Barbie has come a long way since 1992, when the blond bombshell of a doll was programmed to say, “Math class is tough.”

Barbie, whose various careers have taken her from aerobics instructor to supermodel to business executive, will next be a computer engineer, a career chosen by half a million Barbie fans.

Computer Engineer Barbie still has her trademark cascade of blond hair, impossibly small waist, feet frozen on tiptoes to slide into her high heels and a whole lot of hot pink.

She also wears a neon-colored T-shirt with a binary code pattern and carries a smartphone and a Bluetooth headset. Her hot pink glasses will come in handy during late nights coding on her hot pink laptop. Before any one begins complaining, Mattel points out that her accessories were chosen with the help of the Society of Women Engineers and the National Academy of Engineering.

Computer engineer will be the 126th career for Barbie, who turned 50 last year. For the first time, Mattel, which makes the doll, asked people to vote for her career, choosing among computer engineer, architect, environmentalist, news anchor and surgeon.
The choice of computer engineer — a field in which men far outnumber women and in which women’s participation has been declining — was announced Friday at the New York Toy Fair.

Lynn Langit, a developer evangelist at Microsoft who teaches programming to girls and works on a Microsoft program called DigiGirlz that teaches girls about technology careers, said she was thrilled about Barbie’s next career.

“We can use any sort of positive influence that we have, because the number of girls studying programming is abysmal,” she said.

Her only suggestion: that Barbie get a multi-touch netbook next. “If Barbie needs any training, I would be happy to provide it,” she said.
1. Technic Ally
Toronto
February 12th, 2010
5:45 pm
In your recent story on Stanford computer science cheats, did you consider they may have been writing on their palms?
Recommend
Recommended by 0 Readers

2. Bill L
Michigan
February 12th, 2010
7:40 pm
Forget it, Barbie, your gig has been outsourced to a hottie in Mumbai...
Recommend
Recommended by 26 Readers

3. a.r.
Los Angeles
February 12th, 2010
7:40 pm
You try fitting more than one line of code on your palm.
Recommend
Recommended by 4 Readers

4. Stoic
New York, NY
February 12th, 2010
7:40 pm
squeaky wheel gets the grease. surely no special interest other than the Society of Women Engineers or National Academy of Engineering has had it in for Barbie over the past decade. Will this stop the decline of women pursuing careers in IT? I highly doubt it. It's a shame these organizations can't identify and understand the root cause of this problem.
Recommend
Recommended by 5 Readers

5. Tom$
Long Island, NY
February 12th, 2010
7:40 pm
If you can't find your kid's Computer Engineer Barbie the next time they're looking for her, better check in the Bangalore toybox.
Recommend
Recommended by 5 Readers

6. Jason Chaw
Austin, TX
February 12th, 2010
Barbie's an IBMer, working to create a smarter planet! :)  

7:52 pm
Barbie's an IBMer, working to create a smarter planet! :)  

7.
Eric
Dallas
February 12th, 2010
8:11 pm
But will it come with a set of all-male coworkers?

8.
Jozeph
in Milan
February 12th, 2010
8:12 pm
... notice her bust-line has significantly decreased in recent years...
Does that mean she's more intellectual?
Can we say that? Bust-line?
Anyway, it's true.

9.
Walker Peterson
Arroyo Seco, NM
February 13th, 2010
12:58 am
So what's Ken doing these days?

10.
Bee
OH
February 13th, 2010
12:58 am
@Bill from Michigan
I guarantee you majority of the jobs are not being outsourced. I am a recent grad in computer science and engineering and I did not have any trouble finding a job, and neither do my (engineering) friends. The only jobs that are outsourced are call-center jobs or some web-based jobs.

11.
Anonymous
February 13th, 2010
12:58 am
What language will she program in? Java, Python, Ruby?

12.
kim
hawaii
February 13th, 2010
1:23 pm
@stoic The root cause of this problem? You mean the grey cubicles, the all male coworkers, etc? I'm not a member of SWE, but how can it be to blame for not fully grasping the lack of interest? Men would feel
uncomfortable, too, if they only worked with women, and had women bosses. I just wish everyone would stop making things pink for little girls.

Anonymous
February 13th, 2010
1:23 pm
Who would pay 20 bucks for a plastic doll with a headset? Mattel seems to have forgotten that it markets to seven year olds.

Fran Taylor
Somerville MA
February 13th, 2010
1:23 pm
If she programs in OpenSCAD or SolidWorks then she can clone herself.

Anonymous 175536
Boston
February 13th, 2010
1:23 pm
She's old style. If you look at her laptop, she codes in direct binary. You sure she's not a hacker from Russia?

Em
Austin, TX
February 13th, 2010
1:23 pm
Hey Bill from MI. You are naive in the extreme. I say this as a Senior IEEE member who has trained many an overseas colleague to take our jobs back home with them. The huge tech company where I've spent my career does, indeed, for the first time in its history, have more employees outside of the US than inside. Like Barbie, I'm a (Senior) Software Engineer, and the jobs that we have been moving (for many years now) comprise the entire range of software development. As a recent grad, you will learn the truth eventually. Meanwhile, good luck to you and have fun!

Carol Guthrie
Darien, CT
February 13th, 2010
1:23 pm
This makes me think of a recent article in the Times about the how women now exceed men in overall college attendance, to their apparent dissatisfaction, at least in terms of dating. Perhaps Computer Engineer Barbie will encourage young women to attend engineering schools, where the education is stupendous and no woman could ever complain about the male to female ratio!
A computer engineer in America is as unrealistic as Barbie's propositions. Then again, the target audience still believe in the tooth fairy, right?

Recommen

19.
Tone
NY
February 13th, 2010
1:23 pm
No, Number 8.

Evidently you have.

Recommen

20.
Anonymous
February 13th, 2010
1:25 pm
> What language will she program in? Java, Python, Ruby?

Perl, of course!

Recommen

21.
Squid
New York
February 13th, 2010
1:25 pm
Great news. Now if only we could deal with society's reverse sexism and have Ballet dancer Ken....

Recommen

22.
Mia
boston
February 13th, 2010
1:25 pm
@Bee that is fabulous you and your friends got jobs, kind of sucks for those of us who DID loose our jobs to design work going overseas. Not the most appropriate place to comment on this but thought I mention that not even engineering jobs aren't safe when places like India and China are churning them out like butter and smart ones too! Good job Barbie, I would very much buy this for my daughter, she is pretty rockin' with her hot pink everything!! We need more problem solvers and students who THINK rather than regurgitate lessons learned in school because the ENGINEER figures out how to get around road blocks not flounder when they realize that they were never taught how to deal with such road blocks in life such as suffering through the economy we have. A good choice for these times! YAY SWE and YAY National Academies!

Recommen

23.
bK
brooklyn
February 13th, 2010
6:59 pm
i think anything that brings a new career idea to the attention of a young girl is a good thing.

Recommen

24.
robinson
mars, ohio
February 13th, 2010
6:59 pm
"Barbie has come a long way since 1992" Hardly!

She has a hot pink laptop, is unreal even anorexically skinny, and wears designer glasses along with her matching hot pink hair band!

Pull the string and she's likely to say "You betcha" or "Give a shout-out for Alaska!" (Is that rouge or rogue?)

Is this a comfort? "Mattel points out that her accessories were chosen with the help of the Society of Women Engineers and the National Academy of Engineering." They all should be ashamed of themselves!

By the way, which accessories? Does the doll come with pink USB drive, hot pink mouse, and pink cell phone? Will we ever get past the sexism of pink?

Recommend

Recommended by 4 Readers

Max Hailperin
St. Peter, MN
February 13th, 2010
6:59 pm
I take it the phrase "a career chosen by half a million Barbie fans" refers to the vote count, in which case it is inaccurate, because it implies that the votes were cast by Barbie fans at a rate of one vote per fan.

Recommend

Recommended by 1 Readers

Post a Comment Suggest a Correction to This Blog Post »

You must log in to post a comment (Register).

Ads by Google

Degree For Career Change.
Get Bs in Consumer Affairs Online. Great Degree For a Career Change!
BamaByDistance.ua.edu/UnivOfAlabama

ITT Tech - Official Site
100+ Locations & IT Colleges Official Site. Get Free Brochure!
www.ITT-Tech.edu/Info.Technology

Search This Blog

- Previous post A Room With One Heck of a View
- Next post Google Co-Founder Hopeful About Uncensored Search in China
Beijing Renews Google’s License in China

The renewal, which allows Google to continue to operate in China, ended months of tensions over censorship.

Stimulus Projects Bring Broadband to Disconnected

A $7.2 billion federal stimulus package will help extend high-speed access to more poor and rural sections of the United States.

Turning the Page on the Page Turn

Microsoft hopes to patent the digital equivalent of a page turn, but it might not be the most efficient way to read on a digital screen.

More on Technology »

App Smart Extra: Mspot and Sirius XM

Two other music service apps are worth considering.

Carrier Lowers Costs With Coupons

A small Wisconsin mobile phone carrier has figured out a way to lower the cost of its unlimited phone service to $35 a month by providing its customers with discounts on retail goods and services.

What Is That New Phone Really Going to Cost?

Phenomenal phones are flooding the market, but which are really a bargain? Look at the cost of the contract as
well as the phone's features.

Visit the Blog »

Maybe One iPad Recipe Begins, 'Dip Apple in Kraft Caramels'

Kraft is getting experimental with an application for the Apple iPad.

Agency Drops Mel Gibson After Latest Episode

Mel Gibson has been dumped by his agency, William Morris Endeavor

ESPN Makes a Decision (No, Not 'The Decision') to Start a Brand Ad Campaign

ESPN is planning to introduce an advertising campaign that seeks to burnish the cable channel's brand rather than to encourage viewers to watch specific programs.

Visit the Blog »

Spill Commission Hires Science Adviser

The seven-member commission assembled by President Obama to investigate the BP spill has hired Richard A. Sears, a longtime Royal Dutch Shell scientist, engineer and offshore drilling expert, to be its chief technical adviser.

Despite the Best Intentions...

Even as the Bloomberg administration promoted tap water over bottled water, the city spent over $1 million on bottled water in the year that ended June 30.

On Our Radar: Toxic Cleanup in Germany

German officials pledge a cleanup of one of Europe's most toxic sites: a leaking nuclear waste dump in a former salt mine.

Visit the Blog »

What We're Reading

Fast Company

Double Rainbow Guy on Viral Videos, the Influence Project, and WHAT IT MEANS

Paul Vasquez shoots video of a double rainbow, freaks out, goes viral. He's not sure what it means. - David Gallagher

itunes.apple.com

Minesweeper for the iPhone
Forget Flight Control. Retro gaming is back. - Jenna Wortham

vimeo.com

Super Mario Bros + stop motion art + graffiti = Internet win

www.prnewswire.com

May 2010 U.S. Mobile Subscriber Market Share

Android gains more market share of mobile phone market, while iPhone slips slightly. - Damon Darlin

gigaom.com

Should You Be Forced to Admit That You Have a Dark Elf Army?

The World of Warcraft players are going beserk. That's not a good thing. - Damon Darlin

Other Technology Blogs

- All Things D
- AppleInsider
- Ars Technica
- Boy Genius Report
- CNet News
- DigiTimes
- Digits
- GigaOm
- Mashable
- PaidContent
- Post Tech
- ReadWriteWeb
- Search Engine Land
- Silicon Alley Insider
- Tech Trader Daily
- TechCrunch
- Techdirt
- Techflash
- Techmeme
- The Register
- VentureBeat
- Wired News

About Bits

Bits offers a steady stream of news and analysis on the technology industry throughout the day from New York Times writers and freelancers. We cover start-ups, tech leaders like Google and Apple, enterprise technology, government policies and the way the Internet is changing how we live and work. Read more.
Barbie’s Next Career? Computer Engineer - Bits Blog - NYTimes.com

Joshua Brustein

Web Producer, New York

Internet, media, technology and society, policy and law.

Damon Darlin

Technology editor, San Francisco

Consumer electronics, consumer issues, pricing

David F. Gallagher

Deputy technology editor, New York

Internet, blogs, search, cellphones

Miguel Helft

Reporter, San Francisco

Search, Internet, online marketing, Google, Yahoo
Steve Lohr

Reporter, New York

Enterprise computing, economics of technology, Microsoft, I.B.M.

- [Posts](#) | [Profile](#) | [E-mail](#)

Claire Cain Miller

Reporter, San Francisco

Start-ups, e-commerce, venture capital, Twitter, eBay, digital culture, technology and society

- [Posts](#) | [Profile](#) | [E-mail](#)

Matt Richtel

Reporter, San Francisco

Consumer electronics, video game business, Silicon Valley, Internet gambling, Internet pornography

- [Posts](#) | [Profile](#) | [E-mail](#)

Suzanne Spector

Deputy Technology Editor, New York

Technology and society, consumer issues, digital culture

- [E-mail](#)
Microsoft hopes to patent the digital equivalent of a page turn, but it might not be the most efficient way to read on a digital screen.
Wikipedia’s Foundation Plans Expansion

The foundation that runs Wikipedia plans to add employees and raise money to finance an expansion plan.

July 09
(4)

YouTube Will Back Its Most Promising Video Creators

YouTube will invest $5 million in video makers whose work appeals to large audiences and mainstream advertisers.

July 09
(7)

Turning a To-Do List Into a Game

A new role-playing game called EpicWin hopes to help people turn mundane to-do lists into an incentive to collect virtual goods.

July 08
(3)

What We’re Reading: iPad Magic

Dark elf privacy, the Web's origins and street magicians with iPads top the reading list.

Companies

- Amazon
- eBay
- Google
- MySpace
- Apple
- Facebook
- Microsoft
- Yahoo

Grated raw beet salad

ALSO IN HEALTH »
- The voices of alopecia