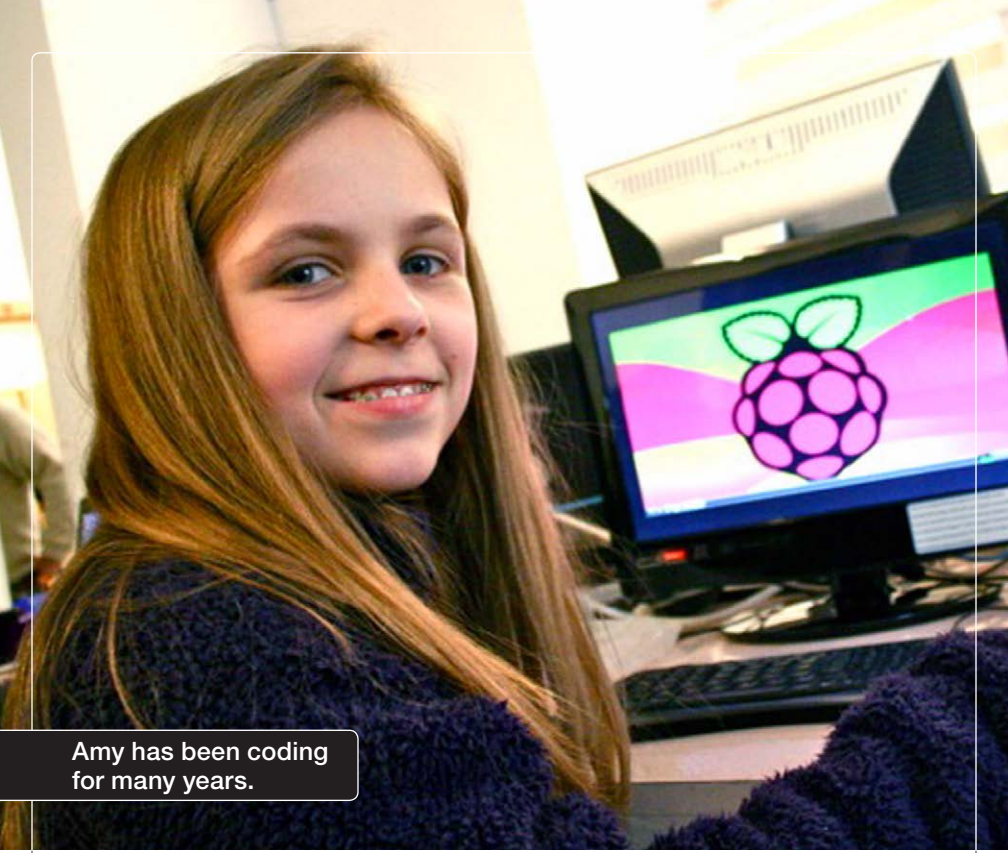

Amy has been coding for many years.

Crafty Coder

Amy Mather is leading the way for kid coders.

By Siobhán McGowan

Amy Mather is a typical teen who just happens to be enthusiastic about all things tech. And we're not just talking about watching funny videos and Net surfing. "It's more about actually making things—with code," she explains.

Coding, or programming, is a way of writing instructions for computers. It can be used for many things. This includes video games, websites, and software. And that's something Amy knows well.

Amy is the leader of the kid coding movement in the United Kingdom, where she lives. She uses computer-programming languages such as PHP and Python to create her own video games. The products she creates have won many awards. Amy was also named European Digital Girl of the Year in 2013.

An Early Start

Amy's interest in coding started when her parents brought her to the Museum of Science and Industry in her home city of Manchester, England. There, she participated in many technology workshops, some of which involved coding. As her interest in coding grew, she began attending other workshops and events run by various tech organizations in her city. By age 12, Amy had learned enough about the subject to start coding on her own. Soon, she was creating interactive volcano models and putting her own spin on classic video games.

"It's so exciting to see an idea work," says Amy. "I do a little happy dance every time!"

Know the Code

However, Amy is aware that coding isn't all fun and games. Computer programming is quickly becoming a growing career field. The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that by the year 2020, there will be one million new jobs for programmers in the United States alone. That number will be far greater worldwide.

Statistics like these have inspired Amy to teach other kids to code. She currently oversees workshops in her hometown. She is also encouraging local schools to include coding in their curriculum.

"We can't progress unless we teach the next generation how to create, instead of consume, technology. This is why I think children should be taught computer programming as soon as they can read and type," says Amy. "By giving students the skills and opportunities they need to write their own computer programs, they will not only have a lot of fun, but they'll be able to code a better future."

p. 1: Alan O'Donohoe/Courtesy Raspberry PI