

# VSTE Minecraft Survival Summer 2017



New to Minecraft? Interested in learning more about this game that seems to have captured your students' attention? This summer, the Virtual Environments PLN will be exploring Minecraft survival mode.

The first live meeting will take place, Friday, May 26, at 6:45 EDT. The team will build a safe house.

Three students from [eastcoastminers.org](http://eastcoastminers.org) will come build recipe frames to show novices how to build the basics.

We will be playing in survival all summer: Memorial Day to Labor Day and helping those with little or no Minecraft experience. The idea is that teachers will learn why their students love this game, while talking with other teachers about how it can be leveraged as an instructional tool in the classroom.

If you have been wanting to learn about Minecraft but didn't know how to begin, this is your chance! You need to get a Minecraft account from <https://mojang.com/>. Then send your Minecraft login name to [K4sons@gmail.com](mailto:K4sons@gmail.com) and ask to be whitelisted.



Visit our website at <https://sites.google.com/view/vstesofs17> to learn more.

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## New Board Members Elected for 2017 – 2020 Term

Five candidates have been elected to the VSTE Board of Directors for the 2017-2020 term. Two are new members while one is returning for a second term. We welcome all of them to the VSTE leadership:

[David French, Virginia Beach City Public Schools](#)

[Heather Hurley, Arlington County Public Schools](#)

[Anita Harris, Cumberland County Public Schools](#)

[Terry Lowry, Wakefield Schools](#)

[Michael Speidel, Loudoun County Public Schools](#)

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## Big Deal Book, May 15, 2017



Maximizing **TECHNOLOGY** in  
the 21st Century Classroom

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VSTE partners with Big Deal Media to bring you the best in online resources for digital learning and professional development plus grant and competition opportunities and more. In this edition, you can Get to Know the EU, Respond to Current Issues, Host a Hackathon & More.

Here are a few of our favorites from this edition...be sure to check the full Big Deal Book for more great resources!

## **Stories of Women in American History**

A substantial portion of the **New-York Historical Society's** fourth floor has reopened as the **Center for Women's History**, a cutting-edge **museum** and **scholarship hub**.

## **Hackathons for Girls**

**Black Girls CODE** hosts community-oriented "girls only" hackathons for girls between the ages of 12 and 17.

## **Game-based Learning with Primary Source Materials**

Recognizing the potential of digital games to promote primary-source use for discovery and problem solving, the **Congress, Civic Participation, and Primary Sources Project** is developing **KidCitizen**, a *free cross-platform app* that provides **game-based learning activities with primary sources** for K–5 students.

[Big Deal Book, May 15, 2017](#)

Not everything in the Book is time sensitive so be sure to check out the [archives](#).

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**National Day of Action for**

# Education

Join CoSN, ISTE, and SETDA on **May 11, 2017**, for a national Day of Action to advocate for the policies that could significantly impact educators, their schools and the students they serve.

## **What You Can Do on May 11th**

On May 11<sup>th</sup>, we ask that you please join educators and advocates all across the nation by taking one (or all) of the following extremely critical actions:

### **1. Send a prewritten letter to Congress**

Use our easy advocacy tool to send this [pre-written letter](#) to Congress about the effectiveness of E-Rate and the Title IV, A block grant, which houses the ed tech provisions in ESSA.

### **2. Tweet #ERateWorks, #MoreTitleIV, #Act4EdTech**

Here are some sample tweets you can use:

- Millions of students are connected to the internet at school because #ErateWorks @AjitPaiFCC
- Personalized and digital learning is possible in schools because #ErateWorks to provide broadband in classrooms @AjitPaiFCC
- Give schools the funding to provide Students with a well-rounded education @[Congressperson] #Act4EdTech #MoreTitleIV
- Every school benefits from #edtech funding @[Congressperson] #Act4EdTech #MoreTitleIV

### **3. Call your members in Congress!**

Unsure who your Representative is? – Visit the [Find Your Representative](#) tool. Unsure what to say? – Here is a script you can use when speaking to staff member of the office.

- I am a **[insert title and organizational affiliation]** and I am calling to urge Senator/Representative **[insert name here]** to support full funding of the Student Support and Academic Enrichment grant program under Title IV, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act. Congress authorized Title IV Part A of ESSA at \$1.65 Billion to ensure that each school district received funds to support access to a well-rounded education, improve student's physical and mental health and improve conditions for learning, and to increase the effective use of technology. Unfortunately, the current appropriation bill falls far short of full funding.
- There is a wealth of evidence that supports the needs for students to have access to a diverse academic curriculum that includes science, arts, foreign language and civic education; programs that support students physical, mental, and behavioral health, and the improve school safety; and modern, classroom based technology. All of these areas are critical to ensure all students graduate from high school ready to enter.
- ESSA consolidated most of the programs that support student health and safety, well rounded academics and education technology into this new flexible block grant. Without a significant investment in Title IV Part A, districts will be faced with the unnecessarily difficult decision of choosing which area to invest in. Full funding of Title IV Part A will ensure that each district is provided funds to invest in each of these critical areas.
- I urge Senator/Representative **[insert name]** to support the full funding if Title IV Part A.

We hope you can join us on May 11<sup>th</sup> to support edtech policies!

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# Leading Ed Forum, October 19 & 20, 2017



VSTE and the Virginia Department of Education are partnering to present the Leading Ed Forum, a two-day conference for school division instruction and technology leaders including chief technology officers, technology directors, and superintendents. Session topics will focus on E-rate, digital equity, 1:1 initiatives, and student data privacy. Broadband connectivity will be a special focus on Friday, October 20.

The conference will be held October 19 – 20, 2017, 8:00 AM to 4 PM, at Daniel Technology Center, Germanna Community College, Culpeper, Virginia.

[Registration Open Now](#)

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## Big Deal Book, May 1, 2017

VSTE partners with Big Deal Media to bring you the best in online resources for digital learning and professional development plus grant and competition opportunities and more. In this edition, you can Celebrate Women in Science, Connect Shakespeare to Hip-Hop & More.

Here are a few of our favorites from this edition...be sure to check the full Big Deal Book for more great resources!

## **Global Network of Coding Clubs**

**CoderDojo** is a loosely connected global network of *free volunteer-led, community-based programming clubs* for young people. The volunteers are usually a mix of technical mentors and nontechnical volunteers.

## **Posters Celebrating Women in Science**

A science-trained designer, Amanda Phingbodhipakkiya, has created a series of posters celebrating women in science to connect the Women's March to the March for Science.

## **Educational Hip-Hop Videos**

**Flocabulary**, the interactive learning platform that uses educational hip-hop to engage students and increase achievement across the curriculum, has launched its first **mobile app**.

[Big Deal Book, May 1, 2017](#)

Not everything in the Book is time sensitive so be sure to check out the [archives](#).

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## **VE PLN: Summer of Survival**

This summer, Memorial Day through Labor Day, VSTE Place in Minecraft will hold its first Summer of Survival! Participants will be able to warp to survival mode for a completely

different Minecraft experience. We will discover why our students beg for survival mode at school. It's challenging, but fun, and we will need each other to survive!

You may be able to earn points from your district with your VSTE certificate of participation. There will be a list of achievements to accomplish over the course of the summer. You can complete them in a few weeks or take the entire summer. The idea is to have fun while networking with other educators inside Minecraft.

Participants will need a Mojang account, a copy of Minecraft installed on their computer, and access to VSTE Place, the VSTE Minecraft server. Contact [K4sons@gmail.com](mailto:K4sons@gmail.com) to get your Mojang Minecraft account whitelisted on our server.

Keep up with all the events at the [summer website](#) and the [Google Plus community](#).

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## **TSIP Refresh: Feedback Requested**

The Virginia Society for Technology in Education (VSTE) has drafted new Technology Standards for Instructional Personnel (TSIP).

These standards update the original 1998 standards (<http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?000+reg+8VAC20-25-30>) and represent base level skills that every educator must meet in order to be considered proficient in the use of technology for teaching and learning.

We welcome your feedback on these standards. You can review



the standards [here](#) and then complete a [short survey](#).

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# What Is Instructional Technology?

*Members of the VSTE Board of Directors will be taking time to periodically share their ideas and passions with the VSTE membership. In this post, Board Member Tim Stahmer muses on the meaning of instructional technology.*

A primary mission of VSTE is, of course, to help empower educators to make great use of technology for teaching and learning. Many of our members even have “instructional technology”, or some variation on the phrase, in their job title.

But what exactly is “instructional” technology? As opposed to another variety of tech, like the 1977 Ford Pinto.

Ask around and you’ll probably get many different answers to that question, but, since this is my post, here is my twitter-length definition:



**Tim Stahmer**  
@timstahmer

Instructional technology is anything that can be used directly by students to enhance and extend their learning.

That would exclude the student information system many teachers use every day. Certainly the online grade book, attendance system, and other tools in most SIS packages is an essential part of classroom management. But it's not used by students in any part of their learning.

We also drop the learning management system (LMS) many districts provide for their teachers. Think Blackboard, Edmodo, or Google Classroom. Also not "instructional" technology.

I suppose you could make the case that students might use parts of some LMS directly for their learning (a blogging tool, for example). But that's not how they are commonly used. Most LMS function as organizational and distribution systems for content pushed to students, again to improve classroom management.

Also not "instructional": response tools (Kahoot, Socrative), interactive whiteboards, video tutorials (Khan Academy), and a long, long list of curriculum games. Although I've seen a few (very few) special cases, student interaction with these resources is almost always as consumers, responding to material provided by publishers and teachers, not using them as creators.

And for me, that is the fundamental component for any technology to be considered instructional: control. When I say "directly by students", I expect them to have some meaningful control as to how the technology – device, software, website, whatever – is used in the learning process.

So, what would I consider some examples of "instructional" technology?

That word processing program most students use would count, but only if they have some decision about what they will write. It would be even better if their writing was connected to the web, allowing them to present their ideas to a larger,

more meaningful audience. One without a red pen.

We could include one of those slide show presentation programs, but only if the student has some control over the content. And again, let's extend that control and let them determine the tools that will allow them to best explain their ideas to an audience beyond the walls of their classroom.

Then there are the devices that many students bring to school everyday, the ones that too many of their teachers still consider as the antithesis of "instructional". Beyond providing access to vast amounts of information, those so-called phones are also powerful creative tools that can be used to record, edit, and distribute still images, audio, and video. Tools students can use in many, many ways to communicate their thoughts, ideas, and learning.

Of course, all of the above is only my opinion. But what do you think? How would you define "instructional technology" (or it's shorter, equally vague sibling "edtech")? Tweet your ideas to @timstahmer and @vste and let's have that conversation. Or post a longer comment to [this post on my blog](#).

Because in the end, the terminology we use when discussing these issues – with our colleagues, the community, legislators – does matter. We must be very clear when advocating for the use of technology in our schools and why it makes a difference for students.



*Tim has been helping educators make better use of technology for teaching and learning at his website [AssortedStuff](#) since*

the turn of the century. He also loves to connect with interesting people on [Twitter](#) and is a member of the VSTE Board of Directors and serves on the conference committee.

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## Big Deal Book, April 17, 2017



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Partners with Big Deal Media to bring you the best in online resources for digital learning and professional development plus grant and competition opportunities and more. In this edition, you can Program a Robot, Converse with Scientists, Thank a Teacher & More.

Here are a few of our favorites from this edition...be sure to check the full Big Deal Book for more great resources!

### **Weekly Poetry Radio Series**

During April, **National Poetry Month**, students can embark on a journey into the world of daily poetry by tuning into **PoetryNow**, a weekly **radio series** that features some of today's most accomplished and innovative poets.

### **Meaningful Making Projects**

Illustrated with color photos of real student work, **Meaningful Making: Projects and Inspirations for FabLabs and Makerspaces** contains project ideas, articles, and best practices from educators at the forefront of making and hands-

on education.

## **American History Through Stories of Diversity**

Teachers, students, and the general public can dive into the diversity of American history at **OneHistory.org**, where they can listen to the voices of America, past and present.

[Big Deal Book, April 17, 2017](#)

Not everything in the Book is time sensitive so be sure to check out the [archives](#).