



A Message from the Director of the National Science Foundation

As [Computer Science Education Week](#) (Dec. 4-10) nears, my thoughts turn to computing pioneer Admiral Grace Hopper. Her vision for easily understood programming languages extended the use of computers far beyond the lab and industrial settings. The National Science Foundation (NSF) shares Hopper's vision of breaking down barriers to computer science (CS). Wider access broadens the pool of individuals creating digital technologies and increases the likelihood that these technologies meet needs across all of society.

Students engaged in CS and computational thinking early on can develop problem-solving skills that will serve them in the future, regardless of the career path they pursue. Yet CS is currently taught in less than 25 percent of K-12 schools across the country.



NSF supports multiple initiatives aimed at developing the critical thinking skills needed to succeed in an increasingly digital world and expanding access for all students, including those historically underrepresented in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) such as women, minorities and people with disabilities. These programs include research on CS learning, development and testing of instructional tools for CS, expansion of traditional STEM courses to include CS and professional development for CS teachers. This latter aspect is crucial to extending CS in all schools since many teachers who take on CS are prepared in other subject areas.

As intelligent systems transform the work environment and leisure time, the ability to seamlessly interact with computers and other digital technology will be critical. That's why NSF has included "Work at the Human Technology Frontier" as one of its 10 Big Ideas for the future. This initiative will explore how humans and machine can collaborate effectively with beneficial results.

Preparing for the future starts in the classroom. NSF's computer science initiatives can ensure that tomorrow's workforce, in all its variety, will have the requisite skills to embrace the abundant opportunities new technologies will afford.



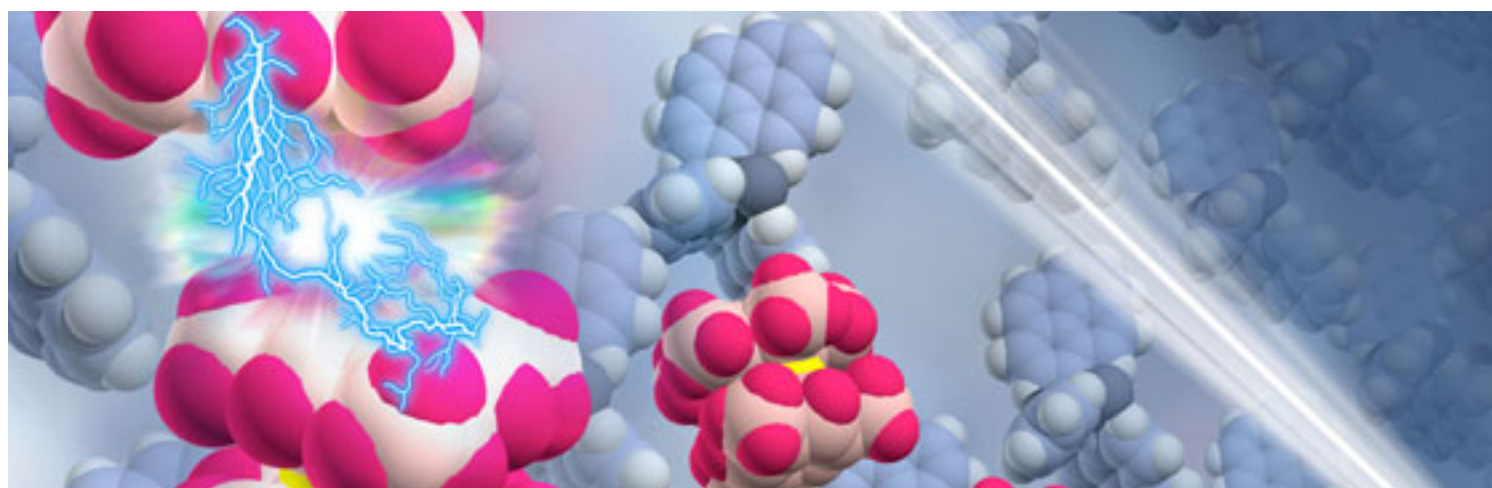
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What's Next?

Dec. 15, 2017 – National Competitiveness Forum, a two-day C-Suite forum to examine America's competitiveness standing, and present the opportunities and challenges for US Innovation growth and productivity. Dr. Córdoba will deliver opening remarks.

Dec. 15, 2017 – Science Philanthropy Alliance Panel at the National Academy of Sciences. Dr. Córdoba will be on a panel discussing the landscape of federal funding.

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