could hook them up with some of the all girl teams

**NancyJK:** There was a small article about BUZZ a couple of years back in a girls magazine....perhaps I can find out the name from Kristen.

**PatriciaCh:** yes...whatever that are reading....some of my students read surfing ...fishing..hot rodding...

**RobynN:** check this article out: <http://flash.uoregon.edu/S01/teen.html> I just googled magazines teen girls

**RobynN:** Seventeen magazine reaches more girls more often than does any other teen magazine. Teen and preteen readers are eager and interested in the world around them and magazines create a sense of community where girls can read about other girls and compare their lives."

**MarieMS:** Great ideas - just think - what is the audience you want to get to - what is the message you'd like to deliver to them, what is the call to action you would deliver and how do we follow through! - COOL!

**RobynN:** I think we should try and find this author, she has pegged exactly what we've been talking about

**RobynN:** I will be happy to find her, maybe she can join us in a chat and offer some advice

**NancyJK:** We do need to find another "channel". this one isn't working. No girls here tonight.

**NancyJK:** And the college ones do not have excuses, right? Aren't they all done?

**RobynN:** well, the girls I've talked to think it's a great idea to have a secure chat room....I just don't know how to get them here

**RobynN:** yes, I think all the colleges are done

**RobynN:** and those girls have different perspectives and may be able to suggest some new ideas for us

**PatriciaCh:** I think we need to send a reminder out to the girls.....I plan to email them....colleges are done....the high schoolers...are taking exams ...

**PatriciaCh:** I am not sure if they get the yahoo reminders

**RobynN:** maybe post a reminder on CD

**NancyJK:** My high schoolers have a month of school yet...we get out June 26th or 27th.

**RobynN:** or just send out emails

**NancyJK:** Perhaps you are right Pat, maybe they don't know about it.

**RobynN:** wow, that's late, Nancy .... our kids are out on the 13th

**NancyJK:** Three snow days. I believe the Governor has let the students out of the 2 flood days from last week.

**RobynN:** wow...we didn't use many snow days

**RobynN:** here's the bio on the author of that article, Marie....how can we

**RobynN:** "use" her? <http://jcomm.uoregon.edu/facstaff/Profile.php?id=305>

**MarieMS:** I'll check Robyn

**NancyJK:** I am not sure what happened to Kristen tonight....she had some items to bring up. But I am not "privy" to them.

**RobynN:** oohhh....she was a media director at many agencies...maybe she can help develop our strategy for getting to the girls

**PatriciaCh:** well...mine daughter is still "recovering" from college...

**PatriciaCh:** I think it is important for the all the chapter leads to meet and talk as well

**MarieMS:** I agree with Pat

**NancyJK:** Well, guys I have to do some internet searching before I can finish up some lessons here.

**NancyJK:** Then get it copied.

**RobynN:** Marie, perhaps you can contact Prof. Merskin....from your position as an exec, she may be more amenable to offer advice and assistance

**PatriciaCh:** great idea

**MarieMS:** Robyn - can you email me with info on Prof. Merskin - I'm really happy to do that - just prime me with info and I can help.

**NancyJK:** But you guys all have so many great ideas. David and I have not done well inspiring students this year at all. We have very few that wish to continue on next year. I guess they were a strange group...or the teachers were!! LOL!!

**RobynN:** what's your email, Marie?

**PatriciaCh:** some kids are hard to inspire....

**NancyJK:** I will check back for the transcript of this for information later on this week when I have a few minutes to digest.

**NancyJK:** night all

**MarieMS:** I appreciate you all! Marie

**RobynN:** we are trying....

**BJB2** waves goodnight. Interesting discussion tonight! Thanks.

**PatriciaCh:** good night

**RobynN:** good night