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## Hammond receives NSF grant to support anti-cyberbullying project



Dr. Tracy Hammond, professor and director of the Sketch Recognition Lab (SRL) in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at Texas A&M University, recently received the Information and Intelligent Systems' EAGER grant from the National Science Foundation, which was given in support of the social media platform, KidGab.

**[KidGab \(/news/2015/01/14/kidgab-on-mission-to-end-cyber-bullying\)](#)**

is a social network developed by SRL Assistant Research Scientist, Dr. Stephanie Valentine, with support from Hammond. Originally designed for preteen Girl Scouts, KidGab was meant to serve as a safe space for children to interact with each other and reduce cyberbullying and oversharing.

Although preteens regularly use social networks, little is known about how they behave online or how this affects their well-being. This is because most popular social networks close preteens' accounts when detected, while purpose-built networks for preteens are heavily restricted in terms of both what users can do and what data is available for study. With this grant, Hammond and her SRL team will investigate why children use social networks and how they influence each other using KidGab.



The team has previously worked alongside Girl Scout councils in Texas and will expand the outreach workshops with new councils. It will also develop new features and activities for KidGab.

The team will also develop methods for studying creativity, conformity and influence in social networks by looking at how children create and adopt each other's drawings in visually-focused activities.

Ultimately, the goal of this research is to build a network that is large enough that the team and other researchers can conduct future studies, and to also build a large enough dataset to answer new questions through later data analysis.

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Photo above: Valentine working with Girl Scouts

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