

MAKING THE MOST OF HELLO WORLD

Hello World offers educators support, inspiration, and a network of like-minded peers.

Alan O'Donohoe shares his suggestions for making the most of the magazine

Years before there was a national curriculum for computing, Hello World magazines, or England's National Centre for Computing Education, I had ambitious plans to overhaul our school's ICT curriculum with the introduction of computer science. As the subject team I led consisted mostly of non-specialist teachers, it was clear I needed to be the one steering the change. To do this successfully, I realised I'd need to look for examples and case studies outside our school, to explore exactly what strategies, resources, and programming languages other teachers were using. However, I drew a blank. I couldn't find any local schools teaching computer science. It was both daunting and disheartening not knowing anyone else I could refer to for advice and experience.



Thankfully, ten years later, the situation has improved significantly. Even with increased research and resources, though, there can still be a sense of being alone. With scarce prospects of meeting other computing teachers, there are few people to be inspired by, bounce ideas off, celebrate achievement with, or share the challenges of teaching computing with. Some teachers habitually engage with online discussion forums and social media platforms to plug this gap, but these have their own drawbacks.

It's great news, then, that there's another resource that teachers can turn to. You all know by now that Hello World magazine offers another helping hand to computing teachers searching for richer experiences for their students and opportunities to hone their professional practice. In this Insider's Guide, I offer practical suggestions for how you can use Hello World to its full potential.

Put an article into practice

Teachers have often told me that strategies such as Predict–Run–Investigate–Modify–Make (PRIMM) and pair programming have had a positive impact on their teaching after first reading about them in Hello World. Over the five years of its publication, there's likely to have been an article or research piece that particularly struck a chord with you — so why not put the learnings from that article into practice?

You may choose to go this route on your own, but you could also persuade colleagues to join you. Not only is there safety in numbers, but there are also shared rewards and motivation that come from teamwork. Start by choosing an article. It could be an approach that made an impression on you, or something related to a particular theme or topic that you and your colleagues have been seeking to address. You could then test out some of the author's suggestions in the article; if they represent something very different from your usual approach, why not pilot them first with a teaching group that is fairly open to trying new things? For reflection and analysis, consider conducting some pupil voice interviews with your classes to get their opinions on the activity, or spend some time reflecting on the activity with your colleagues. Finally, you could contact the author to compare your experiences, seek further support, or ask questions.

HELLO WORLD RESOURCES

- Back issues of Hello World can be downloaded as PDFs for annotating and printing: helloworld.cc/issues
- A selection of Hello World articles to read in your browser: helloworld.cc/articles
- Hello World podcast: helloworld.cc/hwpodcast
- A collection of Insider's Guide articles: exa.foundation/press
- Subscribe to Hello World magazine: helloworld.cc/subscribe
- Suggest your article idea: helloworld.cc/writeforus
- Buy back issues of Hello World in print: helloworld.cc/buy

Strike up a conversation

Authors generally welcome correspondence from readers, even those who don't agree with their opinions! While it's difficult to predict exactly what the outcome may be, it could lead to a productive professional correspondence. Here are some suggestions:

- Establish the best way to contact the author. Some have contact details or clues about where to find them in their articles. If not, you might try connecting with them on LinkedIn or other social media. Don't be disappointed if they don't respond promptly; I've often received replies many months after sending a message.

“ IF AN ARTICLE MADE AN IMPRESSION ON YOU, PUT THE LEARNINGS INTO PRACTICE



- “Professionally, writing for Hello World provides recognition that you know what you're talking about and that you share your knowledge in a number of different ways” - Neil Rickus



■ Hello World is five years old this year!

- Open your message by introducing yourself, then move onto some positive praise, describing your appreciation of the article and points that resonated deeply with you.
- If you have already tried some of the author's suggestions, you could share your experiences and pupil outcomes, where appropriate, with them.
- Try to maintain a constructive tone. Even if you disagree with the piece, the author will be more receptive to a supportive tone than criticism. If the article topic is a work in progress, the author may welcome your suggestions.
- Enquire as to whether the author has changed their practice since writing the article, and whether their thinking has developed.
- You might take the opportunity to direct questions at the author, asking for further examples, clarity, or advice.
- If the author has given you an idea for an article or project on a similar theme, they're likely to be interested in hearing more. Describe your proposal in a very short summary and see if they'd be interested in reading an early draft or collaborating with you. ➡

WRITE FOR US!

"We strongly encourage first-time writers. My job is to edit your work and fix grammar and punctuation - so don't worry if this isn't your strength! Remember that as an educator, you're writing all the time. Lesson plans, end-of-term reports, assessment feedback ... you're more of a writer than you might think! If you're not sure where to start, you could write a lesson plan, or contribute to our 'Me and my Classroom' feature."

- Gemma Coleman, Editor

Start a reading group

Take inspiration from book clubs, but rather than discussing works of fiction, instead invite members of your professional groups or curriculum teams to discuss content from issues of Hello World. This could become a regular feature of your meetings where attendees can be invited to contribute their own opinions. To achieve this, firstly identify a group that you're a part of where this is most likely to be received well. This may be with your colleagues, or fellow computing teachers you've met at conferences or training days. To begin, you might prescribe one specific single article or broaden it to include a whole issue. It makes sense to select an article likely to be popular with your group, or one that addresses a current or future area of concern.

To familiarise attendees with the content, share a link to the issue for them to read in advance of the meeting.



■ "Hello World gives me loads of ideas that I'm excited to try out in my own classroom" - Steve Rich

If you're reviewing a whole issue, suggest pages likely to be most relevant. If you're reviewing a single article, you could make it easier by removing all other pages from the PDF and sending it as an attachment. Print-only subscribers should remember that you can also download back issues of Hello World as PDFs, which you can then edit or print.

Encourage your attendees to share the aspects of the article that appealed to them, or areas where they could not agree with the author or perhaps struggled to see working in their particular setting. Invite any points of issue for further discussion and explanation — somebody in the group might volunteer to strike up a conversation with the author by passing on the feedback from the group. Alternatively, you could try inviting the author of the article to join your meeting via video conference to address questions and promote discussion of the themes. This could lead to developing a productive friendship or professional association with the author.

“ WRITING AN ARTICLE FOR HELLO WORLD CAN BOOST YOUR CAREER PROSPECTS

Propose an article

"I wish!" is a typical response I hear when I suggest to a teacher that they should seriously consider writing an article for Hello World. I often get the responses, "I don't have enough time," "Nobody would read anything I write," or, "I don't do anything worth writing about." The most common concern I hear, though, is, "But I'm not a writer!" So you're not the only one thinking that!

Help and support are available from the editorial team. I for one have found this to be extremely beneficial, especially as I really don't rate my own writing skills! Don't forget, you're writing about your



■ "I love Hello World! I encourage my teaching students to sign up, and give out copies when I can. I refer to articles in my lectures" - Fiona Baxter



■ "One of the things I love about Hello World is the huge number of interesting articles that represent a wide range of voices and experiences in computing education" - Catherine Elliott

own practice, something that you've done in your career — so you'll be an expert on you. Each article starts with a proposal, the editor replies with some suggestions, then a draft follows, and some more refinements. I ask friends and colleagues to review parts of what I've written to help me, and I even ask non-teaching members of my family for their opinions.

Writing an article for Hello World can really help boost your own professional development and career prospects. Writing about your own practice requires humility, analytical thinking, and self-reflection. To ensure you have time to write an article, make it fit in with something of interest to you. This could be an objective from your own performance management or appraisal.

This reduces the need for additional work and adds a level of credibility.

If that isn't enough to persuade you, for contributors based outside the UK (who usually aren't eligible for free print copies), Hello World will send you a complimentary print copy of the magazine that you feature in to say thank you. Picture the next Hello World issue arriving featuring an article written by you. How does this make you feel? Be honest — your heart flutters as you tear off the wrapper to go straight to your article. You'll be impressed to see how much smarter it looks in print than the draft you did in Microsoft Word. You'll then want to show others, because you'll be proud of your work. It generates a tremendous sense of pride and achievement to see your own work published in a professional capacity.

Hello World offers busy teachers a fantastic, free, and accessible resource of shared knowledge, experience, and inspiring ideas. When we feel most exhausted and lacking inspiration, we should treasure those mindful moments where we can sit down with a cup of tea and make the most of this wonderful publication created especially for us. [\(HW\)](#)



ALAN O'DONOHUE
Alan has over 20 years' experience teaching and leading technology, ICT, and computing in schools in England. He runs **exa.foundation**, delivering professional development to engage digital makers, supporting computing teaching, and promoting the appropriate use of technology ([@teknoteacher](#)).

YOUR HELLO WORLD PROBLEMS ANSWERED!

I no longer receive print issues. I used to, so I don't know why!
In spring 2021, Hello World emailed all print subscribers and asked them to resubscribe. If you didn't respond, this could well be the reason why. It's not too late - you can go now to helloworld.cc/subscribe and subscribe again. All back issues are available as digital downloads, or you can buy old print issues at helloworld.cc/buy.

I wish I had the time to read the magazine. Past issues are gathering dust on my desk in school!
Take these magazines home or better still, have them delivered to your home. Try keeping some in your car or bag when travelling. Hello World doesn't need to be read from cover to cover in one sitting; try dipping in and out at your leisure. You can also read a selection of articles on Hello World's blog or listen to the Hello World podcast on the move.

My students told me they didn't think the magazine was for them. That's right! Although there are a few articles designed to be shared directly with older students (for example, the data science jobs profile in issue 16 and the healthcare research profiles in issue

17), it's not meant for your pupils. However, your students will, of course, benefit from the magazine indirectly when you try some of the different approaches with them.

I'm a teacher with 20 years of experience. Hello World has nothing to interest me.
If you don't feel that your teaching would benefit from fresh ideas or recently published research, and you know you have nothing to learn from other education professionals, then you're probably right. Would your students agree with you, though? Perhaps you could use your talents to support other teachers, sharing some of your insights, experience, and the solutions you have developed in a future article for Hello World. You're guaranteed to get a kick from seeing your work in print, even if you have already had other work published.

If only there were a Hello World podcast! I would definitely listen to that.
Great news - there is! Search for "Hello World podcast" in a podcast player, or listen in your browser at helloworld.cc/hwpodcast. There are other similarly titled shows, so look for the Hello World logo and subscribe.