

For Immediate Release

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Gaming challenge: Can Washington students solve 250,000 algebra equations?

SEATTLE – Can Washington schoolchildren solve 250,000 algebra equations in a single week?

That's the goal of the Washington State Algebra Challenge, scheduled for June 3-7, when the Center for Game Science at the University of Washington will give K-12 schools around the state access to a customized version of the popular math learning game DragonBox.

“We hope this challenge will show that algebra concepts are fun and can be mastered at a very early age, even in elementary school– and not just by a few students, but by the entire class. More importantly, we aim to create excitement and enthusiasm for math among young learners,” said Zoran Popović, Director of the Center for Game Science at the University of Washington.

DragonBox, originally produced by a Norwegian company WeWantToKnow, is a multi-platform math learning game that is among the top-selling learning games on the Apple App Store. For the challenge, the Center for Game Science has developed a special online version capable of adapting to each unique learner to maximize learning by every student. This new version of DragonBox has also been adapted to be in line with the new Common Core State Standards for Mathematics being adopted in Washington and 44 other states. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that young people need for success in college and careers.

Educators who sign up their classrooms for the challenge will also receive teacher tools and support resources that they can use in subsequent school years. The Center for Game Science has produced an innovative analytical tool called the Teacher Portal that enables educators to view their students' learning progress as well as provide feedback for most effective strategies for assisting each student.

Live tracking of progress towards the 250,000 equation goal along with a variety of statistics will be displayed on the Algebra Challenge website, AlgebraChallenge.org, during the event. The Technology Alliance, a statewide not-for-profit organization, will provide prizes to the classrooms that achieve mastery of greatest percentage of students at each grade level.

“Washington has a vibrant and expanding technology economy,” said Susannah Malarkey, Executive Director of the Technology Alliance. “We want to see our students learning the skills they need to succeed in that economy.”

After the challenge, educators will receive extended access to DragonBox and the Teacher Tools and Portal for use in the 2013-14 school year. The participants will also have first access to future game-based learning tools developed by the Center for Game Science.

The challenge is a partnership between the University of Washington Center for Game Science, WeWantToKnow and the Technology Alliance, sponsored by the US DoD Engage program, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Hewlett Foundation, and the Broadband office of the Department of Commerce under a Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant from the National Telecommunications and Information Agency.

To sign up for the challenge, please visit AlgebraChallenge.org.

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About The Center for Game Science: The Center for Game Science at the University of Washington is dedicated to finding solutions to unsolved problems by leveraging human creativity and problem solving in a video game context. The Center has pioneered innovative techniques for scientific discovery and education using a model of adaptive specialization for each learner. Its successful projects include award winning scientific-discovery game Foldit, as well as early math learning games Refraction, Treefrog Treasure, that have been played by over 5 million people worldwide. For more information, visit www.centerforgamescience.org



About The Technology Alliance: The Technology Alliance is a statewide, not-for-profit organization of leaders from Washington's technology-based businesses and research institutions united by our vision of a vibrant innovation economy that benefits all of our state's citizens. To learn more, please visit www.technology-alliance.com

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