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The International Journal of Graphic Design and Digital Media

International Typeface Corporation

Volume 22
Number 1
Summer 1995

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Circle 1 on Reader Service Card

Announcing the arrival of

the Cyberkids issue

Summer 1995

Volume 22, Number 1

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the designer

International Typeface Corporation would like to thank Rhonda Rubinstein of R Company, New York, for the design of this issue of U&lc.

MESSAGE FROM ITC

by Mark Batty

Defining refining

Seybold Seminars in Boston this spring tackled a broad agenda. While formally presenting updates on technological advances, software upgrades and multiple platform breakthroughs, the conference also introduced sessions on publishing on the Internet as the next direction this industry will take.

Behind the scenes, discussions centered on refining desktop publishing with comments on the increasing cooperation between developers and manufacturers. There were critiques on what could and does go wrong, but the technology is changing so rapidly that representatives from software companies (and equipment manufacturers) made overtures to specialist co-developers to refine and fine-tune software and hardware. This trend is manifested in the various extensions being developed for most major applications. This is a relatively new phenomenon.

Related announcements at Seybold included the alliance of Adobe with Netscape for easier access to the World Wide Web. Microsoft's integration of its online service software as a feature of Windows 95 is also seen as accelerating an online future for a large user population.

With the ever-expanding use of the Internet comes a new form of publishing that is truly reader friendly. One model being touted allows readers to choose news and features from a selection called up on the computer screen. With a push of the print key one may receive a personally selected publication.

Whether on paper or on the screen, typeface design and development is more and more crucial since type is an inherent feature of every communications medium. This was evident from the attendance at the Seybold Font Free-for-All on "Type or Typography Online–New Frontiers or Last Roundup?." The panel here touched on the problems and esthetics of type on screen.

As a more immediate response to the demand for typefaces for desktop publishing, we at International Typeface Corporation are moving in a new direction. ITC is introducing the first in a series of innovative display fonts. These designs, featured on pages 28 through 32, are contemporary headline and image fonts created in response to the need for a wide variety of designs. As ever, ITC continues to develop type for today and for the future.

We can be quite sure as we look forward that today's children will gleefully inhabit the Brave New World of the next century. These "cyberkids" accept computers as part of everyday life: multimedia and online resources are merely the electronic extensions of books and teachers. And the young will determine the role of the Internet. As Nicholas Negroponte comments in his recent book, *Being Digital*, familiarity and ease with computers is generational. Today's young people are already *wired* in the best sense of the word.

One encouraging observation relating to children and computers is highlighted in this issue of *U&lc*. More and more software products are being developed for children, and these are often the best designed products in the digital realm. From this perspective, the future is not only digital, but also well designed.

COVER ILLUSTRATION *by* J. OTTO SEIBOLD

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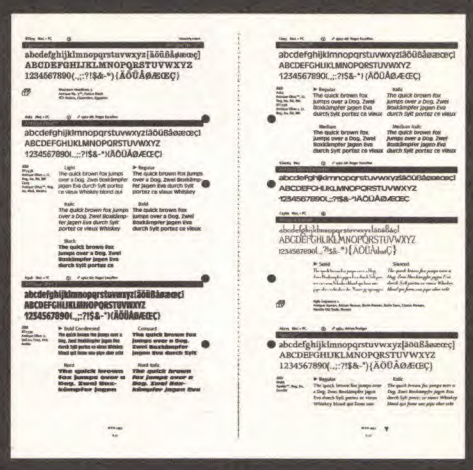

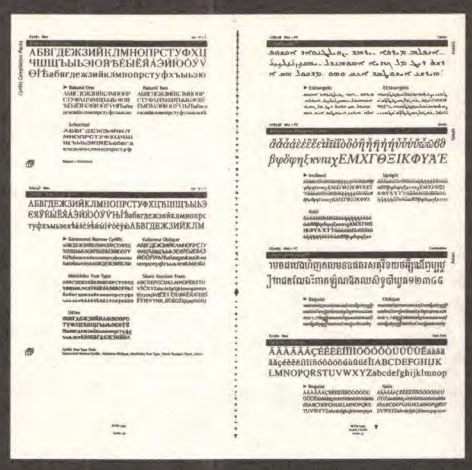

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640 pages, 155 x 297 mm (6 x 11 1/2); published Winter 1993, showing typefaces plus symbols, ornaments, non-latin and special accent fonts from 32 libraries, including Adobe, Agfa, Emigre, Letraset, Linotype, Monotype etc. Plus FontFonts, FontShop's own exclusive range. Edited by Ed Cleary† & Jürgen Siebert, designed by Erik Spiekermann & available from FontShops worldwide.

FontBook Volume 2

320 pages, published Spring 1995, showing the latest releases from 43 libraries in all, including Berthold's exclusive fonts and the new StyleFinder (see below).
30 divider pages by designers from nine different countries; cover by Erik Spiekermann.
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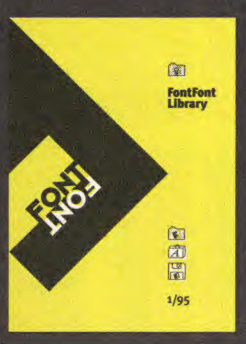
StyleFinder

80 pages, published Spring 1995, showing all the fonts from FontBook Volume 1 and Volume 2 as one-word setting; sorted into Sans serif, Serif, Slab serif, Script, Graphic/Display, Blackletter, Symbols & ornaments, Non-latin & special accents. Designed by *guess who*?, and available from *you-know-who*. Free with FontBook Volume 2.



FontFontBrochure

96 pages, 148 x 210 mm (5 3/4 x 8 1/2); published January 1995. Designed by Neville Brody, Luc(as) de Groot *et al*. Showing FontShop's exclusive range of FontFonts – all 600 of them. Available free of charge, but only from FontShops.

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DAZZLING BY DESIGN

By Margaret Richardson

Dazzeloids **presents a whole fantasy world invented by artist Rodney Alan Greenblat. This interactive CD-ROM is filled with memorable characters, captivating narratives and Greenblat's inventive imagery. Greenblat has merged his own iconography with technical expertise to transform a CD-ROM for children into a new art form.**

Continued on page 8

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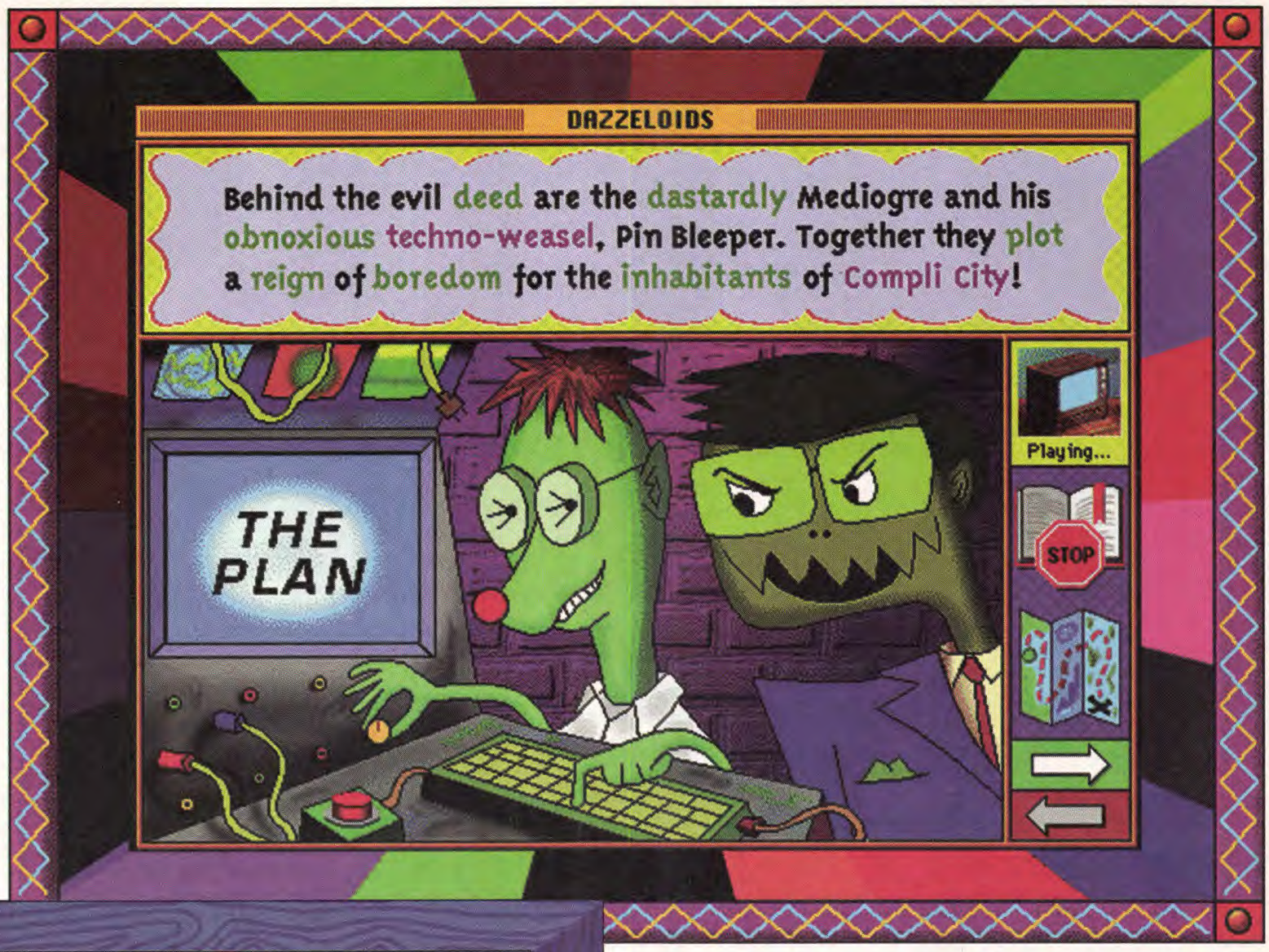
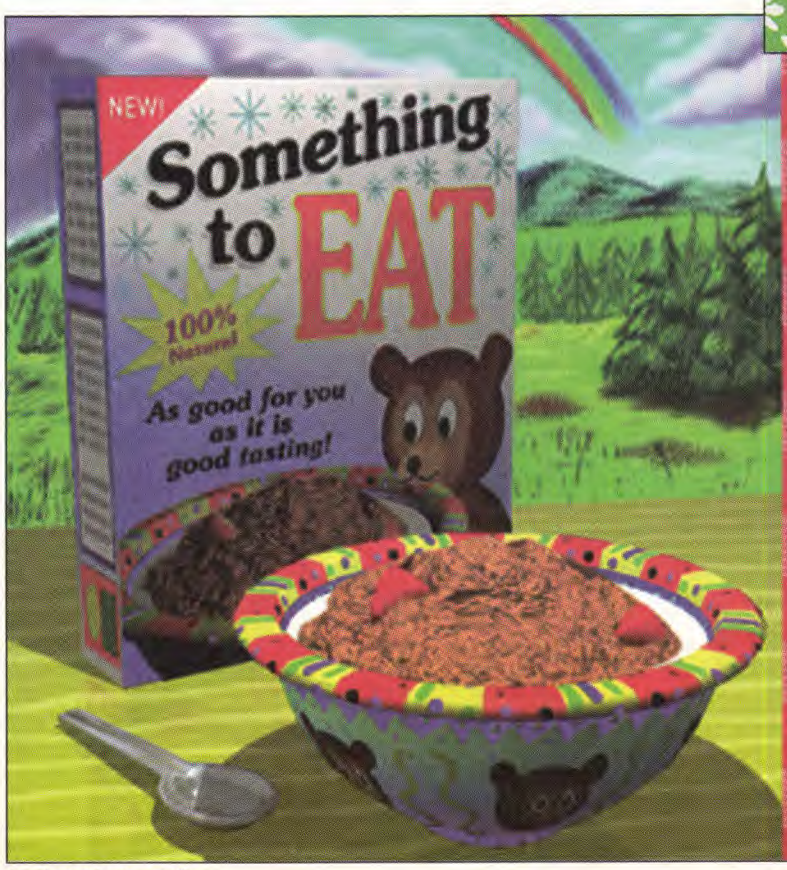
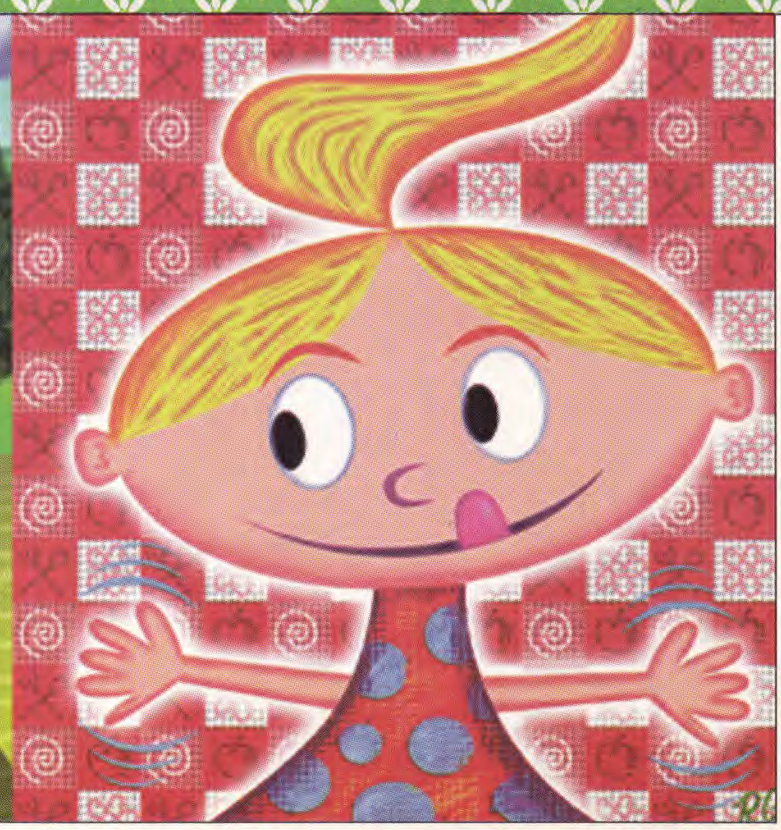






Greenblat's projects include CD-ROMs Dazzeloids (top), Rodney's Fun Screen and Wonder Window (center), and a painting shown at P.P.O.W. Previous page: characters from Dazzeloids.

Continued from page 6

Greenblat brings to *Dazzeloids: CD-ROM Superheroes on a Binge Against Boredom* (reviewed on page 13) the consistent artistic vision that he has explored for over a dozen years. Greenblat's art has always evoked a world of buoyant, innocent childhood captured with Crayola colors and happy cartoon characters in painting, sculpture, furniture, installations and multimedia pieces. His art has generated acclaim since the early 1980s when he was a student at the School of Visual Arts in New York. His "Ark of Triumph" was featured in the 1985 Whitney Biennial and he consistently exhibits in museums and galleries here and abroad with recent shows in Japan and the P.P.O.W. Gallery in New York.

In the 1980s, Greenblat concentrated on his painting and sculpture as those forms proved the most successful for him in the heady days of the East Village art scene. More recently Greenblat extended his craft and his audience. Because his work naturally has an appeal for children, Greenblat wrote and illustrated three children's books published by HarperCollins: *Uncle Wizzmo's New Used Car, Aunt Ippy's Museum of Junk* and *Slombo the Gross*. Greenblat's involvement in CD-ROMs evolved from his interest in music, writing and multimedia (although, as he points out, that word had quite a different meaning 10 years ago), and his acquisition of a Macintosh computer with a color monitor in 1987.

At first he experimented on the computer almost as a hobby, but eventually became more involved in what he could do with it. And when the gallery he was closely associated with for years closed, he focused on developing two software products. He worked on a learning program for preschoolers, and he also began to animate his drawings.

The first eventually became *Rodney's Fun Screen*. To develop this, he recruited a partner and financial backer, the independent film producer Jim Stark. Greenblat took his project to various software companies and this teaching tool was eventually released by Activision, the games and software company.

Greenblat also developed an interactive art piece which evolved from the animated vignettes of his drawings. This experiment caught the attention of Voyager president Bob Stein, who decided to publish it as a CD-ROM. Called *Rodney's Wonder Window*, it was released in 1992 and was unique because it did not conform to anyone's usual notions of what an educational product or game should be.

While developing **Wonder Window,** Greenblat had no experience creating CD-ROMs, did not own a CD-ROM drive, and knew no one who did. However, working with new software for a new medium was enticing, so Greenblat persevered and learned by trial and error. At one juncture, for example, he wanted to combine CD-quality sound with his animations. He found an audio card (Audio Media) that he thought would work, but it didn't function with HyperCard. He discovered he needed interactive software, so Greenblat contacted Macromind (as Macromedia was then called) and was subsequently recruited to be a beta tester for Director, the company's multimedia authoring software.

Greenblat comments that he almost unwillingly learned about making a CD-ROM from *Wonder Window*, but, by the time he was halfway through it, he was up to speed on using the software, and ready to tackle another CD-ROM. For this project, Greenblat had a double agenda: he wanted to push the art as far as it could go, and he wanted to create a commercially viable software package.

The resulting **Dazzeloids** is Greenblat's tour de force. It is a totally integrated CD-ROM. "I wanted to make this a kids' storybook, with a format people could get into, and then put all kinds of wackiness on top of that," he says. Greenblat is certainly the auteur of *Dazzeloids*. He wrote the intertwined stories and his is the voice of the storyteller. He also composed the music and sings the songs.

The visual concepts and artwork throughout are pure Greenblat from the startling blue interface, to the graphic cartoon-like icons to the idiosyncratic characters. Greenblat manages to entwine all elements of the function, form and interaction seamlessly, and he adds the dimension of his own QuickTime movies, shifting perspectives, and a mythical resonance. In this effort, as in his other experiments, Greenblat was greatly influenced by his twin daughters Cleo and Kimberly, now 8, who are his inspiration and trial audience.

For Greenblat, the making of *Dazzeloids* was perfecting another art medium, yet moving in this direction was almost accidental. "What happened is the tools have just gotten better," he explains. "I feel that the Macintosh has just grown up with me. Almost everything that I wanted it to do, Apple eventually made it do. The same thing happened with the software. I wanted it to do more, and then the next version would come out and it did do more."

At his studio, the Center for Advanced Whimsy in New York, Greenblat develops his concepts and programs on a PowerBook 540C, while his assistant Jenny Horn works on a Mac Quadra 950. Greenblat will add a Power PC chip to his PowerBook and then upgrade everything. Currently, he is using Macromedia Director 4.0, Adobe Photoshop 3.0, Macromedia Freehand 5.0 and Fractal Design Painter 3.0. He composes music on a Mac IIci system with a range of music software including Opcode's Studio Vision and Passport's Alchemy.

Working on computers and producing CD-ROMs is merely the latest manifestation of Greenblat's art. His experience as an artist has been advantageous in this realm because, he says, "I have the freedom to do things other software makers can't do. I create a lot of things on the fly. For example, I can set up the screens, then realize the potential and, not unlike when I am working with my sculpture, I'll come up with an overall design, but as I work on it and it takes shape, I open it up and do something more. Working with CD-ROMs is even better for this kind of improvisation. I can plan for a certain amount of interactivity, for example, but then when I get it going, I can do something unpredictable."

Greenblat's spontaneity comes from being the sole creator of his projects, and from understanding the technology. He points out that most CD-ROMs are done by committee: "You put a computer in a room and someone says: 'We're going to make a creative product. You're the head of the creative team, and he's the artist.' Then you get all these people in (and maybe David Bowie). Is that how you make art?" he asks, answering, "Not."

Greenblat's next two projects are another CD-ROM for Voyager (still in the planning stages) and a video game for Sony in Japan for its proprietary Playstation system, a new game machine. He is enthusiastically optimistic about these and future projects. For this artist, each new technical challenge is a new opportunity to forge his art.

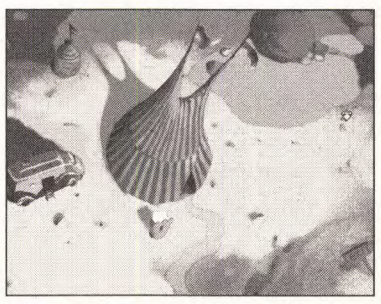
The visual concepts and artwork throughout Dazzeloids are pure Greenblat from the startling blue interface, to the graphic cartoon-like icons to the idiosyncratic characters.

child's play

DESIGNERS AND THEIR CHILDREN TEAM UP TO

When it comes to evaluating software for their children, graphic designers are a tough audience. Nothing escapes their scrutiny. They ask: is it esthetically pleasing? Easy to use? Is it well-illustrated? Does it have nice packaging? A logical interface? Good typography? Their children, on the other hand, have a simpler concern: Is it fun? We asked a handful of graphic designers (and one illustrator) to informally review CD-ROMs and disks with their offspring and record their reactions. Here are their comments.

Photographs by CHRIS BUCK



FROM LEFT: ZOO-OPOLIS, A SILLY NOISY HOUSE, CIRCUS! TOP: DANGEROUS CREATURES

Melissa Tardiff

ART DIRECTOR

& Rose Elizabeth Tardiff

AGE 2

REVIEW

Zoo-opolis, A Silly Noisy House, and *Circus!*

REVIEW INTERACTIVE GAMES AND EDUCATIONAL SOFTWARE

Zoo-opolis

ZOO-OPOLIS HAS A GREAT opener with loud, appropriate music. Its style is cartoony, but becomes downright ugly when videos are played against this bold background. It is very simple and direct, easy to use and follow, with some funny interactive sequences. The music and the games (including one where you identify the closeup of an animal by selecting one of the photos surrounding it) are its best features. Its main design flaw is the use of the awful QuickTime movies combined with the Crayola-cartoon style of the backdrop. Rose danced to the music, and I loved the animal videos and games. I think Rose would have fun learning this way when she gets older.

Zoo-opolis: an interactive zoo tour with movies, games, puzzles and educational fun. Compton's NewMedia: (619) 929-2500.

A Silly Noisy House

THE TITLE SAYS IT ALL for *A Silly Noisy House.* You go through the rooms of a house and click on objects to make them reveal themselves–a music sequence, a close-up of animation, a moving arm, water running. Of the three CD-ROMs we looked at, this was Rose's favorite (and the most appropriate to her age). She loved hearing the familiar songs, laughed at the surprises and liked clicking the mouse. There are lots of things to click on in each room, and very charming and funny things happen, such as when the teapot in the kitchen sings, "I'm a little teapot." There are inventive interactive sequences: a magic wand reveals a dream; by moving the hand you can brush away the foreground to reveal a dream scene. There is also a flashlight in a dark room, which when dragged around, illuminates the room. Rose was mesmerized by this one, although watching my two year-old daughter glued to the computer screen left me with some hesitation.

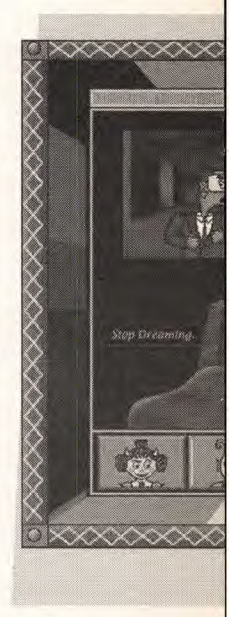
A Silly Noisy House.
Voyager: (800) 446-2001.

Circus!

ROSE LOVED THE MUSIC in *Circus!,* especially the big drum in the music tent, but she was only mildly interested in the animations. Although the animated sequences are well done, there is an uneven quality to some illustrations, which look more like sketches than finished art. There is a lovely quality to other illustrations, and the interface sticks to a nice and simple two button-operation for navigating. However, finding your way back to where you entered a room seemed laborious.

Circus! unfortunately lacks humor. Although the animated scenes are terrific, the interactive component seemed generally limited. There is one nice interactive sequence where you choose men's hair, glasses, mouths and then get to color them. Rose is a bit young to figure out any of this, and her mother is a bit old to feel as lost as she does half the time.

Circus!: An Interactive Cartoon on CD-ROM.
Voyager: (800) 446-2001.



Stephen Doyle

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

& Maud Doyle

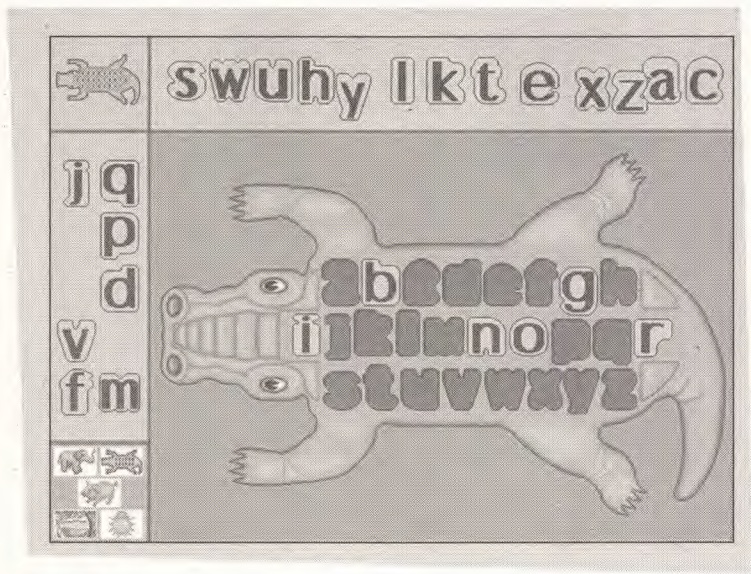
AGE 6

REVIEW

Zurk's Learning Safari

"YOU'VE FINALLY got it working!" exclaims Maud. This is our first interactive computer play at home. "Click anywhere," I instruct her. She clicks on the floor of the cozy-lion-family-at-home picture. Nothing. Then the chair. Nothing. Then again. Nada. She clicks on a colorful box. Niente. Again. Nichts. "What do you think?" I venture. "I like it." she says.

Zurk's Learning Safari consists of "seven engaging games" (Hide and Seek counts as two.) Some highlights: A poky, unwitting lion cub gets lost in some insipid watercolors, ostensibly representing the "bountiful wildlife of Africa's Serengeti" (a leafless tree in a parched grassland). The cub is the cursor. "Go! Straight! Move it!" commands Maud, "C'mon, don't you move?" The cub is a stubborn cursor, frustration runs high. Should the makers have recruited a donkey? It's nearly impossible to exit so I try (unsuccessfully) to sacrifice the cub to an alligator. I ask what she's learning. "Patience!"

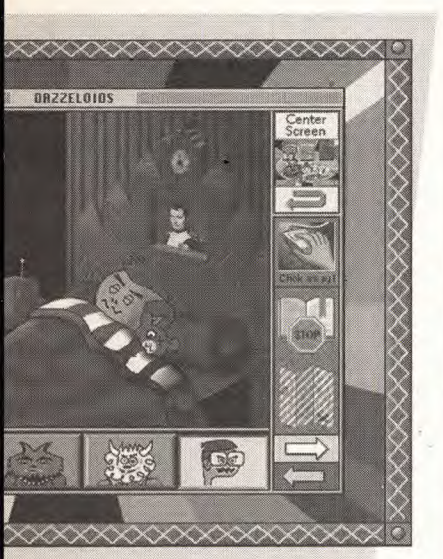


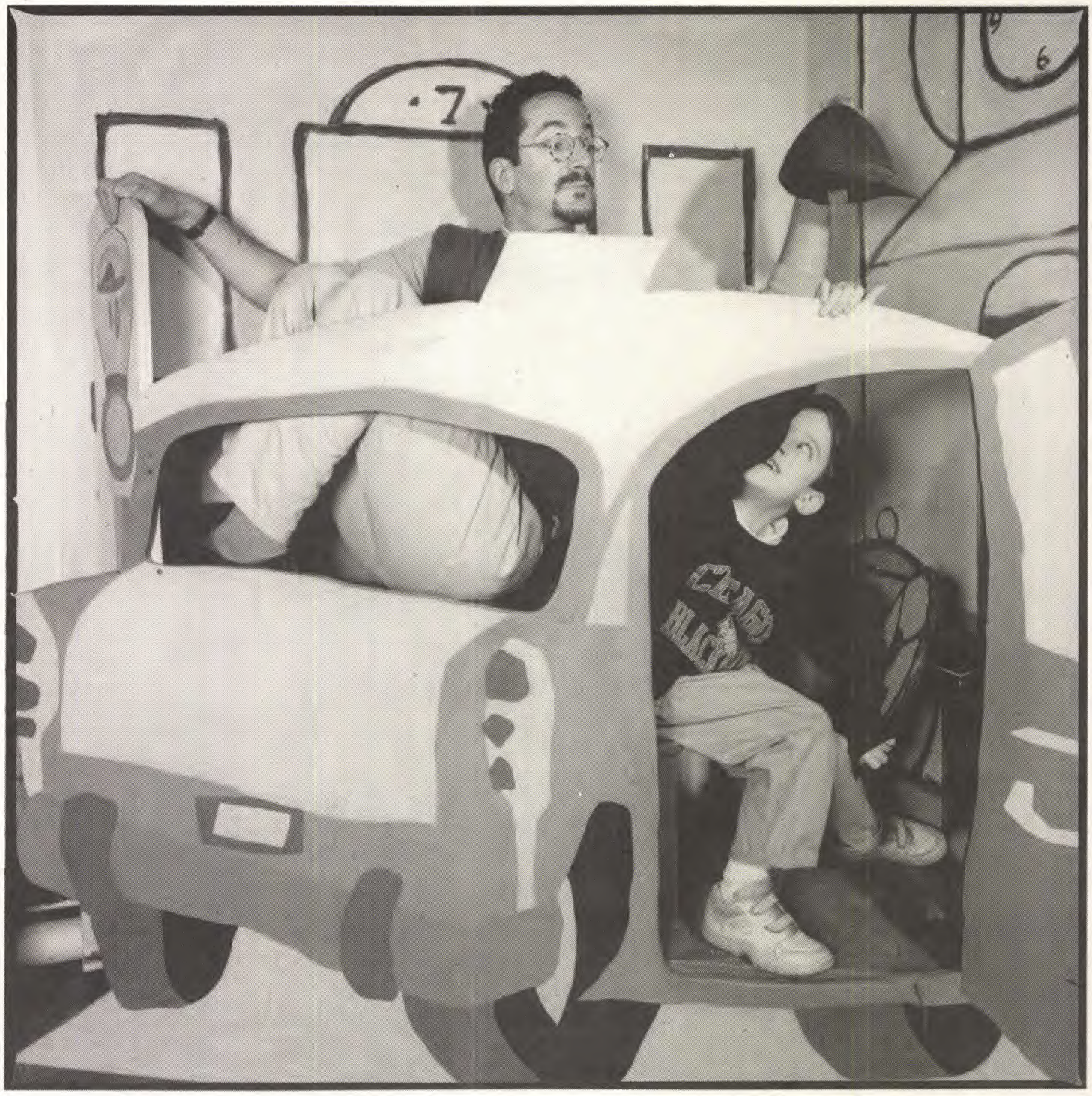
Hide and Seek is an "exciting hunt for camouflaged animals through multiple wilderness scenes." Count 'em: two. One, two. But it's fun enough if you overlook the artwork and tune out the music. The soundtrack is like the PBS "Mystery!" theme performed on a "play-along" organ with the cha-cha button depressed.

In the puzzles, your 3-7 year-old can practice the lowercase alphabet by plunking them into splotches shaped more like Neville Brody's Blur than letters. Or, piece together a pig puzzle, in an inexplicable segue from Safari to Barnyard. See pictures of a Hyrax, Wombat, Caracal and Xenops without scale, context or explanation!

The artwork is consistently poor, the logic is fractured, the five disks are over-packaged. Kids love it. And to its credit, it recommends: "Look at picture books…Read stories about animals and…Go to a zoo or natural history museum." Amen.

Zurk's Learning Safari.
Soleil Software: (415) 494-0114.





Steven Guarnaccia
ILLUSTRATOR

& Jasper Guarnaccia
AGE 6

REVIEW

Dazzeloids: CD-ROM Superheroes on a Binge Against Boredom

MY WIFE, SUSAN, is the computer expert in our house, though Jasper keeps up pretty well. In general, Jasper led me through a selection of CD-ROMs (his artwork on KidPix Studio appears on page 24), although there were times when neither of us were sure what to do next. Fortunately, Susan was our backup. Susan has a daily relationship with the computer. Jasper and I, on the other hand, tend to go the computer like we go to New York now that we've moved out of town–to do something special. Today it's to review *Dazzeloids*.

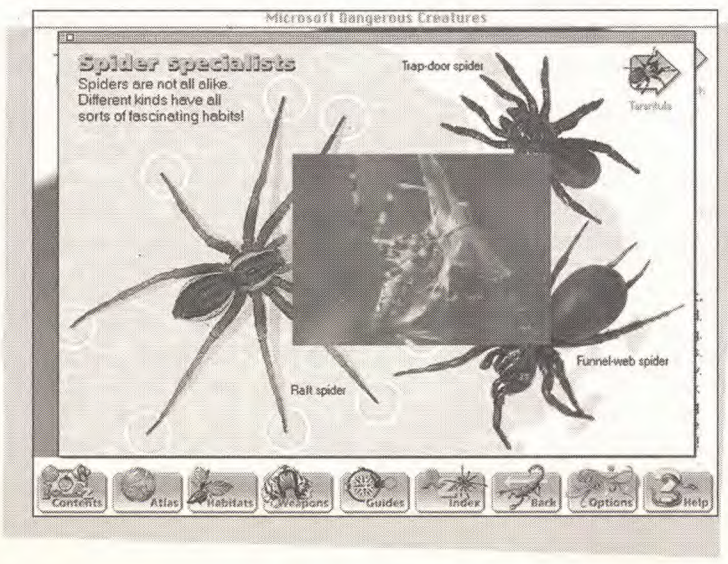
Jasper knew Rodney Alan Greenblat's children's books from toddlerhood, with their game show colors and sincerely positive messages. He'd been inspired to make characters out of cans after seeing Greenblat's Canworld multimedia environment at the World Financial Center in New York, and was also a seasoned veteran of *Rodney's Funscreen* and *Rodney's Wonder Window* (See related story on page 6). Jasper owns a copy of *Dazzeloids,* has worn the *Dazzeloids* temporary tattoos, and has written a fan letter to Greenblat. (I also own one of Greenblat's paintings.) It's safe to say we are Greenblat aficionados.

Jasper was fully in charge here, taking me on a guided tour with recommended stopovers. "Daddy, I want to sing this song–it's good." Jasper gets up and marches along with and acts out the words to the *Dazzeloids* theme song. His favorite character is Yendor Talbneer (Greenblat is far ahead of the pack in wacky wordplay and sheer giddy goofiness). *Dazzeloids* is sweet-natured and uncynical. The tunes are silly and catchy, and Jasper knows the words to all of them. You meet the Dazzeloids first (these are the main characters with their good sides and bad sides spelled out) and you choose one of the story options: "A Child is Bored," is the tale of a boy who watches too much TV; "Banker Spare that Pet Shop," a drama about corporate greed and pets, or "Dazzeloid Dreams," a peek into the sleeplife of our heroes.

Greenblat is staunchly anti-boredom, and his vivid characters guarantee his audience won't snooze. The graphics are funny, garish, sophisticated, childish and they manage to accomplish that neatest of all tricks–entertaining and involving kids and adults equally. And as Jasper says, "All the things you choose are right answers." It's not a game about winning or losing, or right against wrong. It's about fun versus yawn. *Dazzeloids* is clearly the work of someone who has found the ideal medium, a match for his considerable creative gifts. There are lots of small, throwaway moments that Greenblat has tossed in just for the joy of it. You can feel his enthusiasm, and the good time he had making this. It also seems clear that what he's doing couldn't be accomplished so effectively in any medium other than CD-ROM. Jasper and I eagerly await his next offering.

Dazzeloids: CD-ROM Superheroes on a Binge Against Boredom. Voyager: (800) 446-2001.

Carin Goldberg
GRAPHIC DESIGNER
& Julian Biber
AGE 7
REVIEW
Microsoft Dangerous Creatures: Explore the Endangered World of Wildlife



JULIAN LOVES WATCHING *Dangerous Creatures* and plays with it constantly. He likes the games best, especially the matching games where choosing the animal correctly is rewarded with its sound. Although I thought this section was vague, Julian understood it immediately. He also preferred the movies to the static information. The movies made exploring these creatures exciting, funny, icky or scary, depending on the narrative. Julian navigated the CD on his own, which is a real plus. Even with a rudimentary and intuitive understanding of the computer, he found his way around easily. The random access feature (moving from one type of animal to an entirely different one with some commonality) kept the storyline from becoming too linear. If Julian was looking at insects, for example, the next image could be a sea creature with a similarly poisonous bite. For me, this CD-ROM does not live up to its potential typographically. Why couldn't it have a clean and classical presentation (like Dorling Kindersley's *Eyewitness* book series?) I also found the narration at times silly and overly stylized. Julian, on the other hand, found the tone of the voice welcoming and accessible. Any child like Julian who has a continuing fascination with nature will enjoy this CD-ROM and will probably take a long time to grow tired of it.
Microsoft Dangerous Creatures: Explore the Endangered World of Wildlife. Microsoft: (800) 426-9400.

Steven Heller
ART DIRECTOR
& Nicolas Heller
AGE 6

REVIEW
Gahan Wilson's The Ultimate Haunted House

GAHAN WILSON'S *The Ultimate Haunted House: A Game To Delight Monster Lovers* has 13 rooms where players are invited to scour cobwebbed nooks and crannies and secret passages and dungeons. Their task is to find monsters, props and 13 keys that will lead to a variety of eerie surprises–all before the clock strikes thirteen.

For those who were weaned on Gahan Wilson's sardonically macabre cartoons, this interactive CD-ROM has a certain charm. But for the child who has never before experienced a Wilson cartoon, this is a level playing field. Without preconceptions my son entered Wilson's haunted house with only one goal: to have fun. Unfortunately, the results were mixed.

While he enjoyed the delightful sound effects–from a clip of the '70s hit "Monster Mash" at the beginning of the CD to the creaking, crackling and otherwise scary noises throughout–he was less entertained by the drawings than I would have expected. Wilson's comically ghoulish characters seemed curiously mundane. Perhaps exposure to two decades of Sesame Street monsters and scores of other animated otherworld denizens, from Beetle Juice to X-Men, have taken their toll.

Nevertheless, when confronted with a wide array of hot spots, Nick pointed and clicked all over the cluttered screens, and was genuinely excited when his action caused a noisy or graphic reaction. Despite having ignored the onscreen instructions (which I was too lazy to read) he was able to deduce rather quickly that the more monsters and keys he uncovered, the greater the ultimate reward (which is a Gahan Wilson cartoon screensaver that can be downloaded onto your computer). Eventually, he stumbled onto a soundtrack where the comically ghastly, disembodied voice of Wilson himself explained certain rules of the game; for example, props could eventually be used as ransom when one is cornered by a ghost or monster.

Most screens had clear and intuitive navigational landmarks, such as doors leading up or down staircases. But Nick was frustrated when trapped in two different rooms. Clicking off a lightbulb in the attic, for example, caused the screen to go dark and brought out two monsters who blocked his way until one of the props he had found earlier was returned to them. Unfortunately, we had trouble figuring out how to release the props from the prop bag. After about three minutes (Nick was bored after 30 seconds) I randomly clicked on the right spot which took us to the previous room. There we had previously clicked on virtually every hotspot, only to find we could not escape at all. As Nick indicated his increasing disinterest, I frantically clicked every logical and illogical spot to desperately get free. Nick finally wandered off, leaving me to what I presumed was Wilson's wicked trick for parents. As I plaintively asked a higher being for guidance, from the other side of the room Nick nonchalantly said, "just restart the computer, Daddy." Which is what I did.

Such traps are common with CD-ROMs that do not include obvious "skip" or "home screen" buttons; *Ultimate Haunted House* does not have these devices. This is the worst feature of the CD, as well as its annoyingly stiff QuickTime animation, which could be improved. The best features, in addition to the sound effects, are the "scary monster mini-movies" in the monster screening room, which are short clips of weird animated collages. Also tucked away on the disk are some of Wilson's great captioned cartoons, a source of enjoyment for me, at least.

The Ultimate Haunted House is suggested for children ages 8 and up, which was about the age I was when I began reading Wilson's cartoons in *Playboy*. The drawings in this CD-ROM are classic Wilson, and the flaws of interactivity are probably resolvable. So I would recommend it for the targeted age group. Younger children might enjoy it, too, if they're not already too jaded.

Gahan Wilson's The Ultimate Haunted House: A Game To Delight Monster Lovers. Microsoft (800) 426-9400.

Photographs on pages 11, 13 and 15 were shot on location at The Children's Museum of Manhattan. Those on pages 12 and 14 were taken at The Discovery Zone, New York City.

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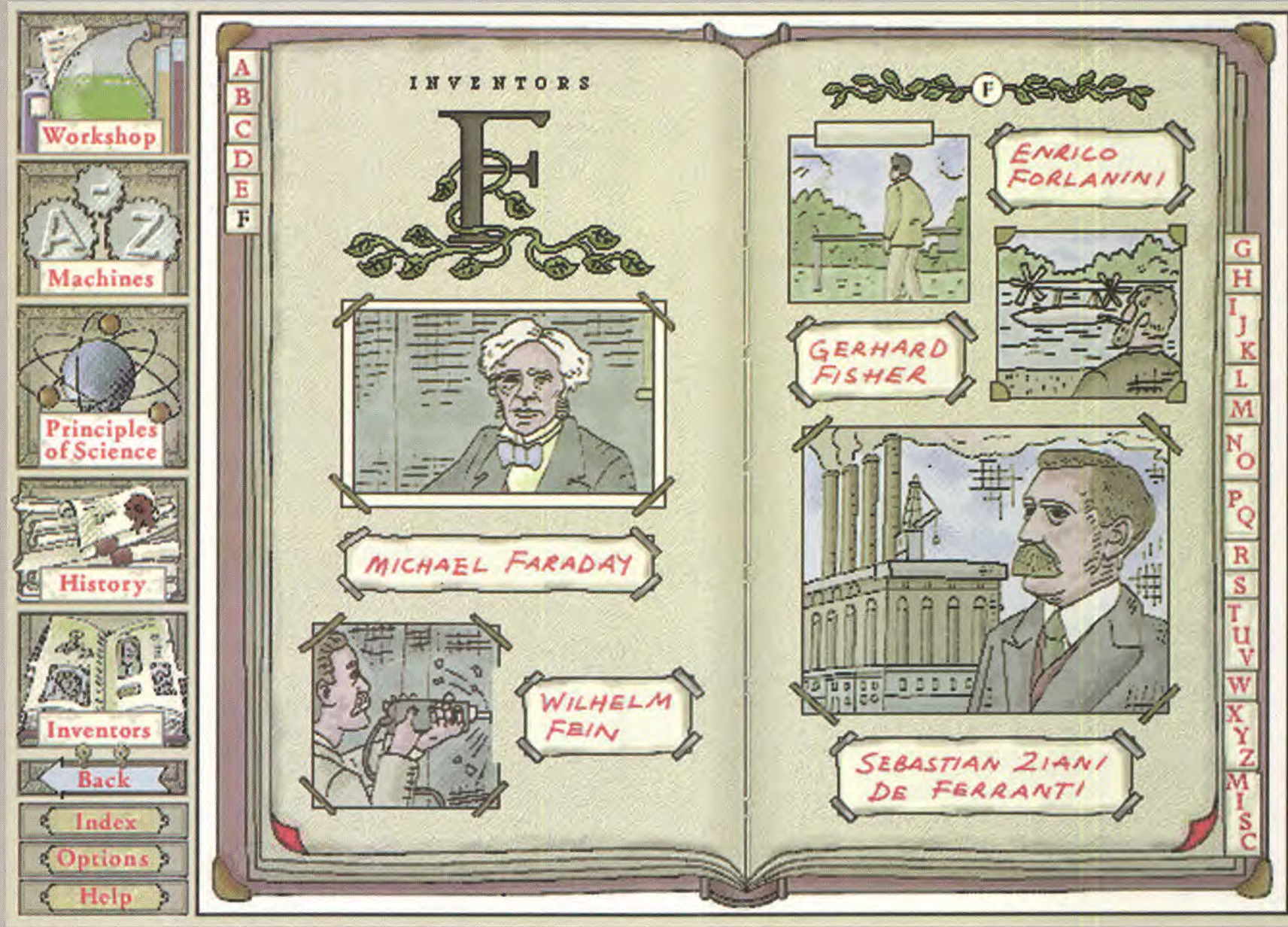
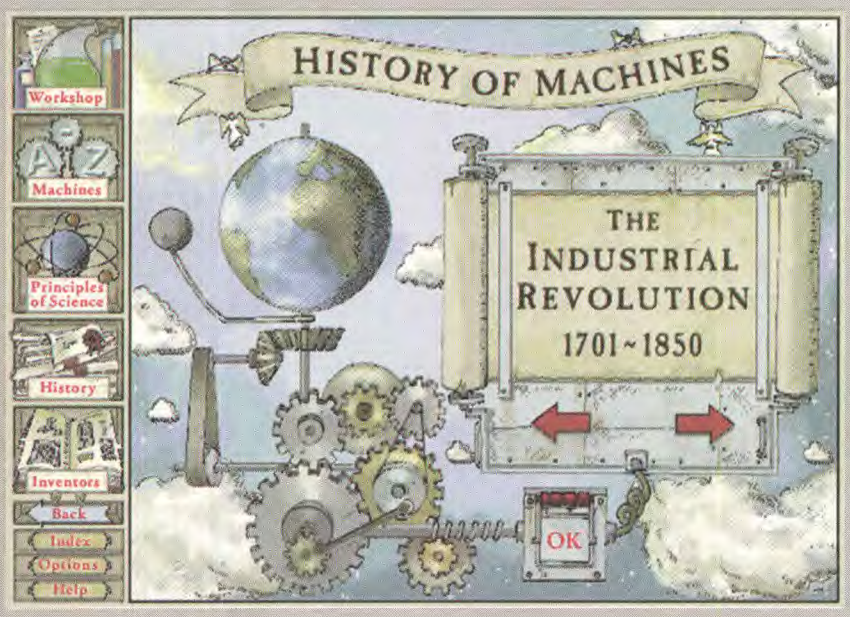
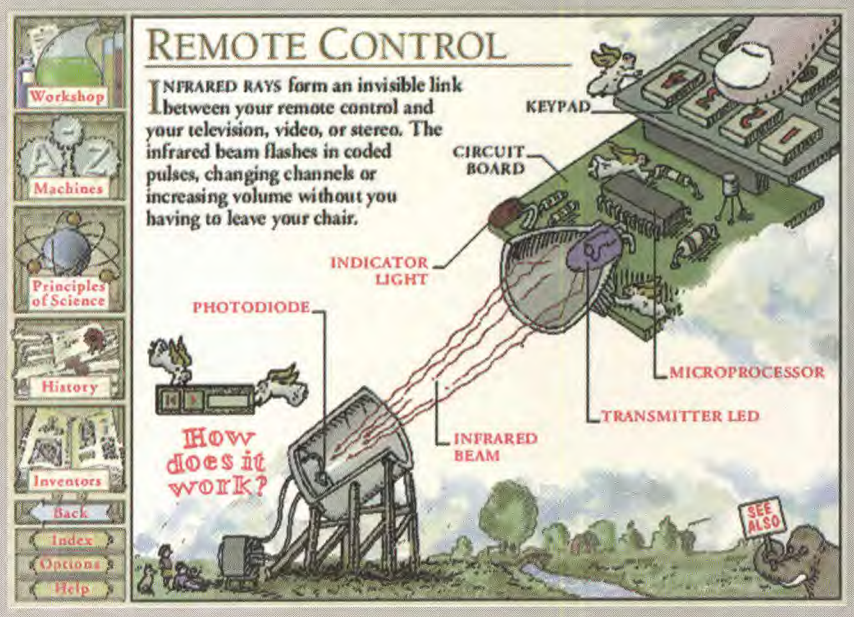
RY THE BOOK

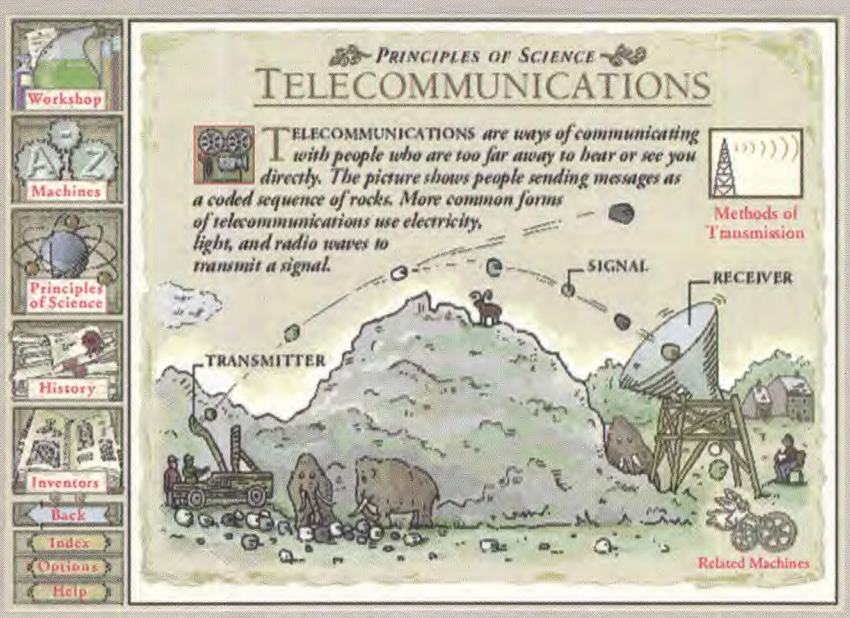
DORLING
KINDERSLEY
applies its printed-page ingenuity
TO
CD-ROMS
THAT
inform, delight
AND
inspire

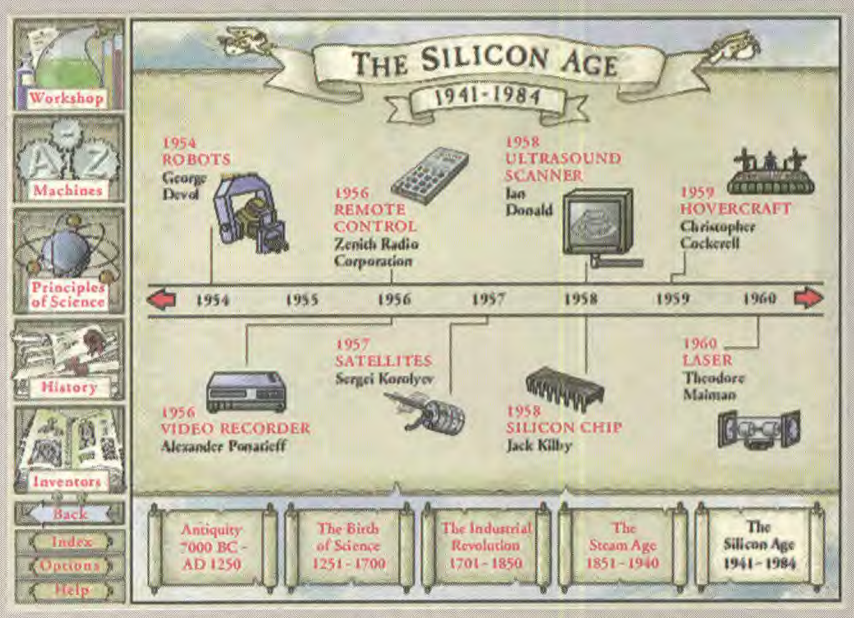
By
STEVEN HELLER











Packed with information, The Way Things Work *is a textbook example of how CD-ROMs can work well.*

CD-ROMs come in two formats: functional and dysfunctional.

The latter is difficult to navigate, hard to read and poorly designed. The former is a whiz to navigate, a joy to explore, graphically well designed, and proves that this type of multimedia product offers viable new options. Unfortunately, the dysfunctional genre has so far prevailed. In the surge to make artistic and market inroads, a great many CD-ROMs have failed to transcend the medium's technical limitations. This is why Dorling Kindersley's premier line of CD-ROMs is a key event in the short history of this medium.

Dorling Kindersley is a London and New York based publisher of some of the most extraordinary nonfiction children's books produced within the past five years. The publisher's series of thematic, mini-encyclopedias on such topics as rocks, flags, space, armor, insects, dinosaurs and mechanical inventions are in-depth reference books filled with beautifully composed pages with photographs and illustrations that inform and delight. DK's first line of children's books for ages five and up are characterized by complex, but accessible layers of text and image. Their trademark is precisionist color still-life photography, silhouetted with natural shadows against a white seamless background, creating an enticing trompe l'oeil effect.

Regardless of its targeted age group, each DK book follows a strict hierarchical structure and applies a rigorous deconstruction of specific information. In a typical book, like the one on sea creatures, each sub-topic is designated its own page or spread on which photographs and drawings show the environment and the inner workings of a creature. The narrative text includes an overall introduction, extended captions for each image, and sub-captions where necessary. The typography does not overwhelm, but allows the reader to either scan the content randomly or read linearly.

With multi-levels of design and various entry points for approaching texts, these books are actually perfect CD-ROM storyboards. So it's not surprising that Dorling Kindersley would enter the multimedia field like gangbusters. It is not just chance that these first four CD-ROM offerings are as innovative as books–these are already successful books brought digitally to life.

But before reviewing *My First Incredible, Amazing Dictionary, The Way Things Work, The Ultimate Human Body, and Stephen Biesty's Incredible Cross-Sections: Stowaway,* it should be noted that DK's most important innovation is quite simple: while most CD-ROM visuals appear onscreen in a rectangular box stuck in the center of the computer screen, DK's CD-ROMs fill the entire screen area. With most CD-ROMs the inner screen is like watching a TV in a TV. Not only does viewing it contribute to eye strain, but it forces the viewer to be overly conscious of the medium. Filling the screen, on the other hand, focuses the viewer's attention solely on the image, not the box in which it appears. Another innovative touch is the enjoyable sound and music effects sequence that plays over the first title screen for the duration of the 60 to 90 second downloading time. On many CD-ROMs this otherwise short interval seems to take forever, but with these disks, the time flies as the effects percolate. The usual CD-ROM annoyances are kept to a minimum. (All titles are available in Mac and Windows formats.)

My First Incredible, Amazing Dictionary

DORLING KINDERSLEY'S UNDERSTANDING of the medium underscores its sense of what is appropriate multimedia material. *My First Incredible, Amazing Dictionary* offers early readers their first 1,000 words in such an exciting verbal and visual context that most traditional dictionaries will pale by comparison. The viewer is grabbed immediately by an opening screen that rejects the clichéd alphabet block motif in favor of an animated Century Schoolbook alphabet running along the top of the screen with a potpourri of photos, drawings and pictographs below. A soothing female voice (unlike any grade school teacher I ever had) gives instructions, but once the child clicks on a letterform–which is immediately illuminated–intuition guides navigation. For the child unfamiliar with letters, an illustrated matrix shows the relationship of word to letter with "hot" boxes that, when clicked on, call up a specific word screen. Each word is beautifully illustrated in a precisionist style and defined in the text. By clicking on a megaphone icon you can also hear the definition. At the bottom of the image area a small box features related pictures; click here and call up additional words. Along the bottom of the screen are easy to understand navigational devices, including buttons for quick search, quit, return and the ingenious "surprise me" icon, which selects words that the child has not yet found. If this dictionary does not inspire the child (or the adult), it must be that the computer is malfunctioning.

The Way Things Work

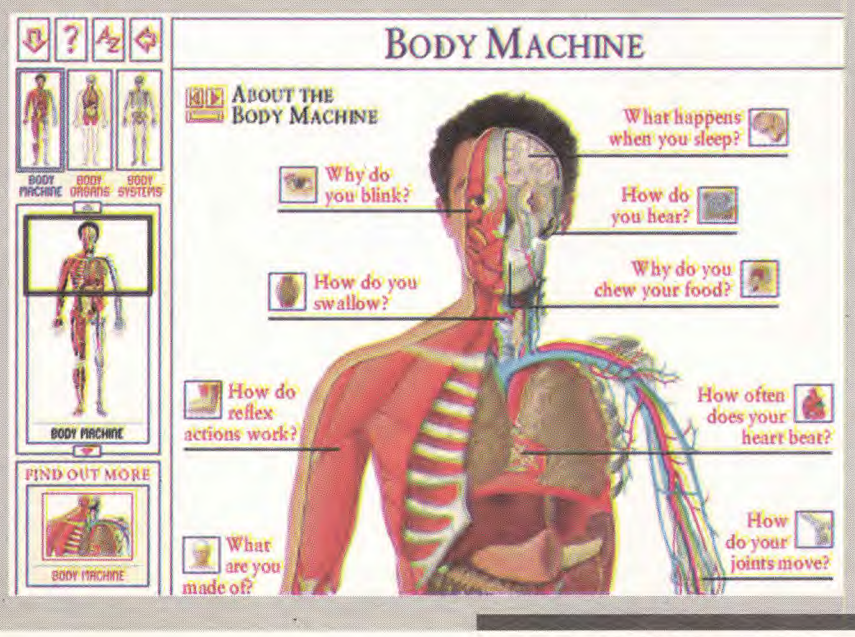
FOR THE SLIGHTLY MORE MATURE READER, David Macaulay's *The Way Things Work* is a witty romp through the inner workings of everyday life. Although the book is spectacular in its own right, the CD-ROM is an even greater *tour de force.* Here multiple levels of information are presented so accessibly that even technologically disadvantaged adults come away understanding how, for example, a seat belt operates. Like the other Dorling Kindersley CD-ROMs the title screen is supported with wonderful (in this case mechanical) sound effects. When the program loads, animated, metamorphic letterforms materialize. A furry mammoth elephant appears in various places as an agent to guide the viewer through the narrative, showing up in at least one QuickTime animated movie, which is accessed by clicking on an icon of a movie projector. Down the left side of the computer screen a menu offers various options, including categories on "principles of science," "workshop" and "inventors." The latter is a book with alphabetic tabs, where each click turns to a page of biography. For example, the inventor of the window shade was James Barton, and on his page are hot boxes featuring related inventions. If you click on one of these boxes, an illustration and text will appear with hot words in red, such as "ratchet." When chosen, this word calls up a schematic illustration of a ratchet accompanied by text and verbal explanations.

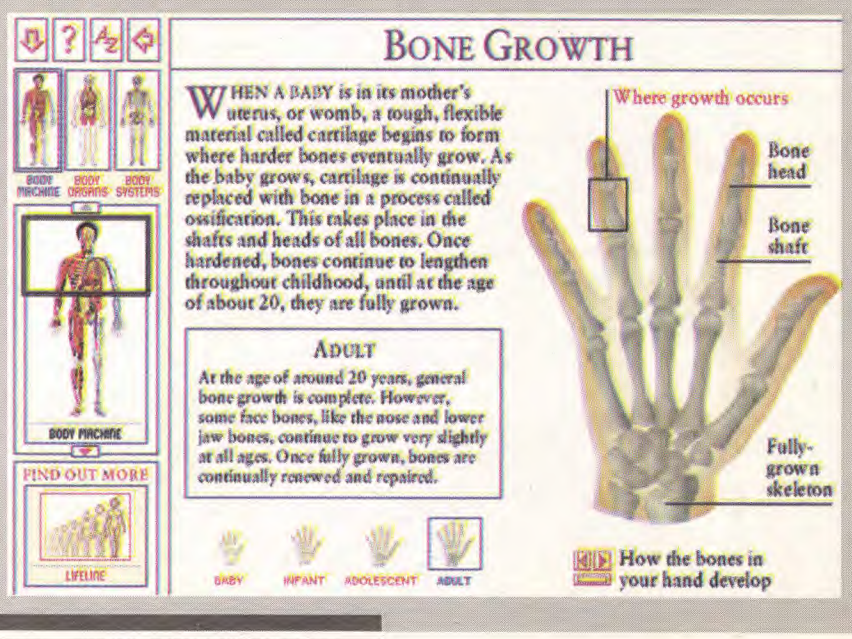
The Ultimate Human Body

THIS LAST CD-ROM TAKES SUCH FULL ADVANTAGE of the huge capacity for information storage and retrieval that its branching options seem to be almost infinite. Likewise, *The Ultimate Human Body* is not an exaggeration in terms. This is an ambitious anatomical exploration short of a medical school education. To the sound of a pumping heart, a menu

THE ULTIMATE HUMAN BODY

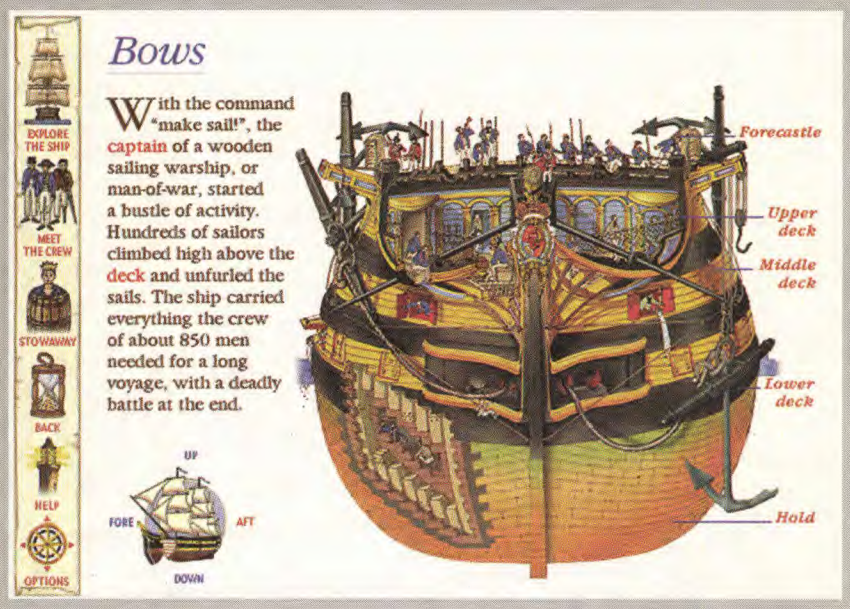
Like a classic World's Fair display in your own home, this CD-ROM is a masterpiece of didactic entertainment.

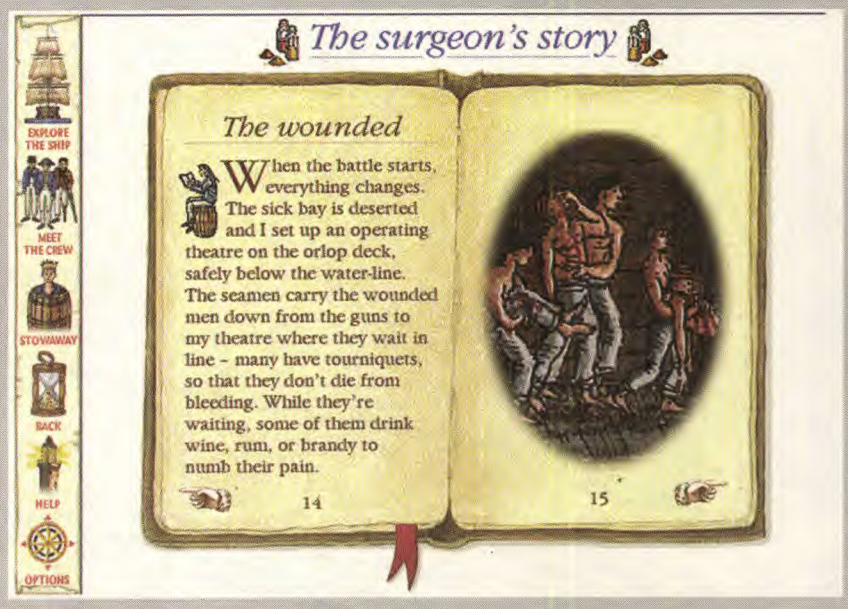




STEPHEN BIESTY'S INCREDIBLE CROSS-SECTIONS: STOWAWAY

An interactive book that combines the best of print and digital media.





offers a wealth of anatomical, biological and pathological information. This is not just some technically rendered anatomy but a detailed survey of how the body machine–its organs and systems–work. Although it is more reminiscent of the classic World's Fair educational displays and info-kiosks (especially with its neutral-sounding verbal narratives) than the other DK CD-ROMs, it nevertheless introduces a degree of intimacy as the viewer plots a personal course through the various levels of the human body. A simple navigational hot box on the menu (which clicks and frames portions of the body) makes it easy to specify body locations. Clicking on the head, for example, evokes a variety of options including specific subject areas, such as "why do you blink?" Typically in this category, male and female voices narrate a limited animation of blinking, and additional information text boxes illuminate the intricacies of the body's mechanics. The "find out more" function activates other related options. Beautifully detailed medical illustrations can also be clicked to either focus on a specific area or deconstruct the body piece by piece.

Stephen Biesty's Incredible Cross-Sections: Stowaway

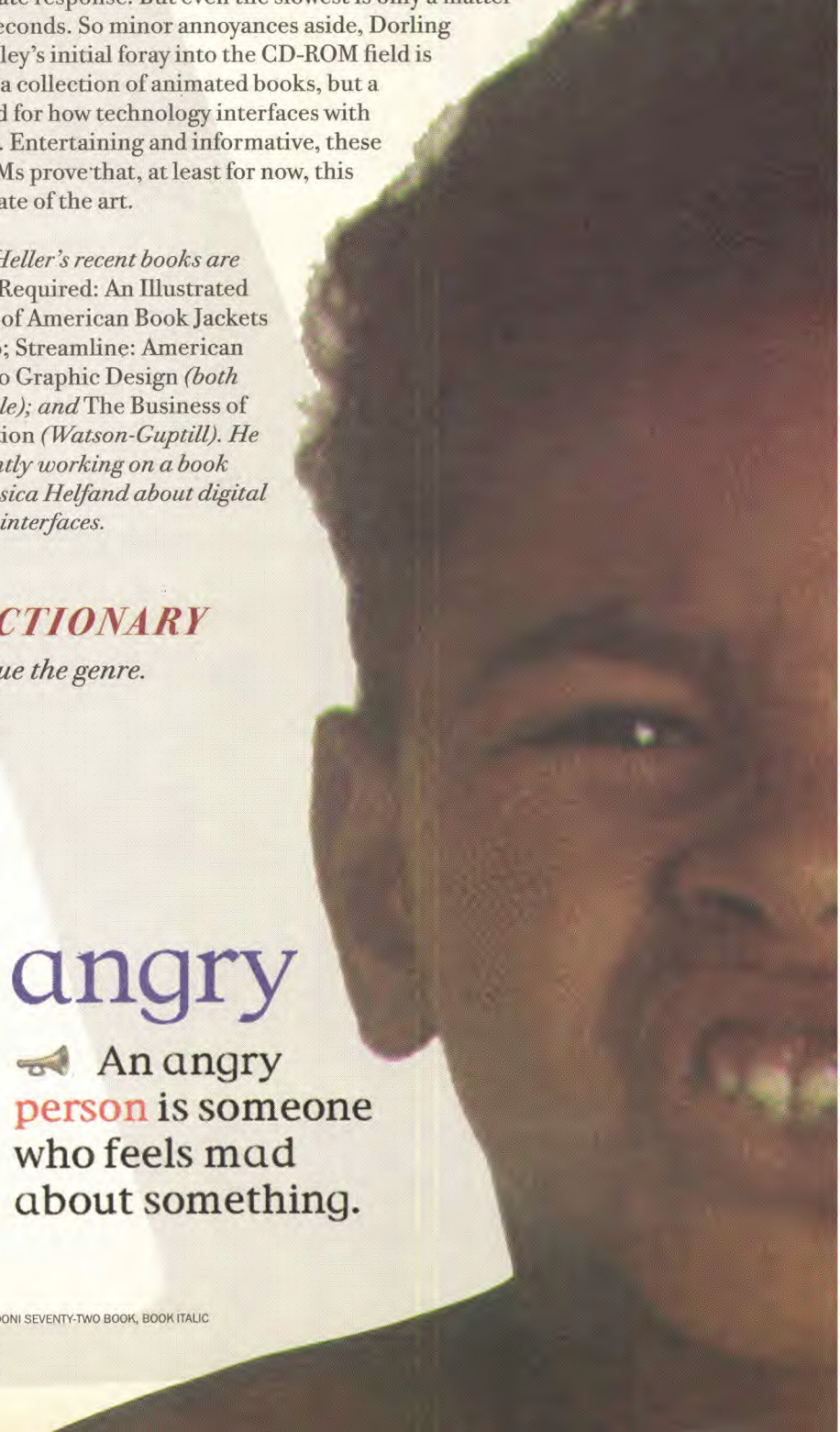
OBSERVING THE BODY IN ITS CROSS-SECTIONAL GLORY and reading (or hearing) about its various functions makes *The Ultimate Human Body* the most remarkable individual learning tool in the entire Dorling Kindersley series. But it is no more ambitious than *Stephen Biesty's Incredible Cross-Sections: Stowaway,* a detailed and adventure-packed journey through an 18th century warship. As sea sounds and squawking gulls reach a crescendo, the opening screen of *Stowaway* reveals a deceptively simple menu of options. By clicking, one can meet the crew, see the ship or find the stowaway, a young lad who, like Waldo, is hidden somewhere on the various decks and holds. In addition to an obsessively detailed and in-depth visual account of this ship, this CD-ROM is a "Wanted" game that keeps children and adults captivated as they try to make ten sightings of the lad. As befits this subject, the navigational devices are cleverly rendered and easy to use. Click an hourglass to go back a screen; click a lighthouse for help; and touch a compass labeled fore, aft, up and down to access the four quadrants of the ship. Long shots and closeups are possible for almost every detail. Clicking on gun ports grants entry to decks where specific activities take place, such as firing a cannon or caring for the wounded. Sound effects and voices are generously used throughout, contributing to a sense that this CD-ROM is a kind of Disney-like theme park.

The only downside to any of these CD-ROMs is the inevitable wait in response to certain clicking functions. *The Ultimate Human Body,* for example, is so packed with bits and bytes that some clicks do not get an immediate response. But even the slowest is only a matter of few seconds. So minor annoyances aside, Dorling Kindersley's initial foray into the CD-ROM field is not just a collection of animated books, but a standard for how technology interfaces with content. Entertaining and informative, these CD-ROMs prove that, at least for now, this is the state of the art.

Steven Heller's recent books are Jackets Required: An Illustrated History of American Book Jackets 1920-50; Streamline: American Art Deco Graphic Design *(both Chronicle); and* The Business of Illustration *(Watson-Guptill). He is currently working on a book with Jessica Helfand about digital graphic interfaces.*

MY FIRST INCREDIBLE, AMAZING DICTIONARY

This early reading dictionary avoids the clichés that plague the genre.



HEADLINE/SUBHEADS/BYLINE: ITC BODONI SEVENTY-TWO BOLD, BOLD ITALIC TEXT/DROP CAPS: ITC BODONI TWELVE BOOK, BOOK ITALIC CAPTIONS: ITC BODONI SEVENTY-TWO BOOK, BOOK ITALIC

Out to Lunch

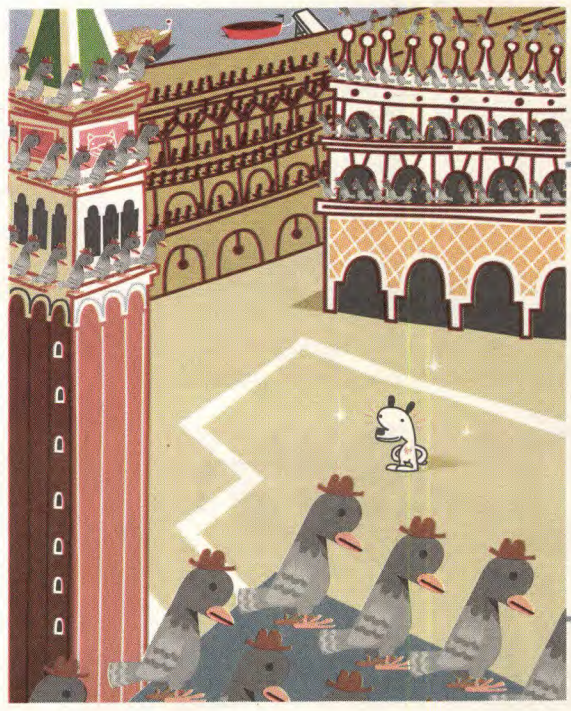
J. OTTO SEIBOLD'S ILLUSTRATIONS ARE WEIRD-AND WIRED

BY JOYCE RUTTER KAYE

"Hel-lo?!"

J. Otto Seibold doesn't merely answer the phone, he *chortles* a salutation in a comical falsetto that could easily belong to a near relative of Crusty the Clown. Should you get his answering machine, you will likewise hear a recording of Seibold shouting the regrets of his absence from a very remote distance.

Welcome to JOTTOWORLD, a very all-caps universe which exists in Seibold's imagination and in the San Francisco studio the illustrator shares with his wife and collaborator, author Vivian Walsh and their two young daughters. JOTTOWORLD's chief export to the real world is a series of hip, hyperkinetic children's books published by Viking, in which space monkeys head up big corporations and bird-chasing dogs become overnight TV celebrities. Seibold and Walsh join Viking's notable roster of writer/illustrators creating kids' books with a postmodern sensibility, including Maira Kalman (The *Max* Series), Steven Guarnaccia *(Blockheads)*, Richard McGuire *(The Orange Book)* and Lane Smith with Jon Scieszka *(The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales)*.

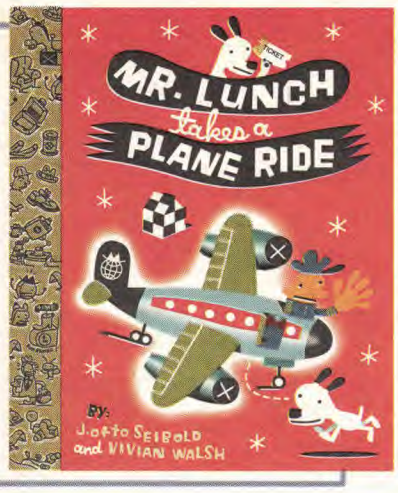


Mr. Lunch encounters Venetian pigeons in 'Canoe'...

...and gleefully chases them to the rafters

Talking with Seibold about his work is rather like flying a kite in high wind: you want to rein him in a bit, but not pull him down to earth. Colleagues say that's just the sort of tethering Walsh provides. Her straight-faced writing is a soothing contrast to Seibold's chaotic layouts; her style also sends up the absurdity of the books' plots. This balance works. Their first book, *Mr. Lunch Takes a Plane Ride* (1993), which traces the adventures of a plucky dog who enjoys fame as a professional bird chaser, sold 15,000 copies (after an original printing of 10,000 copies). This success is likely to be matched by their 1994 follow-up, *Mr. Lunch Borrows a Canoe*. Their newest book, *Monkey Business*, is due out this fall.

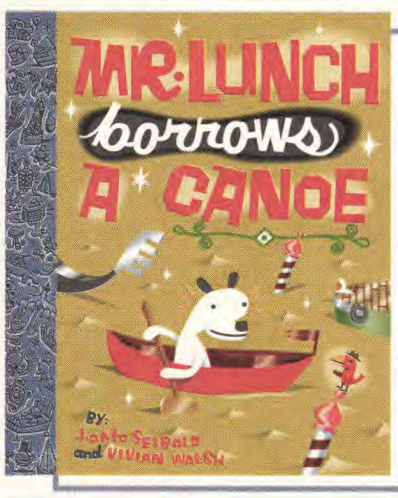
On the page, Seibold's energy is unre-



Seibold's Viking debut sold 15,000 copies

raphy of 1950s and '60s cartoons and are influenced by pop artist Stuart Davis' flat, geometric shapes and jazz-inspired disorder. (Seibold also cites Andy Warhol and the Russian Constructivists as influences.) Seibold, 35, is a baby boomer who is hyperaware of the impact of mass communications, popular culture and the cumulative effects of "just living in the world." A city scene in *Mr. Lunch Takes a Plane Ride*, for example, reveals streets clogged with as many advertisements as skyscrapers–and shows an unmistakably irritable commuter descending the subway steps.

A grown-up reader might view the books as subtle criticisms of our corrupt, consumer-driven society, the intrusive influence of big business and the American obsession with fame, fortune and celebrities. A child, on the other hand, would see them as being silly adventures of happy-go-lucky animals and insects. The books appeal equally to both audiences because Seibold avoids soap-box moralizing, according to fellow illustrator Lane Smith. "He's got the right attitude about sending a message," says Smith. "Like Pee-Wee Herman, he throws it out in an entertaining way. If people get it, fine. If not, that's okay." While working on the text, Seibold and Walsh are careful to skim off a thin layer of sophistication. "We kill off a lot of clever stuff," Seibold says. "We like something and then come back two days later and think it's obnoxiously clever. We're constantly thinking about how you maintain a tasteful narrative without saying too much or showing too much. It's like the sculptor who has a big piece of marble and all he has to do is chip away the parts that aren't the elephant. That's how we feel about the story. We're not smart enough to pander to the hipster adult thing with our kids' books."

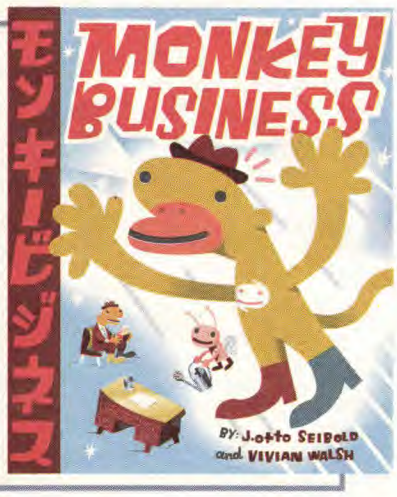


Further tales of a peripatetic bird-chaser

Although his books have a retro appeal, Seibold illustrates and composes them using contemporary tools: a Macintosh IIci computer with Adobe Illustrator. Seibold scans his drawings into the computer, then traces them in the drawing program. He then adds a homespun quality by working with a palette of muted colors such as mauve, beige, blue and maroon. He also draws onscreen. "I like to draw with the mouse and have a sort of intentional crudeness," he says, "but the line weights are still perfect, so it goes between computer and crude." Seibold and Walsh complete all of the layouts electronically–including the type–then send Viking the whole project on disk. This helps speed the production process, says executive editor Stephanie Hutter, but also tends to allow tiny last-minute changes to squeak through, bypassing editorial scrutiny. "Little gaffes have happened," she admits.

Mr. Lunch is asked to appear on national TV

Seibold's interest in technology long preceded his late-blooming career as an illustrator. Working for Clorox's research and development division in the mid-1980s, designing product-testing laboratories, Seibold became increasingly involved with the company's high-end computers and digital imaging systems and less so with his real work. Despite having a long interest in fine art, it never dawned on him that illustration as a career even existed until a friend pointed it out to him in 1986. After experimenting with paper illustration and publishing his work in the *San Francisco Focus*, *California Business* and other periodicals, Seibold convinced Adobe to take him on as a developer for Illustrator. He compares working with Illustrator, which is an object-oriented program, with creating cut-paper compositions. "It's sort of the same thing because the pieces of paper are objects that you shape and move around," he says. "Even when I didn't use a computer, what I was doing and thinking translated really well to the computer." In addition to his books and editorial work, Seibold has done projects for a number of corporate clients, including Apple, Swatch, American Express and NTT, the Japanese telephone giant. For Fuji TV he also created a space monkey character to appear in a series of short animated films, which later inspired him to write *Monkey Business*. The plot of this book is based on a real-life experiment in the 1950s where a monkey was sent to orbit the Earth. In the book, the monkey is appointed head of a large manufacturing company, says Seibold, as were the astronauts following the 1969 mission to the moon, proving that the absurdities in his book are pretty close to the absurdities in real life.



Seibold's latest book, due out this Fall

In 'Monkey,' a bug takes refuge in a 'product'

Given Seibold's technical acuity, it would seem natural for him to go on to create CD-ROMs. For the moment, however, he is holding out for the right project. In the meantime, he is constantly thinking in terms of interactivity. While drawing outer space scenes for *Monkey Business*, for example, he imagined that viewers might click on planets and find out their distances from the Earth, or, click on the sun and have their arrows "melt" onscreen. That JOTTOWORLD is getting more wired by the minute doesn't surprise his colleagues at all. "J. Otto is a techno-hip guy," says Lane Smith. "He's probably not only thinking how things would work on CD-ROM, but also how they would work as a feature film as well. His brain never works on one level." ■

HEADLINE: ITC BOLT BOLD SUBHEAD/BYLINE: ITC CENTURY BOLD TEXT: ITC BOLT BOLD, ITC CENTURY BOOK, BOOK ITALIC, BOLD CAPTIONS: ITC CENTURY BOOK ITALIC

Mr. Lunch is dazzled by the airport in 'Plane Ride'

Opening spread of 'Monkey Business'

...and out to the airport.

A LONG TIME AGO

a monkey was shot into space — in a rocket ship!
His name was Space Monkey. At the time rocket ships were not safe enough for people, so a brave volunteer was needed for the dangerous ride. Space Monkey came forward, and after some training he was ready to go.

His rocket ship circled the earth twice and then landed in the ocean. A helicopter was sent to pick him up, and he was given a ticker-tape parade — the first for a monkey.

His mission was a success, and he retired from the space program. The people of earth (our planet) were so thankful for Space Monkey's bravery that they gave him his own company. He called it MONKEY BUSINESS.

TITLE: The Lion King

ARTIST:

ANNA PELAVIN

AGE:6

PROGRAM: KIDPIX

The Luck of the DRAW

Children's drawing and designing programs can either stimulate creativity or stifle it. Here's a guide to what's available.

by Gene Gable

Art by Illustrators' and Designers' Children

WHEN IT COMES to buying tools for budding young artists, it's hard to imagine anything better than a few crayons and a big pad of paper. But we live in the era of the techno-child, and parents, grandparents and well-meaning friends are eager to tap into the promise of technology as a means to stimulate, encourage and develop artistic abilities among the younger set. Despite several obvious limits, there are in fact many wonderful, creative computer tools out there for kids inclined toward art and design.

For Jasper Guarnaccia the best part of KidPix was that "you can take things from one place and move them to another."

Good and Bad News

The advantages of computer art tools are many. For under $50 you can provide your children with a complete art studio, where they can have access to any number of paintbrushes, spray cans, knives, erasers and the like, all without danger of injury and a mess to clean up. A computer never runs out of blue or red, and though most programs are limited to a palette of 256 colors, that's far more than you'll find in the biggest box of Crayolas.

Computers introduce children to the idea of *revision* in art, allowing any number of versions and modifications, all without the penalty of the little holes that come from too much conventional erasing. And perhaps most important, creative art tools teach kids about using the computer at an age when they don't yet have the need for spreadsheets and word processors.

But for each advantage, there is a disadvantage. Computers are hardly spontaneous tools–they require more discipline and planning than some kids are able to muster, and you can't take them everywhere with you. There is also the danger that once kids get used to the speed and flexibility of electronic art, they'll grow bored with using a pencil and paper to create. I'll leave the whole issue of hand/eye coordination skills to the child development specialists, but suffice to say there's quite a bit of difference between using a mouse to paint and holding a real brush in your hand.

My own greatest fear with creative computer programs for kids is that by their very nature they actually stifle creativity. Most include stock images, premade shapes and rubber-stamp tools that are easy to arrange, but limiting. The size of most computer screens is smaller than a child's typical artwork to begin with, and a completely blank piece of paper can be better for bringing out a child's true emotions. I've seen the results when a classroom full of children get their hands on KidPix, for example, and the art looks strikingly similar–nothing like the variety produced when the same kids work on paper with crayons. If a child wants to draw everything one inch high in a small corner, I think he or she ought to be able to, and learning to draw a straight line or a perfect circle *should* be hard. Computer programs tend to force everything into standard conventions.

Clearly, the following programs should be regarded as a small part of a total education in art. As complements to traditional drawing and painting tools, they're great. And as wonderful inducements for children to learn about computers, they're spectacular. Many also add animation, sound and other features never before accessible to the average kid.

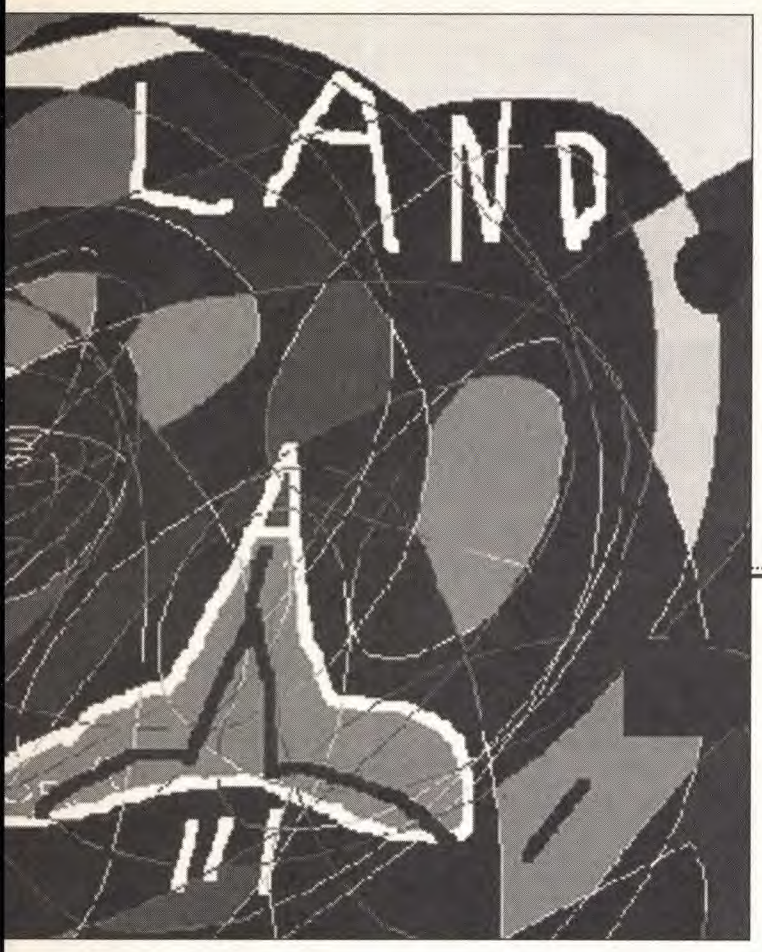
Something for Everyone

The granddaddy of the children's paint programs is KidPix, from Brøderbund. When first released, this program took the market by storm–it has cute little icons, paintbrushes that make funny sounds and 11 different ways to erase something, including a clear-screen command accompanied by a loud firecracker blast. KidPix allows children to add type (in different fonts), sound effects and transitions to their work, and the program can read back the letters they type, in both English and Spanish. The newest version, KidPix 2, contains the two original products, KidPix and KidPix Companion, rolled into one for under $50. A separate add-on program, called KidPix Fun Pack, is available for $20 and brings in more sounds, pictures, rubber stamps and other fun stuff. Brøderbund claims KidPix will amuse kids 3-12, but the older ones will probably grow bored pretty fast. It is available for both the Mac and PC.

Two relative newcomers getting lots of high marks are Crayola Amazing Art and the Crayola Art Studio from Micrografx. These Windows-only programs were produced in conjunction with Binney & Smith, the company that makes Crayolas. Amazing Art is for the younger set, ages 3-6, and includes connect-the-dots and other games designed to teach basic art concepts and color theory. It sells for $59.95. The Crayola Art Studio adds more features and is intended for the 6-12 crowd. With this program kids can produce final projects, including certificates, notepaper, badges and other simple desktop publishing projects. Thanks to transparent ink models, colors can be mixed, so it's possible to learn more about color than even a box of crayons allows. For all the kids introduced to drawing through Crayolas (and who isn't?), these programs may make a transition to the computer a little more comfortable. Both use the visual metaphor of a child's playroom, so the interface is friendly and warm–at least to kids from conventional home settings.

If you want to indoctrinate your child early into the Microsoft way of life, the Washington giant has a good paint program called Fine Artist, which is for the 8-14 year set. Three cartoon characters, including the Amazing McZee, guide kids through the tools and the town of Imaginopolis, which serves as the interface for the program. This program also features fun tools (like a spider-web brush), sound effects, an animation magic wand, and allows you to sequence art and sounds in a simple multimedia format.

TITLE: Nick and Steve
ARTIST:
NICOLAS HELLER
AGE:6
PROGRAM: KIDPIX



TITLE: Jasperland
ARTIST:
JASPER GUARNACCIA
AGE:8
PROGRAM: KIDPIX

For the Older Crowd

Once your child grows tired of the goofy sounds and wacky brushes of the kids' art packages, consider upgrading to one of the more capable programs, like Fractal Design's Dabbler.

Based on Fractal's popular Painter program (which is the primary paint program in professional art circles), Dabbler is available for both the Mac and the PC. It contains a very professional set of traditional art tools, including oil, chalk, paint and pencils, all in an appealing interface that looks like a set of artist's filing drawers. Make no mistake–this is a full-featured art production program. You can select base paper, and Dabbler is not limited by 256 colors or low resolution. The results can be incorporated into page-layout or other design applications and look just like the professional stuff.

Along with Dabbler comes an instructive set of tried-and-true art lessons from Walter Foster (you know the kind–like drawing a dog by combining two triangles and a circle). In addition to the printed lessons, there are prerecorded drawing sessions. You can watch something being created stroke-by-stroke. This is an excellent program for teens or advanced children. It's a bargain at under $99, and there are under-$200 bundles where, in addition to the program, you get a pressure-sensitive graphic tablet.

If Dabbler doesn't fit the bill, or your child wants to try more adult programs, there is Brushstrokes from Claris (which also includes art lessons, this time from Anita C. Mason), priced at $139, and SuperPaint from Adobe, at $109. SuperPaint is a very capable program. Both of these painting applications will produce great results, but the tools and interfaces are a little more intimidating than Dabbler's, since they're not specifically designed for beginners.

Beyond Simple Pictures

If your child wants to be a multimedia producer, you have a number of options. Kid Works (Mac), from Davidson and Associates, lets kids create and hear their own stories, complete with illustrations. Kid's Studio (Mac and Windows) from Storm Technology, lets children make slide shows, storyboards, QuickTime movies and record sounds. Imagination Express (Mac and Windows) from Edmark, is a CD-ROM package that lets kids create custom interactive storybooks, which can then be printed and given to their friends. And if your child seems the architect type, there's even Kid Cad for Windows, also from Davidson, which lets those age 7 and up create 3-D houses complete with yards, furniture, decorations, plants and even pets. It may not be quite the same as Lego or an Erector Set, but you don't have to worry about losing pieces or stepping on sharp little objects.

For the Budding Publisher

Most of the paint programs listed here allow for simple printing, and many let kids create invitations, fliers and the like. If your child wants to go beyond these basics, though, you'll have to consider purchasing a full-grown page-layout application.

There aren't many publishing programs designed specifically for kids, though some of the "home" versions are easy to master (probably easier for kids than for most adults). Print Shop from Brøderbund, available for both the Mac and PC, comes with lots of pre-formed layouts, many fonts and clip art, and fairly easy-to-follow instructions. For around $50, it's a good introduction to page layout, though you'll run into limits quickly if you want to do much in the way of custom work.

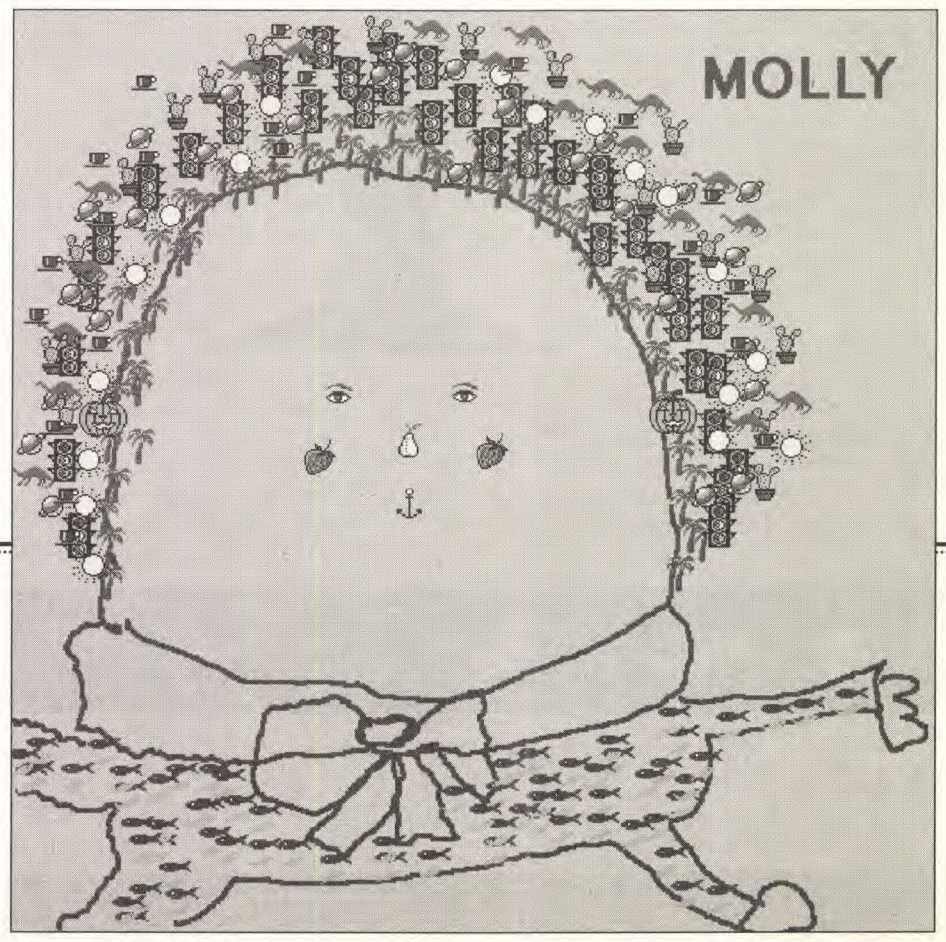
Home Publisher from Adobe, and Microsoft Publisher are a level above Print Shop, and PagePlus (for the PC) from Serif is a full-featured page-layout application that is cheap enough for kids (around $50). After that, you'll have to start looking at PageMaker, QuarkXPress and the rest of the professional tools, especially as kids get to high school where school papers and yearbooks are often using those programs.

Finishing Touches

If you don't have a printer already, you are almost obliged to acquire one along with your first drawing program purchase. Not being able to tape that painting to the refrigerator may prove to be too much to bear. The inexpensive ink-jet models from Hewlett-Packard, Epson and Apple ($300-$600) are more than adequate for kids' work, and well-worth the investment.

There's one last thing you'll need. If your kids are going to be using your family (or even your business) computer for their art projects, consider one of the kids' desktop programs, which offers a simplified and friendly set of commands and provides a level of security for your own work. The best, Launch Pad from Berkeley Systems, sells for about $30 and works on either Macs or PCs. When started, your computer will show a special, limited desktop for the kids that is more lively than the usual Mac or Windows variety, and it only allows access to your child's own documents. Therefore, there's no need to worry about the accidental erasure of your important files. The system is nearly foolproof, and it's easy to disable with a password when it's time to do adult stuff. This program makes the computer much more fun for your kids, and teaches them responsibility about using computers at an early age.

Gene Gable is the Publisher of Publish *magazine in San Francisco. His Internet address is gene_gable@advanced.com.*



TITLE: Molly
ARTIST:
MOLLY PELAVIN
AGE:4
PROGRAM: KIDPIX

HEADLINE/SUBHEADS/BYLINE: ITC JUICE, ITC DAVE'S RAVES TEXT: ITC STONE SANS MEDIUM, ITALIC CREDITS: ITC JUICE, ITC STONE SANS MEDIUM

David Sagorski

ITC Dave's Raves™

ITC Dave's Raves are 300 cheeky and charming spot illustrations created by David Sagorski, the designer behind the newly-released typefaces ITC Juice™ and ITC Snap.™ A Kansas-born designer who studied at the Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale before taking a job on the oil rigs of Texas and Louisiana, Sagorski recently returned to his first career choice as a typeface designer for Letraset and other font suppliers. He tried his hand at image fonts, he says, to demonstrate that not all typeface designers are unable to draw anything other than letters. "There's not a great deal of digital stuff out there in terms of clip art," he adds. "So much of it is either bland and boring, or artsy-fartsy." Sagorski draws his inspiration from an eclectic range of sources, including vintage clip art, Aztec figures, children's illustrations, and the styles and motifs used by Miró, Picasso and Van Gogh. The result is a motley collection of icons and creatures, from a 1950s sci-fi robot to a dancing monkey.

ITC Dave's Raves, which were digitized by Tobias Frere-Jones, make a useful complement to various type-only designs or small pieces that would benefit from a little embellishment, as well as being the obvious accompaniment to ITC Snap and ITC Juice. The coiled snake image, adds Sagorski slyly, might double up as a "great tattoo."

ITC Dave's Raves is available from ITC, authorized ITC distributors, and ITC Subscriber companies, as a Type 1 font for the Macintosh and PC. Only licensed ITC Subscribers are authorized to reproduce, manufacture and offer for sale these and other ITC typefaces shown in this issue.

This image font will be available to the public on or after May 22, depending on each manufacturer's release schedule.

Carnivorous

a beastly verse by Nick Bantock
presented in **ITC Vinyl**™

ABCDEFGHIJ
KLMNOPQRSTUVWX
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rstuvwxyz1234567890
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/#*)(†‡§)

ITC Vinyl Outline

FROM *AVERSE TO BEASTS*, COURTESY CHRONICLE BOOKS

Eating beasts is not a sin.

Open wide and pop 'em in.
Baked or BOILED or even roasted—
Why not try them lightly toasted?

Eating beasts is such a treat,
gnawing legs and nibbling feet.
Don't fret about its mortal soul
Pick 'em up and swallow them whole.

Eating beasts is not a sin.
Open wide and pop 'em in.
But be prepared, for the other view
And don't complain
when they eat
YOU

ITC Vinyl Sawtooth Outline

ABCDEFGHIJ
KLMNOPQRSTUVW
XYZabcdefghijklmnop
qrstuvwxyz1234567890
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ITC Vinyl Sawtooth Black

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YZabcdefghijklmnopq
rstuvwxyz1234567890
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ITC Vinyl Black

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JKLMNOPQRSTUVW
XYZabcdefghijklmnop
qrstuvwxyz1234567890
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/#*)(†‡§)

A hybrid of art nouveau character shapes, a street attitude, and a 1950s design personality, ITC Vinyl is a somewhat iconoclastic typeface design. The family of four display faces is available in outline and solid designs with corresponding "sawtooth" variants for each.

The typeface's designer, J. Keith Moore, was born in Würzberg, Germany, but grew up in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and studied graphic design at Colorado State University. He now works and resides in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he says he spends his spare time existing somewhere between "the sublime and the ridiculous." Moore created this contemporary typeface with traditional design tools—pen, ink and French curves—before he converted it into digital fonts via Adobe Illustrator.

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J. Keith Moore

RANDOM REFLECTIONS FROM FIVE NEW ITC FONTS

PATTY KING'S interest in lettering began at boarding school in Los Angeles, but her interest in the arts has been with her, she says, "since I was able to hold a crayon."

A California native, King was born in Oakland in 1946 and grew up in the northern region of the state. After attending College of Marin and California College of Arts and Crafts, she pursued a career in graphic design and has specialized in lettering for the last 17 years. Among her clients are the Bank of America and the San Francisco Zoological Society.

Patty King

In addition to her capabilities as a graphic artist, King is an accomplished fine artist whose work is greatly influenced by the art and style of the Impressionists.

I am a vigorous script and I deserve to be used for headlines & display

ITC Blaze™

ITC Blaze is a traditional brush script with a vigor not found in many other designs. The powerful swash characteristics found in letters like the *D* and lowercase *s* give distinction and vitality to the typeface. ITC Blaze is also space-economical, making it an ideal script for headlines and other display uses.

I have achieved a balance between power and grace as a brush script which lives for the moment

ITC Kick™

ITC Kick is a bold brush script with a sense of energy. This calligraphic font is both stylish and graceful. The sharp contrast of stroke weight imparts dynamism and enthusiasm to the letterforms. Headlines set in Kick achieve a sense of timeliness.

ITC Kick, ITC Skylark, ITC Spirit and ITC Blaze are available from ITC, authorized ITC distributors, and ITC Subscriber companies, as Type 1 fonts for the Macintosh and PC. Only licensed ITC Subscribers are authorized to reproduce, manufacture and offer for sale these and other ITC typefaces shown in this issue. These new typefaces will be available to the public on or after May 22, depending on each manufacturer's release schedule.

I am UNIQUE, for I am formal yet FRIENDLY, and I have the CONFIDENCE to look great in short texts !!!

ITC Skylark™

ITC Skylark can be described as either a Chancery sans, or a flat-brush cursive. Unique among type designs, ITC Skylark is both formal and friendly. Because it is based on classic Roman letter shapes and proportions, ITC Skylark is not limited to large sizes; it can also be used to set short blocks of text copy.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

I RESPECT MY ROOTS IN CLASSIC FORMS BUT AM ENERGIZED BY THE HERE AND NOW

ITC Spirit™

ITC Spirit is a design based on Uncial letter shapes and proportions. These rounded forms were originally used for books and documents and evolved out of Roman Square Capitals. While those classic forms inspired ITC Spirit, King energized her letters with a hint of ruggedness. The typeface is also available in small caps.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ1234567890
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZABCDEF

ITC Mithras™

I HONOR MY PAST THOUGH IT IS SET IN STONE

[and I look to the future with my mellow face and inviting appearance]

Bob Anderton

ITC MITHRAS finds its foundation in the worn but elegant letters carved into altar stones of a Mithraic temple in Scotland. Capitals are narrow while the lowercase is open and full bodied. Individual character curves in ITC Mithras vary subtly from letter to letter; this subtle contrast gives the face a mellow and particularly inviting appearance. Character shapes are easy to read and the face's proportions add to its legibility, making it applicable to a wide range of display uses.

The typeface is a creation of Bob Anderton, who was trained at the Liverpool College of Art and is now the principal of Anderton Overton Design. Anderton's clients are mainly from the leisure and tourism industries, one of which was responsible for the initial design of Mithras. A commission for a series of panels showing the layout of an ancient Roman fort and town inspired Anderton to draw the beautiful yet rustic letters that were to become ITC Mithras.

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ITC DINITIALS™

HELGA JÖRGENSEN

ITC Dinitials were always intended to be initial letters, but they began life with much more of a "Jurassic" influence than the final form portrays. As Helga Jörgensen, the creator of these image fonts puts it, "When I started drawing the first of them, I was very much inspired by dinosaurs, but during the work my fantasy guided me more and more, and they became rather fabulous creatures."

A few letters, like the R and U, still display their prehistoric foundation; but others, like the H, N and Y, are more gothic in influence–Jörgensen calls them "cranky," and adds that she enjoyed a sense of "malicious glee" when creating them. ITC Dinitials are complete with numerals and are available in both positive and negative forms, to fit a particular design or mood.

Jörgensen has a long-standing relationship with ITC. She had been associated with the studio responsible for converting all of ITC's releases into digital fonts. Jörgensen was born in Hamburg, Germany in 1955, where she still works and lives. Today, she divides her time between her garden, her pet cats and designing alphabets. Prior to beginning her career in digital fonts and images, Jörgensen studied at the Hochschule für bilende Künste in Hamburg.

ITC Dinitials is available from ITC, authorized ITC distributors, and ITC Subscriber companies, as a Type 1 font for the Macintosh and PC.

Only licensed ITC Subscribers are authorized to reproduce, manufacture and offer for sale these and other ITC typefaces shown in this issue.

These new typefaces will be available to the public on or after May 22, depending on each manufacturer's release schedule.

Net Rats

Kids are heading into cyberspace at an unprecedented rate, finding an array of forums, games and educational aids.

BY CONNIE GUGLIELMO

It doesn't take much technical know-how to get online these days. Anyone equipped with a personal computer, a modem and telephone line, graphic interface software and access to the Internet or a commercial online service can easily point-and-click a path through the electronic information highways and byways.

More and more of that pointing and clicking is being done by kids, who are unafraid of technology and more than eager to explore cyberspace. Prodigy Services Co. says that of its two million users, about 300,000 are kids who log on to exchange e-mail and test drive some of Prodigy's youth-oriented games, forums and activities. Although the other popular online services–America Online (AOL), eWorld and CompuServe–don't divulge the size of their younger populations, the amount of kid-specific content they provide demonstrates their desire to lure children away from their TV sets and game cartridges into the online world.

According to research firms Link Resources and Alex Brown, the total consumer online market in 1994 reached about 5 million, half of whom were identified as coming from households with children. And that number is growing; by 1998, the number of online users is expected to expand to 23 million users in 17 million households, with the number of kids in those households also expected to grow. In dollar terms, consumers spent about $1.1 billion on online services; by 1998, that figure is expected to grow by about 33 percent per year to a whopping $3.3 billion.

The Software Publishers' Association, a Washington, D.C.-based industry research group, has also taken note of the interest in computer-based educational goods and services for children. Its research shows that more kids are getting wired, and the market for educational software and the number of computers being sold for educational uses is growing by leaps and bounds.

With all the growth in online services and education-related computer products, it's not surprising that developers are loading the online arena with stuff for kids.

Who's got the goods?

Most kids' services are part of a subscriber's basic membership to a commercial online service; that membership costs anywhere from $9 to $15 per month (start-up software is usually free). The monthly fee includes from two to five hours of online time; after that, you're billed by the hour, with additional online time starting at about $2 per hour.

What will your kids find out there? Games, graphics, chat forums and interactive magazines and activities from well-known entertainment and education publishers and producers.

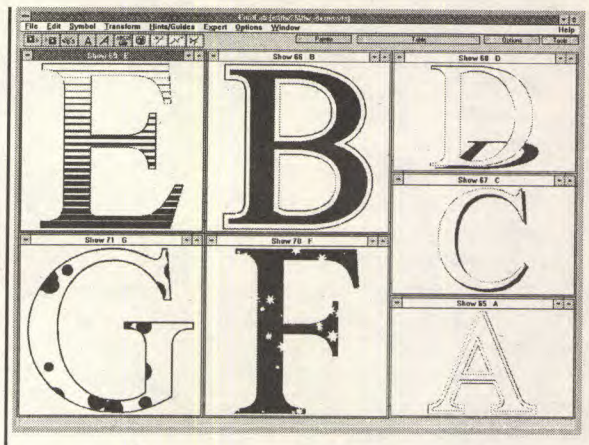
Prodigy

On Prodigy, kids will find interactive versions of popular magazines, such as *NOVA*, *National Geographic* and *Sports Illustrated for Kids*. There is also educational material and entertainment in areas such as NOVA, Sesame Street, The Babysitters Club and Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?, as well as a host of online games. By clicking on the *Sports Illustrated for Kids* icon, you can enter a forum where you can choose from a variety of activities: as part of "Ask the Athlete," kids submit questions they'd like the magazine to ask an athlete who will be featured in an upcoming issue. "This Month in Sports" provides a listing of major sports activities as well as special events such as the IronKids Triathlon and Little League World Series, while the Sports Illustrated for Kids Challenge gives kids a chance to test their sports knowledge by playing a game.

Earlier this year, Prodigy added a new service called Homework Helper that offers an online information database filled with text and images from 700 well-known reference sources such as encyclopedias (*Compton's NewMedia* and *Funk & Wagnall*), international wire services (Reuters), newspapers (*USA Today* and *The Los Angeles Times*), atlases, photo libraries, and major literary works (including the complete text of Shakespeare's plays).

The best thing about this online reference library is that you can search it by asking questions in plain English–no Boolean logic or obscure database search commands is necessary. Kids can ask, "Who said *Et tu Brute*?" or "What is the fastest animal?" and Homework Helper will do a comprehensive search or a narrower search based on specific criteria, such as dates, authors,

Continued on page 54



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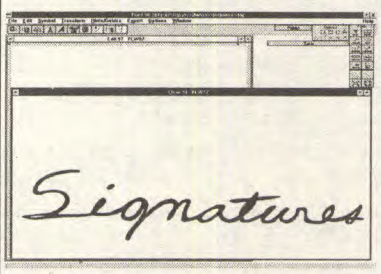

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Circle 4 on Reader Service Card

Nickelodeon's original animations are winning awards—and winning over

Ren & Stimpy

Welcoming a new era of kids' cartoons, the lovable, dosey cat Stimpy and his snappy, unhinged Chihuahua pal Ren

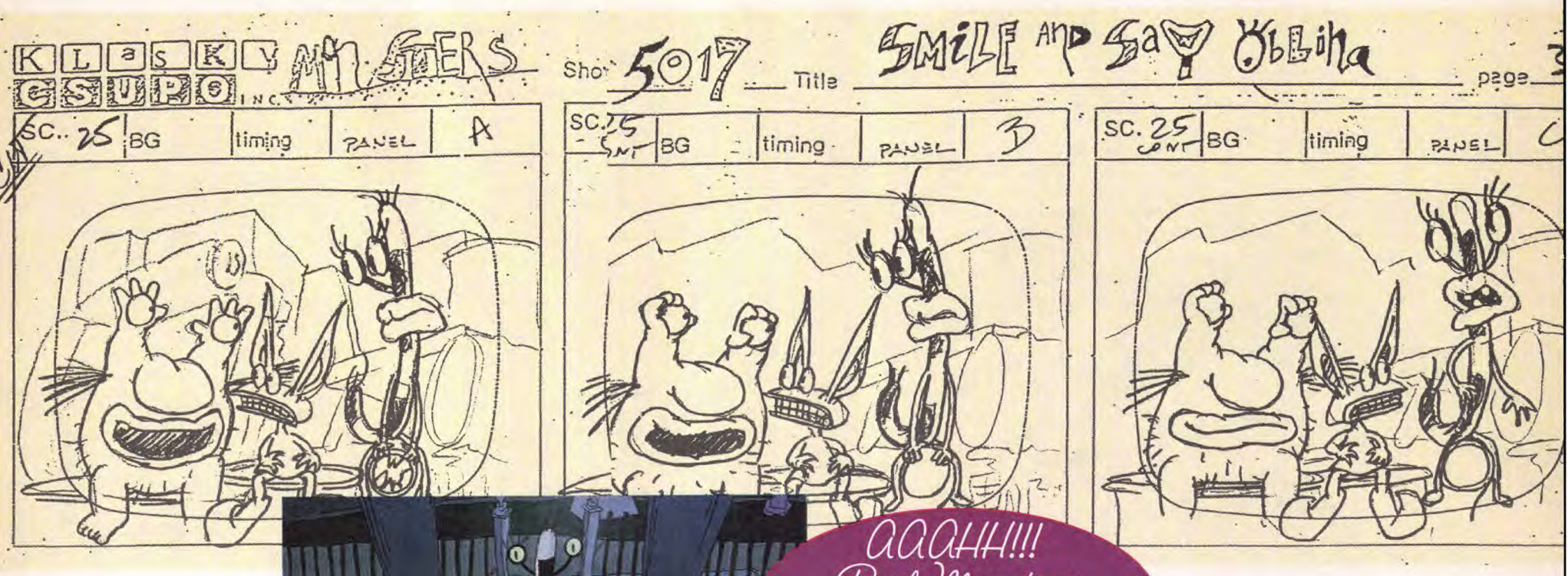
Comic Relief

classic cartoon fans of all ages.

By Peter Hall

Saturday morning cartoon time, with its cast of muscle-bulging Mega Men, X-Men and Spider Men, is usually a cue for parents to flee the TV room. With the animation business inextricably tied up in the toy industry, many of today's cartoons come off looking like poorly-made extended commercials for action figures, using rehashed variations on the hero-versus-villain theme. By contrast, the 40 year-old Bugs Bunny reruns, with their legendary lavish budgets, full orchestra soundtracks, and lack of prerequisites in terms of merchandising, look like masterpieces.

It was against the backdrop of sales-pitching superheroes that the children's cable TV network Nickelodeon introduced its first original animations in 1991. The shows, "Rugrats," "Ren & Stimpy" and "Doug," aired in a 90-



AAAHH!!! Real Monsters

Storyboard (above) and a final frame (left) from Klasky Csupo's wild-mannered monster show. Previous page, a finished animation sequence

minute block of programming called Nicktoons, were the product of an initiative by Nickelodeon president Geraldine Laybourne to entice people in the illustration and animation community to produce original cartoon concepts that had no preexistence in toys, comic books or action figures. So as not to compete directly with the traditional Saturday morning slot, where large Los Angeles animation studios like Hanna-Barbera, Dic and Marvel held court, Nickelodeon chose to broadcast Nicktoons on Sunday mornings, when nothing much else was showing on TV anyway.

The investment in original quality animation paid off. In terms of ratings, Nicktoons consistently rank among the top ten shows on the network, and "Rugrats" has won two Emmy awards and a Cable Ace Award. The three original shows have been joined by two newcomers, "Aaahh!!! Real Monsters," a story of decidedly non-threatening monsters who are training to be truly beastly, and "Rocko's Modern Life" (another Emmy-winner), which tracks the adventures of a bemused Australian wallaby in postmodern America. This success is all without apparent compromises; "Ren & Stimpy," despite being separated early on in its life from its creator John Kricfalusi, maintains a startling edginess, sometimes barely inside the boundaries of acceptable children's programming, with episodes bordering on the excessively violent and scatological. (Few will forget the episode in which the dosey cat Stimpy lets off his first fart, then trails it around like a newborn son.) "Rugrats," which follows the adventures of a bunch of articulate toddlers, manages within a children's show format to deal with issues like bereavement and addiction. For example, one scene in which elder sister Angelica tries to explain to the toddlers why she must continually gorge herself on cookies includes a flashback to her birth, where she is pushed out of the maternity ward by her career-obsessed mother who is yabbering to her boss on a cellular phone: "It's a girl, Jonathan," she says, "her name is..." and pauses to try to remember.

The twenty- and thirty-something humor buried in these shows is no accident. The creators and producers are of the generation that grew up liking Bugs Bunny reruns more than the Scooby Doo episodes targeted at their age group. Kricfalusi himself worked on the Dic cartoon production line early in his career, dreaming of producing something worthy of Bob Clampett (of Merrie Melodies fame). Now of the parenting age, this generation is naturally more inclined to want to share with its offspring the kind of animation it would have liked to

Rocko's Modern Life

Games Animation's bemused wallaby Rocko (seated) and friends, in a show that takes visual cues from The Flintstones and classic Warner Brothers cartoons

Rugrats
Postmodern morality tales: the subtly didactic world of Rugrats, with its distinctive pastel shades and expressive drawings

have seen. Nicktoons are distinguishable from other kids' cartoons because they are produced by parents for parents to watch with their children. "We learned a long time ago not to talk down to children," says Gabor Csupo, the Hungarian-born animator whose Hollywood studio Klasky Csupo produces "Rugrats," "Aaahh!!! Real Monsters" and was responsible for the first-ever appearances of "The Simpsons" (on "The Tracey Ullman Show"). "If children don't understand something it opens up their curiosity, and they ask their parents."

The key to quality animation, according to Nickelodeon's president of animation Linda Simensky, is to integrate the writing and illustration processes so that storylines are told first and foremost in a visual way. "Concepts that are very talky can be a problem visually," she says. "We try to have the creator involved to oversee the writing. There were (and are) shows where writers and artists never met, which seems unfair." At Games Animation, which is responsible for "Ren & Stimpy" and "Rocko's Modern Life," it is the artists who write the scripts, and concentrate on giving the characters vivid facial expressions which convey the story from the early conceptualization storyboards. The still image of Chihuahua Ren with his eyes literally popping out of his head not only evokes the old Tom and Jerry cartoons, it tells the story and ensures that when the layouts are sent out for animation, there can be little room for misleading interpretation.

Surprisingly, for a group of shows that premiered only four years ago, all of the Nicktoons are produced using traditional cel animation. "Computer animation is in its early stages," explains Simensky. "The technology changes every year and things date really quickly, which doesn't help when you're doing a series that you'll want to look good in 25 or 30 years." At Games, storyboards are first drawn for approval, layouts (the art for crucial frames) are rendered by hand, then they are sent to Korea (the place to go for bargain animation labor) to be camera-readied and photographed. Computers are, however, used to speed the production process. Klasky Csupo eliminates the layout stage of the schedule by scanning its storyboards onto a computer, adding voice tracks and playing back these prototype episodes, known as animatics, on video for reworking and approval before sending them out for animation. Colors can also be trial tested on the computer, which has helped the studio establish the distinctive array of primary and pastel shades in "Rugrats" and the atmospheric, gloomy colors in "Aaahh!!! Real Monsters."

Glancing back over the last few years of cartooning, there is evidence to suggest that Nicktoons are part of a bigger revival in the art of animation. In Simensky's version of events, Disney's introduction of *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, a Warner Brothers-style revival, on the big screen in 1988, raised a widespread interest in the format. Many observers cite "The Simpsons," with its sophisticated, irony-laden story lines, minimalist graphics, and bizarre hair and skin colors, for playing a big part in inspiring smarter cartoons. Now word is getting around. Fox, for instance, broadcasts "The Tick," a gloriously self-parodying show of dysfunctional superheroes in a prime time kids' Saturday morning slot. Other more adult-oriented animations are appearing in evening slots, including MTV's experimental "Liquid TV" and Fox's "The Critic."

An animation renaissance might be particularly timely. In a political climate that threatens the existence of educational children's television on PBS, shows like "Rugrats" may soon be the only alternative to "The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers." "There are a lot of kids out there who like really bad shows," says Simensky, "but our aim is to think about what kids deserve."

Peter Hall is a journalist who specializes in design. He writes for several publications in England and the United States.

Nick's ID Check

The slippery design task for Nickelodeon's on-air promotions department is to maintain a fresh network identity that matches the innovation in the shows, while retaining a fluid, consistent presence—all this without looking boring. It also has to appeal to kids between ages two and 11. "It is not just the differences cognitively between those ages," says Scott Webb, creative director of on-air promotions. "Relating to kids is complex. They are as sophisticated entertainment consumers as adults are."

Back in the early 1980s, Nickelodeon's identity was a little dull. "It was a very green vegetables thing," says Webb, "it was good for you to watch, but that was about it." The ad agency men Fred Seibert and Alan Goodman, fresh from their triumphs at Nick's elder brother MTV, were brought in to address the problem. They hired Boston art director Tom Corey, who turned out the now familiar, versatile amorphous orange blob logo. "Our philosophy was that it should be a trademark for animators to play with," recalls Webb. "Since there wasn't one kind of kid, there shouldn't be one kind of logo."

During a recent internal review of the network's on-air packaging, Nickelodeon recognized that some of the vitality of that early orange blob identity had been lost, and made efforts to focus some fresh eyes on the problem. A series of short promos was commissioned from designers and art directors around the country, including Mark Baldo, Blue Brick Design, Barry Deck, Chris Gilligan and Nana North. The brief was simple. "We finished the audio tracks and took them to the animators with only a couple of rules," says Webb. "The logo had to be in each promo for the entire 10 seconds, and the typography and shade of orange had to stay the same."

Though mutterings were leveled at the Nickelodeon "logo police" and their overzealous adherence to the rules, the designers' creative spirits were effectively stirred and a batch of notable promos emerged that managed somehow to stretch the confines of the brief. Baldo had animated ants lolling around after a picnic singing the Nickelodeon theme tune (above), Gilligan choreographed an animated chase between pieces of paper and a pair of scissors (left), and Blue Brick floated the word Nick in a blue sky and had the letters popping like bubbles around an orange Nickelodeon UFO. "Other than that logo rule, they give you carte blanche," says Paul Krygowski of Blue Brick. "They're the only people—with regard to kids' products—who take that approach. They get out of your way. With other companies everything comes back to you looking like an adult did it."

To this extent, Nickelodeon remains one of the few patrons of experimentation in the field. "We don't have huge budgets, but we let creators try ideas that others wouldn't," says Webb. "Our philosophy is that there is a kid in everybody. Creativity comes from playing and exploring, and not from other people telling you exactly what they want you to do."—P.H.

HEADLINE/BYLINE/CAPTIONS: ITC STUDIO SCRIPT TEXT: ITC QUAY SANS BOOK, BOOK ITALIC

Future Refer

ELLEN SHAPIRO AND SON ALEX MILLER RESEARCH FOUR CD-ROM ENCYCLOPEDIAS AND COMMENT ("THIS BITES!") ON THEIR CONTENT ("THAT RULES!")

No more trudging to the library to look

up something in the encyclopedia. No more high-pressure door-to-door salesmen who separate guilty parents from thousands of dollars for leather-bound encyclopedia sets. Today you can access a whole shelf full of facts and resources by typing in what you want to find—provided you have a computer with at least 4 MB of RAM, a color monitor, a CD-ROM drive and $35 to $90 to invest.

We compared four CD-ROM encyclopedias—

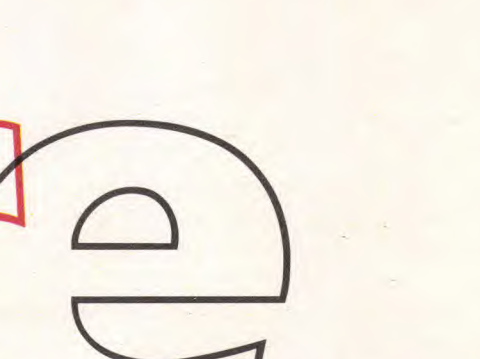
the 1994 Microsoft *Encarta*, the 1995 *Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia*, *Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia*, Edition 1995, and *The Random House Kid's Encyclopedia*. We evaluated *Encarta* and *Grolier* at home on a Mac IIsi with 16 MB of RAM; *Compton's* and *Random House* were at the time available only for Windows, so we tried them out at Irvington (New York) Middle School on an IBM 433-D/DX with 4 MB of RAM. We compared user's guides, interface, navigability and the quality of writing, images, music and other features.

Here's our first impression of each:

MICROSOFT Encarta

Nicely *packaged with clean, seductive graphics.* **User's** *guide booklet fits in jewelbox so it doesn't get lost.* **Opens** *quickly with a collage of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech, jazz and crickets chirping. Alex comments, "Graphics look pretty cool."* **Contains** *26,000 articles, 7,000 pictures, 100 animations and video clips, 250 interactive charts and tables; timeline and atlas.* **Text** *type is set in a large, easy-to-read, sans serif face.* **Attractive** *interface*

Grolier MULTIMEDIA ENCYCLOPEDIA

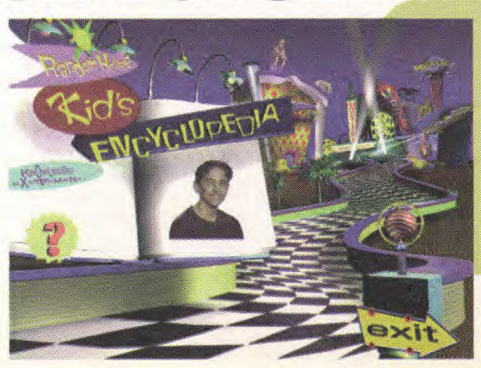


User's *guide is off-putting, with all kinds of restrictions, limited warranties and disclaimers printed in capital letters.*

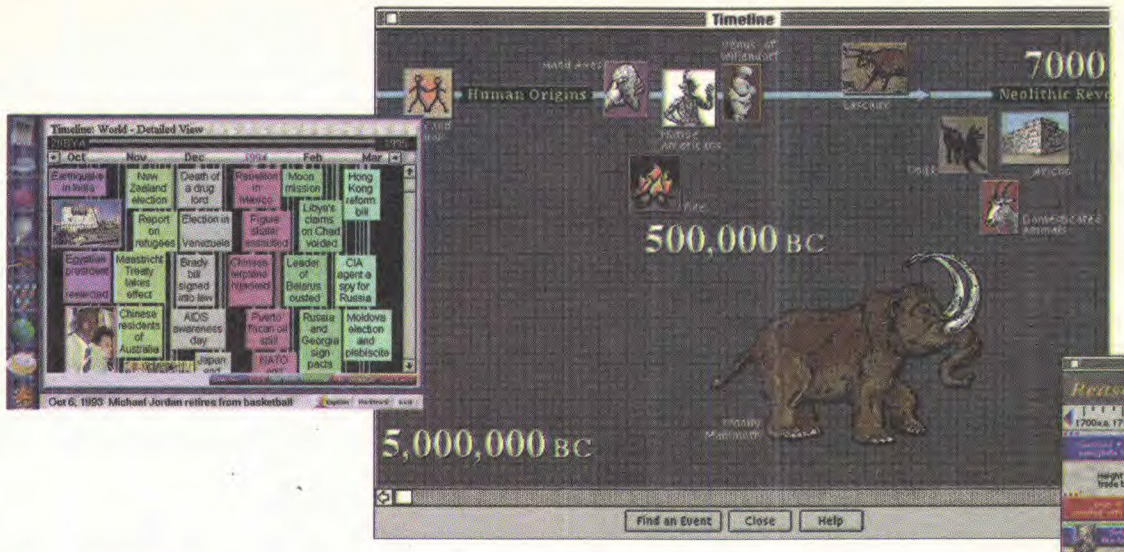
Compton's INTERACTIVE ENCYCLOPEDIA

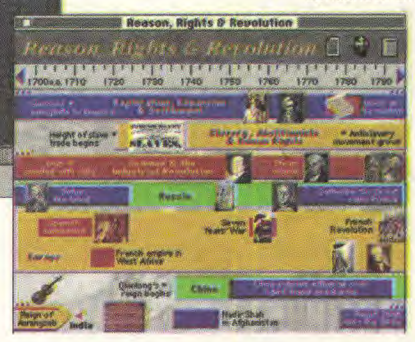
User's *guide is poorly designed with captions and heads in impossible-to-read yellow type.* **Title** *frame has "boring" graphics.* **Tableau** *screen interface is a little stodgy-looking, but it's the most intelligently crafted. A row of buttons lets you access articles, pictures, movies, sounds and tables, which you can view in "tableau" format or blow up to a full screen.* **Contains** *the most articles—35,000—plus 8,000 pictures, 100 videos and 3-D animations and a dictionary.* **"Idea** *Search" lets you ask a question like, "Who is the father of television?" (and helps find the answer). Icons such as "InfoPilot" and "Topic Tree" let you*

Random House KID'S



Kind *of unfair to compare to other three encyclopedias because it's aimed at children from ages 7 through 12.* **Comes** *with two CDs: "Fact-ory" encyclopedia and "Arcade" for playin games (we passed on that one).* **Took** *us 20 minute to install (with*





Look it up:
Comparing screen graphics and content of timelines in (left to right) *Compton's Interactive, Encarta* and *Grolier Multimedia* encyclopedias.

ence

with titles reversed from black bands. Pictorial graphics, used like chapter heads, indicate

sports, music, mathematics and other general subjects. **Many** *ways to find things, such as alphabetized book icons with initials on the spines, as well as "Category Browser," and "Find Wizard."*

Opens *with the images of John F. Kennedy, seagulls and a jet taking off.* **Contains** *33,000 articles, 8,000 pictures, videos, sounds, maps and animations.* **Type** *is small and hard to read. So many words are highlighted in blue (indicating they can be cross-referenced) that legibility is decreased considerably.* **Text**, *pictures and sound are not integrated. "This bites," says Alex. "You have to click on each icon and wait for the thing to appear."* **"Speed** *Scroll" puts what you're looking for at the top of a list of titles; "Word Search" lets you find all the articles containing a single word or phrase. For example, under "Adams," we found 10 Adamses who appear 467 times—Abigail, Ansel, Henry, and various Johns, including English astronomer John Couch Adams, who calculated orbits of planets. "This kind of thing can take you into something you weren't looking for, and that can either be interesting or a major pain," notes Alex, "depending on how much time you have."*

browse a display of related articles. **Words** *or topics that can be cross-referenced have little file-card icons next to them; we think that this is smarter and less distracting than blue highlighting.* **Well-written** *articles aren't merely dry recitations of facts, but interesting essays which have distinctive points of view.*

NCYCLOPEDIA

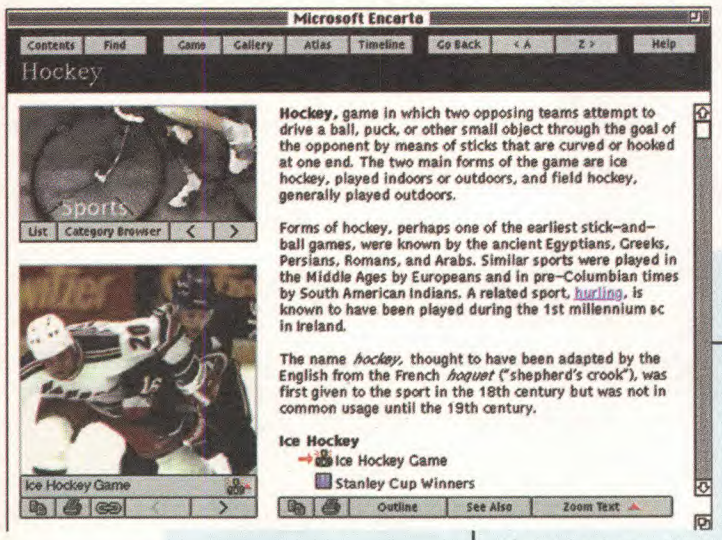
the help of Mr. Buckley, Alex's resource room teacher, who remarked, "Gets bad marks for ease of installation.") **User's** *guide is set in a "Dom Casual" kind of type in reflex blue ink that tries hard to be childlike but is very difficult to read.* **Title** *screen sets the tone: colorful, animated, 3-D, fun-house, game-show graphics. Then a "Main Street" intersection of "Fact-ory," "Movie House" and "Arcade." When it came up, I said, "Cute." Alex said, "Dorky."* **Contains** *2,000 articles, 1,000 narrated entries, 250 movies and animations, and a bibliography for every entry.* **"Vid** *Kids," young actors, appear on the disk as "guides and playmates." Two grown-ups read the text out loud. Alex pronounces, "This is really not good for anyone over the age of 10" and warns parents, "your kids will outgrow this." But at $35, that might not really be an issue.*

AFTER WE FAMILIARIZED OURSELVES A BIT WITH THE CD-ROMS, WE LOOKED UP—OR ATTEMPTED TO LOOK UP—**10 TOPICS IN EACH:** DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, RICHARD NIXON, SIX-DAY WAR, FLOWERS, ALGEBRA, JAPANESE FOOD, JAZZ, TABLE TENNIS, RECYCLING AND ICE HOCKEY.

WE GAVE UP ON JAPANESE FOOD—NOTHING ANYWHERE—AND ON TABLE TENNIS—IT ONLY APPEARS IN COMPTON'S (WITH AN IMPRESSIVE COLOR DIAGRAM OF A PING PONG TABLE, PADDLES AND GRIPS). ICE HOCKEY WAS OUR ALPHA TEST TO JUDGE THE QUALITY AND DEPTH OF INFORMATION PRESENTED.

SO OFF WE WENT ON A BRIEF TOUR TO FIND OUT HOW USEFUL EACH PRODUCT MIGHT BE FOR DOING, SAY, SEVENTH-GRADE HOMEWORK.

the alpha test

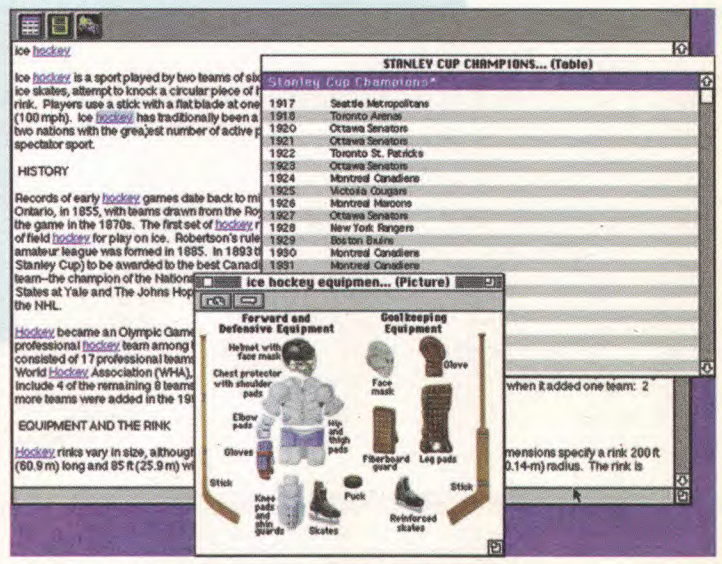


ENCARTA

Encarta offers one "action" photo, 11 paragraphs of text, bios of eight players (with no pictures) and a bibliography. The text begins: *Ice hockey is probably a descendant of bandy, a sport which developed in England in the late 18th century but is now played only in the Baltic countries, Sweden and Russia and the other successor states of the USSR. Modern ice hockey was devised in either 1853 or 1860 by British soldiers stationed in Canada.* Ho-hum.

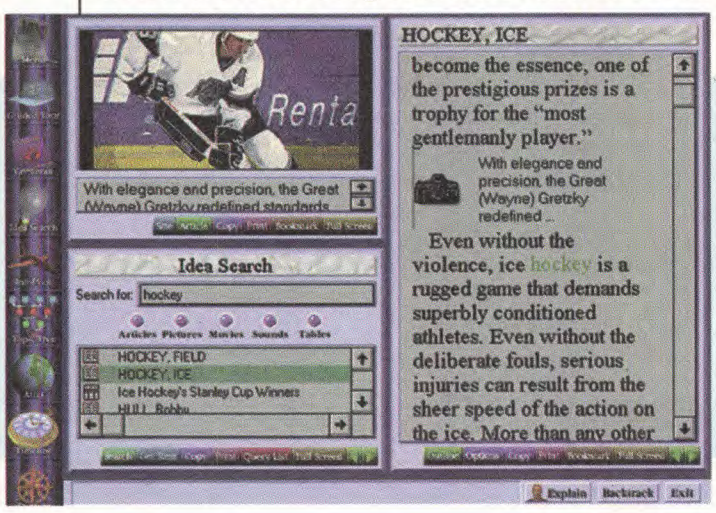
GROLIER

Grolier describes the game's history, equipment and rink, and play. There are lots of technical data, such as, *The puck is a disk-shaped piece of black vulcanized rubber 3 in. (7.6 cm.) in diameter and 1 in. (2.5 cm) thick; it weighs 5-5.6 oz. (156-170 g.).* Alex remarks, "Good vocabulary. They use words like delineated, circumscribed." But he pans a drawing of equipment: "This stuff is out-of-date, looks like 1972 face masks." There are bios of seven players with photos. Alex grimaces, "The only good thing about this picture of Wayne Gretsky is that a Ranger is in the background." A chart displays all the Stanley Cup winners from 1917 to 1994. Alex yells, "Go, Rangers!" The essay starts: *Ice hockey is a sport played by two teams of six players on a rectangular surface of ice called a rink. The players who wear ice skates, attempt to knock a circular piece of hard rubber, the puck, into one of two goals, situated at opposite ends of the rink.* Alex interrupts, "The rink isn't rectangular!"



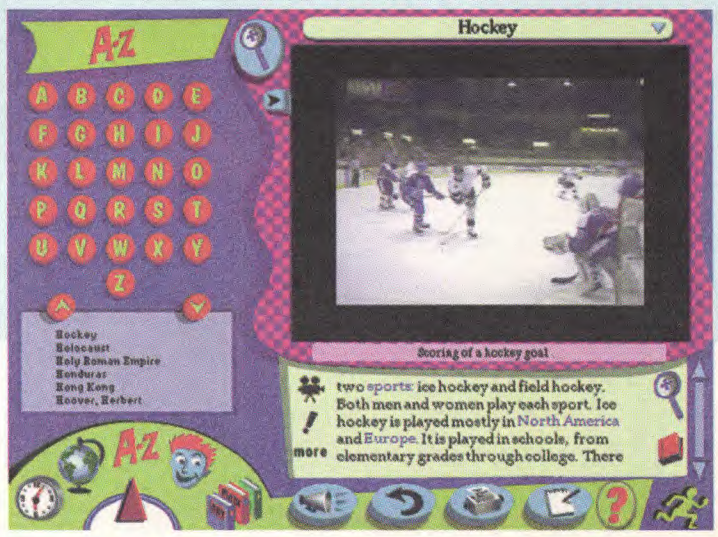
COMPTON'S

Compton's features an up-to-date-looking color diagram of the rink with all kinds of measurements. Alex likes the color pictures of players and laments the lack of a video. We agree that the text is far and away the best written: *The fastest of all team sports, ice hockey has been described as a combination of "blood, sweat and beauty." With an increased focus on bloodshed, descriptions of professional hockey games today are more likely to include words like "goon," "mayhem," and "degenerate." Stiffer penalties have not discouraged the players from using their basic equipment of sticks and skates as weapons, and this brutality has diminished the abstract beauty of the sport.*



RANDOM HOUSE KID'S

Random House Kid's has one bland-looking picture. The narrator reads: *"Hockey is the common name given to two sports: ice hockey and field hockey. Both men and women play each sport. Ice hockey is played mostly in North America and Europe. It is played in schools, from elementary grades through college..."*



ice hockey

the rest

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Encarta gives us five paragraphs of text and a picture of the Declaration. "Alex says, "I wish I could zoom in to see the signatures." We're led into a timeline of American history, which Alex rates as "pretty crummy."

We find *Grolier*'s tiny type hard to read. "Not enough space between the lines and the letters aren't thick enough," complains Alex. There are several pictures, but instead of an integrated screen set-up, you have to click on each one to view it, which we find tedious.

In *Compton's*, a captioned picture appears of the founding fathers signing the Declaration—and you can scroll, grab and zoom in on it. "This rules," is Alex's assessment.

A narrator reads the *Random House Kid's* text to us. Music plays all the time, in this case, "Yankee Doodle Dandy." Says Alex: "For babies. You can't scroll through the text because you have to wait for the person to finish reading. If you have a school project you need to get done fast, don't use this."

RICHARD M. NIXON

Encarta has "tons of text." Alex says, "I think this is pretty in-depth." Gallery Browser shows us pictures of related topics, such as "Nixon Announces End of Vietnam War" with a sound clip and animated map of Vietnam.

We like the "Facts About" feature in *Grolier*, a scrolling bio with color photo and bullet points. There are two videos: Nixon's farewell remarks, with David Eisenhower looking on sadly, and a funny clip of the Kitchen Debate with Kruschev. Clicking on the still pictures is a slow process (at least on our IIsi) and we feel the quality of the images is not worth the wait.

Compton's has an interesting sidebar with biographical highlights. It plays the "I am not a crook" speech and a little film about the Vietnam War.

In *Random House Kid's*, a nice lady reads us a short bio accompanied by a photo.

SIX-DAY WAR

We can't find any reference in *Encarta's* Category Browser to this 1967 war, in which Israel gained the West Bank, Golan Heights and Sinai Peninsula. We're referred to "Yom Kippur War," a different war that took place six years later. Alex sums up, "Then all you get is three paragraphs and one crummy picture of some people with their backs to the camera."

No listing in *Grolier*. Nothing in *Compton's*, either. So we look up "Israel" and it plays Israeli folk music and "Hatikva" (Israel's national anthem) while showing a video of Rabin, Arafat and Clinton signing the 1993 Peace Accords. "Mom, this is going to be hard to find," says Alex.

In *Random House Kid's*, we go straight to "Israel" and watch a travelogue that does mention that "Israel defeated three of its Arab neighbors" in 1967.

FLOWERS

Encarta lets us know there are 804 topics with the word "flower" somewhere in them, including "Truman Capote," and "Caravaggio." We take a little side journey into "cannabis" and then look at some attractive photos of lilacs and jasmine blossoms.

We watch *Grolier's* videos of irises and roses opening, kind of like the stuff on Walt Disney's "Wonderful World of Disney." "What's the point of these?" asks Alex. The pictures of individual flowers look like old drawings scanned out of a book. Alex says, "They must have gotten these cheap. Where's the information?"

I like *Compton's* long, thorough essay with subhead topics such as, "Raised for Food," "The Earliest Gardeners," "Plant Explorers and Horticulturists" and "Flower Societies and Shows." It's solid stuff.

The closest thing in *Random House Kid's* is "Bee Pollinating Flowers," a video clip with special bumblebee music.

ALGEBRA

Encarta supplies ample history and theorems. "Appears to be very advanced," remarks Alex.

He's critical of *Grolier* because for some reason it can't use a "•" instead of "x" to indicate multiplication. He explains that x appears so many times as the unknown in equations it's confusing to employ it as a mathematical symbol. He says, "I can't judge if this stuff is past the seventh grade."

We admire the interestingly written essay in *Compton's* demonstrating how a father might answer a son's question using an algebraic formula.

In *Random House Kid's*, there's a one-paragraph definition.

JAZZ

Encarta's Gallery Browser takes us into "Sounds," which include "harpsichord," "lute" and readings by James Baldwin and e.e. cummings, as well as jazz. We're quickly realizing that one of the problems—and benefits—of CD-ROM encyclopedias is that you can easily get sidetracked into stuff you're not looking for.

Grolier offers a list of still pictures with bio-captions. We look up "Charles Mingus" and get a photo but no sounds. We're led to a "Musical Selections" menu, which goes from Bach to Wagner. Then we take off into "Knowledge Explorer," a narrated slide show about the history of world music. Alex rolls his eyes, saying, "A third-grader would get bored."

In *Compton's* there's a terrific essay on the development of jazz with sound clips of ragtime, Dixieland, swing era, bop era, etc. We like the bios of jazzmen such as Count Basie and Coleman Hawkins.

There is no listing in *Random House Kid's*.

RECYCLING

We get pulled into *Encarta's* graphs and tables, which lead to some good discussions. We learn, for example, that the amount of waste generated by U.S. households each year—876 kg—is far ahead of 17 other industrialized countries. Sweden is the lowest with 214. This makes us want to learn more about Sweden. Like, what do they do with their garbage? Another chart shows us that municipal waste accounts for only 5.2% of total U.S. waste; animal wastes account for 39.1%; and mineral wastes for 38.2%. We wonder, what kind of animal wastes? Dog doo-doo or animal carcasses from slaughterhouses? Are humans animals whose waste is counted? And what *are* mineral wastes, anyway? And where do we find out? We don't know. But this has been the best thing we've seen in *Encarta* so far.

There's no listing in either *Grolier* or *Random House Kid's*, but *Compton's* offers a well-written essay about "Recycling: an Ancient Practice with Many Modern Applications."

Well, we had fun. But we were left wondering how CD-ROM encyclopedias compare to conventional books, such as the former industry-standard, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Isn't it more convenient to access information by viewing everything at once on printed pages, instead of clicking and scrolling? We went to the library, expecting to find that CD-ROMs, for all their glitz, aren't as comprehensive or useful as the "real thing." Wrong! In the 12-volume *Britannica*, which retails for $1,599 to $2,500 (depending on the binding) Ice Hockey shares a page with Ice Formation, Ice Plant, Ice Shelf, and Ice Show. In fact, it rates less than one column of coverage—and has no pictures, diagrams or player bios. The reader is referred to the "Macropaedia" (another 18 books) for listings under sports, major teams and individuals. We left. It wasn't worth the trouble.

Alex's overall evaluation of CD-ROM encyclopedias? "Great! You can just download an article to your word-processing program, change it around a little bit, misspell some words, and hand it in." Just like *we* did in school. But we had to copy—by hand, not photocopy—the whole damn thing. Look how far education has come!

Ellen Shapiro is a writer and graphic designer. Her son, Alex Miller (email:bigjons 201 @aol.com) is a seventh-grader at Irvington Middle School, Irvington, New York.

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The Family Computer

How to cut through the baffling sales and technical jargon and find a multimedia system that will suit your household and weather a few format changes.

BY NICK WINGFIELD

For most families, the decision to plunk down money for a multimedia system comes easily. Then the difficult questions begin. What kind of CPU do we buy? How much RAM do we need? What speed CD-ROM drive? A multimedia shopping list has a lot of elements to it and more than enough techno-jargon to overwhelm first-time buyers. Fortunately, computer companies and retailers are making it easier to buy a system by selling complete multimedia packages. Instead of hassling with upgrade kits or separate, potentially incompatible components, you can get everything you need in one convenient purchase.

Even if you're not fluent with the technical language, it's a good idea to understand what you're buying. In their zeal to make a sale, retailers may not tell you whether a system is upgradable, easy to use, or, worst of all, imminently obsolete. Arming yourself with a mental or physical checklist of basic items before you buy can save you from fits of hair-pulling later on.

The First Question: Mac or PC?

The Italian author Umberto Eco has suggested that the difference between the IBM-compatible PC and the Apple Macintosh is like the difference between Protestant Christianity and Roman Catholicism. Both systems, the twin pillars of the personal computer market, have their acolytes. One of the most compelling reasons to consider a PC is price. The cost of multimedia-ready Macs dropped significantly this year, but you can still expect to pay $200-$400 less for comparable MPCs. (MPC, or multimedia personal computer, is a standard that specifies the minimum level of equipment needed for CD-ROM playback on PCs.) In the PC market, there are dozens of vendors selling computers. The upshot is extremely competitive pricing on MPCs. This year Apple made an historic decision to license the Mac operating system to other hardware makers, including Radius, DayStar, and Power Computing, but consumers probably won't see much impact on prices from this year's Mac clones, except perhaps on high-end workstations.

Many users argue that the Mac's ease of use more than justifies the extra cost. Of course, the accuracy of this claim depends first on who you talk to and, second, what you do with your computer, whether it's for word processing, spreadsheets, or design. For families, ease of use is a strong selling point and the reason the Mac has captured the majority of the home market.

On the surface, the Mac operating system and Microsoft Windows, the most pervasive PC operating system, have a lot in common. (Properly speaking, Windows is not an OS, but a graphical user interface that sits on top of DOS, an older, more arcane operating system.) They both sport similar graphical user interfaces with icons, workspace windows, and pull-down menus. But the similarities end there. Try adding a new component to your system, such as a sound card or CD-ROM drive, and the PC gets ugly, requiring complicated re-configuration and installation of software drivers.

The Mac, on the other hand, is almost totally fuss-free: plug a new card or peripheral into it and you're ready to play. That's one of the beauties of the Mac. For years, Macs have come with built in sound and, often, integrated CD-ROM drives. Only in the past couple of years have PC makers followed suit by offering complete multimedia packages under the MPC stamp.

If you want to avoid PC configuration hassles, buy a complete MPC instead of upgrading a computer with a multimedia kit. Out of the box, an MPC should be ready to roar, no configuration necessary. Another caveat for those who upgrade is that the PC component market is open to many players, and quality control is less tight than it is for Macs. Since most Mac components come from Apple, users face fewer compatibility problems. Microsoft is, however, promising to make PCs friendlier with a revamped operating system, Windows 95, due out in August. Among other things, Windows 95 will include multimedia-friendly features like Plug and Play and CD Autoplay (which installs CD-ROM fonts and drivers, then removes them when the CD is ejected).

PCs claim a much larger chunk of the personal computer market than the Mac. As a result, MPCs have a larger library of multimedia titles available to them, including kid-oriented edutainment discs. About 63% of all titles are produced exclusively for PCs. Developers often release Mac versions around 6 months after the release of the original MPC version. This isn't true of all titles, though. Some of the more critically acclaimed CD-ROMs, such as those from New York-based developer Voyager, do often appear in Mac format first, and some multimedia developers opt for a CD-ROM format that works on both MPCs and Macs.

Ultimately, your decision to buy a Mac or PC should be based on more than multimedia playback. Consider the other things you and your family plan to do with your computer. Again, PC users have

a greater range of products and applications to choose from because it's a bigger market. But statistics suggest that the overall customer satisfaction level is higher among Mac users. For print designers, the process of outputting Mac files tends to be less plagued with problems; I know a couple of PC designers who've been to PostScript hell and barely lived to talk about it. The Mac also maintains better multimedia authoring, graphics, audio and animation tools than PCs, though this is changing.

If you just can't decide between PC and Mac, you can have both in one machine–but it'll cost you. Mac users have two options for running Windows applications on their computers: SoftWindows, a pokey emulation program that runs Windows applications at 286 speeds, and a pricier DOS card (about $799) that does the same but at 486 speeds. If you choose either option, be prepared to buy lots of extra RAM for your computer. PC users can't yet run Mac applications on their machine.

Chips Anyone?

There's a rule when it comes to microprocessors: Every year, prices come down (resulting in cheaper computers), and performance goes up. This year is no exception. The new generation of CPU chips for Macs and PCs have more horsepower for improved multimedia playback, as well as design. If you're looking for a bargain, though, systems based on older chips offer acceptable performance at clearance sale prices. Some PCs and Macs permit chip upgrades if you decide later that you need more power.

The current MPC standard, Level 2, advises a minimum 25-MHz 486SX CPU and a recommended 66-MHz 486DX2 for multimedia PCs. (MHz is the processor's speed, 486 is the chip model.) I wouldn't recommend anything less than 33-MHz, especially since prices on faster models are so low right now. A complete 486/66 MPC can be had for song–just over a $1000. A 100-MHz system will cost about $400 more, but you'll really see the difference when playing back video and large graphics files. Prices on 486 MPCs have dropped because Intel and other PC chip suppliers are making way for the newer family of Pentium processors. A Pentium machine adds a lot more zip to multimedia playback, but an entry level 60-MHz model will cost around $1500. Prices on the newer chip will fall in late '95 as Intel competitors introduce their own Pentium-class chips.

On the Mac side, machines based on the PowerPC chip are fast eclipsing the older Macs with 680x0 chips. For multimedia playback, the older computers are sufficient, but if you're going to be doing any multimedia production at all, go with the PowerMac. Apple is gradually phasing out the 680x0 line of Macs, though a few remain on shelves, including the popular Performa multimedia models, most of which run at 33-MHz. They're well priced, from about $1400 to $2000. A basic 60-MHz PowerMac multimedia system will cost around $2400, but the added speed really makes a difference, especially when using multimedia titles with lots of animation or rich graphics. The PowerMac outperforms all other personal computers on the market now, including the Pentium.

More Memory

Whenever you launch a document or a multimedia program, the information goes into your computer's random access memory (RAM). **For multimedia playback, don't consider a system with anything less than eight megabytes (8MB) of RAM.** Your computer's operating system will eat up half of that, leaving the other half to run your multimedia title. Going up to 12MB is advisable for better playback, and you'll need a minimum of 16MB if you're going to be using any image editing or authoring tools.

Depending on your system, you'll probably be able to add RAM in 4MB increments. You can always add more memory after you buy your computer, but check to see what its ceiling is on RAM upgrades. Chances are that it's more than you'll need. Memory will cost around $35 per MB, not including installation fees.

More Storage

Storage space on your hard disk, also measured in megabytes, is equally important. Even if a multimedia title comes on a CD-ROM disc, it usually requires a few MBs or more on your hard disk to enhance performance. A 350MB hard disk is standard issue today with most multimedia systems, and you'll want at least that much if your family plans on building a CD-ROM collection. If you're working with large graphics files or digital video, you'll want to invest in plenty more storage–at least a gigabyte (1,000MB). If your internal hard disk fills up, you can always add an external hard disk or removable-cartridge storage, such as a magneto optical or SyQuest drive.

CD-ROM Drives

Double-speed CD-ROM drives are fairly common in today's multimedia

Continued on page 48

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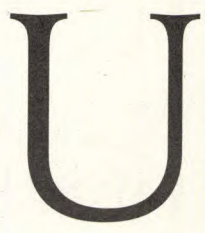

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Medium
Medium Italic
Bold
Bold Italic
Black
Black Italic

ITC Vinyl™
Black
Outline
Sawtooth Black
Sawtooth Outline

ITC Weidemann®
Book
Book Italic
Medium
Medium Italic
Bold
Bold Italic
Black
Black Italic

ITC Wisteria™

ITC Zapf Book®
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Medium
Medium Italic
Demi
Demi Italic
Heavy
Heavy Italic

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Medium
Medium Italic
Demi
Bold

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بطرس مسطرة أبيض مائل
Light Italic

بطرس مسطرة متوسط
Medium

بطرس مسطرة متوسط مائل
Medium Italic

بطرس مسطرة أسود
Bold

بطرس مسطرة أسود مائل
Bold Italic

ITC Boutros Kufic™

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Light

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Light Italic

بطرس كوفي متوسط
Medium

بطرس كوفي متوسط مائل
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Bold Italic

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Light Italic

بطرس كوفي حديث متوسط
Medium

بطرس كوفي حديث متوسط مائل
Medium Italic

بطرس كوفي حديث أسود
Bold

بطرس كوفي حديث أسود مائل
Bold Italic

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بطرس رقعة متوسط
Medium

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Light Italic

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بطرس صحفي متوسط مائل
Medium Italic

بطرس صحفي أسود
Bold

بطرس صحفي أسود مائل
Bold Italic

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لطيف أبيض مائل
Light Italic

لطيف متوسط
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لطيف متوسط مائل
Medium Italic

لطيف أسود
Bold

لطيف أسود مائل
Bold Italic

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ITC Анна

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Book

ITC Авангард Готик нормальный
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ITC Авангард Готик полужирный
Demi

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ITC Баухауз срелний
Medium

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Continued from page 43

packages, but quad-speed drives are gaining popularity as they get cheaper. If bought separately, quad-speed drives can be had for less than $400. (Single-speed is too slow for most multimedia titles, and triple-speed never really caught on.) There are two key measurements of performance in CD-ROM drives: transfer rate (the speed at which data is sent from the CD to the rest of the computer for playback) and average access time (the time it takes the drive to switch tracks on the CD). A double-speed drive should have at least 300KB (kilobyte) per second transfer rate; quad-speed should have at least 600KB per second. An access rate of more than 400ms (milliseconds) is unacceptable for multimedia performance; make sure that a drive's access rate is less than that.

The benefits of a quad-speed drive are more or less noticeable depending on the kind of data on the CD-ROM. It can improve video playback, sound may be more in synch with video, software installation can be faster, and games will respond better. If you're buying a CD-ROM drive separately from the rest of your system, make sure it's compatible with your hard disk controller board.

The Sound of Music

Whether you plan to record or just play, sound will greatly enrich your multimedia experience. All Macs are equipped with an internal speaker and built-in sound, whereas PCs require a sound card for audio output. Of course, if you buy an MPC, it will come with a card installed and configured. There are two ways to measure the audio quality of a sound card. First, remember that 16-bit is better than 8-bit sound. The difference may not be striking for voice recordings, but it is for music. Most MPCs will have 16-bit audio cards, and the same goes for PowerMacs, but many 680x0 Macs only have 8-bit audio. A second measure of quality is kilohertz (kHz), which indicates the rate at which sound is sampled. Most 8-bit cards will record and play back sound at 22 kHz, while 16-bit cards have a 44 kHz sampling rate.

The speakers that come with Macs and most MPCs usually aren't as good as home stereo speakers. For better sound, you can upgrade to higher wattage computer speakers with built-in amplifiers or hook the computer up to your stereo system, a popular alternative. If you choose the latter option, make sure your sound card has line-out port; you'll probably need to buy a special cable to plug it into your stereo amplifier. Likewise, if you plan to record music, check the card for a MIDI and microphone port.

Graphics Boards and Monitors

The quality of digital video and graphics playback depends largely on two things: your computer's graphics board and monitor. Macs and MPCs typically offer a graphics resolution of 640x480 pixels. MPCs come with SVGA (Super Video Graphics Adapter) boards that have either 8-bit (256 colors) or 16-bit (65,536 color) color capabilities. Macs usually have 16-bit color. Although you can upgrade both systems with 24, 32, and 64-bit boards, 16-bits will suffice for most of today's multimedia titles. Also, keep in mind that the more colors your computer has to display, the slower its performance. You can juice it up by adding a board with a graphics accelerator on it, but expect to pay a premium for that.

Your computer monitor is also important. The first thing to consider is size. Screens are measured diagonally, but typically a monitor displays one or more inches less than the stated screen size. MPCs and Macs almost always come with 13 to 15 inch monitors. These sizes are tolerable for multimedia playback. Besides size, find out what the dot pitch of a monitor is before you buy–the distance between dots on screen. A dot pitch of more than .40mm isn't advisable for multimedia playback. Designers will probably want something closer to .28mm.

Conclusion

You can keep adding more and better components to your multimedia system until your wallet is worn out. Increasingly complex, graphics-rich titles are straining the capabilities of yesterday's systems. If you and your family really want to enjoy–and not simply endure–the multimedia effects coming your way, such as 3D animation and virtual reality, invest in a powerful system.

Make sure that the A-list of options for your multimedia computer includes a modem (at least 14.4 Kbps). CD-ROMs aren't the only multimedium after all. Online services and the Internet are delivering sound, hypertext, graphics, and video to computers over phone lines. In fact, if the prognosticators are correct, CD-ROMs will eventually vanish as a distribution mechanism in the coming years, a casualty of technology's planned obsolescence, to be replaced by high-speed data lines.

Nick Wingfield is a freelance writer based in San Francisco. He can be reached at nickw@sirius.com.

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Hansson

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Part one of our three part AgfaType Creative Alliance Profile Series features four of today's leading type designers who are creating exclusive typefaces for Agfa. This issue highlights their first typeface contributions to this exciting new program, and provides insight into the personalities behind the designs.

BERTHOLD

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AREPO

Sumner Stone, practically a legend in his own time, served as Director of Typography at Adobe Systems Inc. during the ground-breaking 1980s.

The multi-talented **Stone** is a mathematician, graphic

designer, calligrapher, author, and teacher as well as type designer par excellence. Now principal and founder of Stone Type Foundry in California, Stone found inspiration from both Giambattista Bodoni and Guiseppe Verdi when he designed Arepo: a harmonious combination of elegance & discipline in a display face.

Pioneer digital type designer David Berlow began as a letter designer in 1978. Four years later he joined Bitstream, Inc. In 1989 he and partner Roger Black founded the highly regarded The Font Bureau, Inc. Their innovative custom designs are used by publications as diverse as The Wall Street Journal and Entertainment Weekly. Throhand's 12 faces are the result of Berlow's study of some of the earliest European Roman faces. They're fine, delicate faces, well-suited to high-resolution work—and they're offered, along with 20

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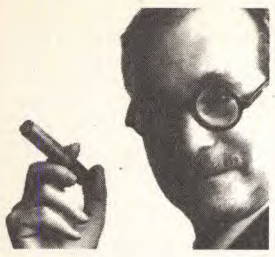

As a trainee carpenter, the young Albert Boton discovered letter design while peering through a window at a graphic design studio—and was hooked. He studied under master typographers Adrian Frutiger and Ladislas Mandel, and went on to develop hundreds of typefaces at prominent graphic and industrial design studios. Now Art Director with Carré Noir graphic design studio in Paris, M. Boton has developed type designs for major type foundries including ITC, Mecanorma, and Berthold AG—and now Agfa.

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Part 2 in Next U&lc Issue

- The 40-year veteran designer who began by learning to cut punches by hand for metal types in The Netherlands
- A hot young typographiste, on the fast track to world class status, who custom designed the digital typeface used at one of Europe's largest daily newspapers
- A noted Scandinavian who began designing type after years of teaching children with severe reading problems
- The British representative for the New York Type Directors Club, and an international lecturer on type design

Swedish painter and designer Lennart Hansson began hand designing letterforms at age 20. His exceptional calligraphic artwork and lettering designs have been widely published and displayed in exhibits throughout the world. The Lennart Hansson design studio, founded in 1977, went digital in 1992. In 1993, Hansson won the Nordic Typeface Competition in Copenhagen for his charismatic typeface Runa Serif, inspired by the forms of ancient Viking runes. The Runa Serif and the related Crane typeface families are exciting new Agfa Exclusives.

Scherzo Runa Alliance

AGFA

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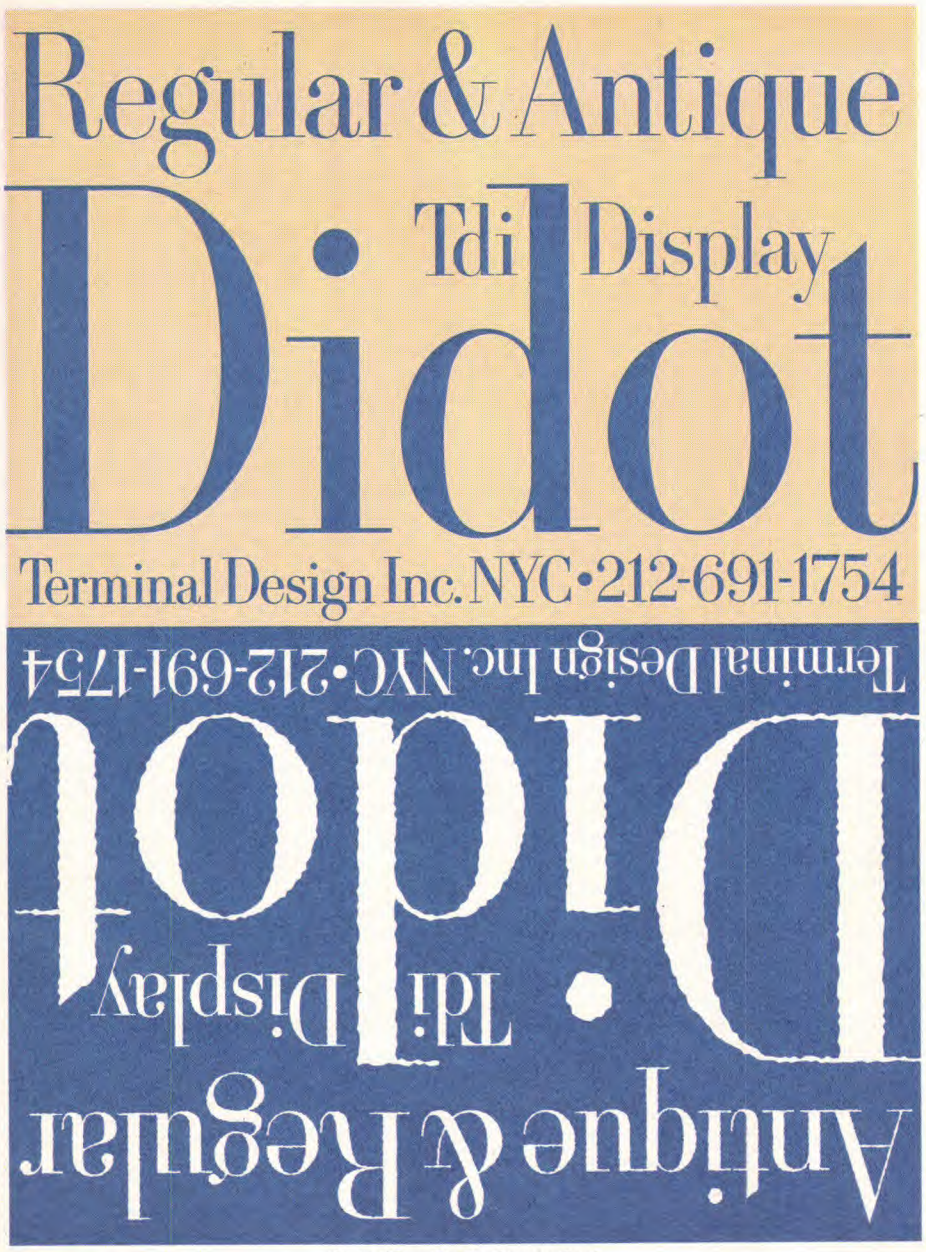

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publications or materials appropriate to a certain age or reading level. This service comes at a price; it's $9.95 for two hours of use, with additional hours billed at $2.95 each (that's over and above Prodigy's $9.95 monthly rate, which includes five free hours of online time. Start-up software is free of charge).

AOL

America Online (AOL) places all its kid-related content in the Kids Only arena. In addition to games, newsletters, and galleries of pictures and libraries of stories, AOL has a large complement of interactive magazines and information sources, featuring articles and activities in such areas as Scholastic KidsWorld, Disney Adventures Magazines, TIME for Kids, DC Comics for Kids, National Geographic World, Smithsonian Online and CNN.

You will also find KIDSNET, which provides television and radio listings of programs for kids, imaginary places (or virtual communities) such as Hatrack River, based on the novels of science fiction writer Orson Scott Card, and StarFleet Academy, from the Star Trek Next Generation series. There are also forums, such as Student to Student, where schoolkids can hook up with other students to work on joint projects, and Generation to Generation, where they can meet online with senior citizens.

AOL also has homework and study aides in the form of *Compton's Encyclopedia*, a K-12 multimedia encyclopedia, and Homework Help, an academic assistance service that connects kids who have questions with online teachers and tutors.

AOL's membership kit, including startup software, is free. Membership is $9.95 per month, and includes five free hours. Additional hours cost $2.95 each.

eWorld

Apple Computer's eWorld has a variety of forums to visit, geared to people from 8 to 18 years old (as with most of the other services). These include games and games reviews, a martial arts forum, and homework help in the form of UPI News You Can Use, the *Grolier Encyclopedia* and Time Machine, a collection of famous quotes, major dates in history, global statistics and a selection of reviews of historical documents.

The three most popular sites (all part of eWorld's Learning Center) include Youth Central, ImaginEngine and BlackBerry Creek. Youth Central is a forum where kids join in online conferences to talk about everything from school and homework to music, movies and current events. The forum was started by an eighth grader who wanted to give students a place where they could meet online to talk freely in an open forum about a range of topics and issues.

Kids may also want to become a character in a mystery as part of the Learning Center's ImaginEngine, where they choose an "Intelligent Agent" code name to work with others online to solve and create new mysteries. ImaginEngine also includes a place for you to post an opinion, download graphics files and software, participate in online conferences and get information about new books.

BlackBerry Creek is geared to 8-to-14-year-olds interested in creating their own theater productions or publishing a newspaper or book. Here they will find software that helps them create skits and make posters and tickets. There's also a writer's workshop where they can post their stories and join in contests. There are also a few places to hang out in BlackBerry Creek, most notably the Hungry Ear, a "live performance space" where kids can write group stories and share jokes as part of a comedy club.

eWorld's membership kit, with startup software for the Macintosh only, is free. In the United States and Canada, subscribers pay a $8.95 monthly fee, which includes four hours of access time. Additional time is $2.95 per hour. (Outside the U.S., the cost is $9.95 per month, which includes one hour of access time).

CompuServe

CompuServe doesn't actually have kid-specific content; rather it has a variety of games, entertainment and family forums that may interest children. For instance, in the Library, they will find reference

sources that might help them with their homework, including the *Academic American Encyclopedia* (keyword: Go Encyclopedia) and the *American Heritage Dictionary* (Go Dictionary), while the *Daily News* forum offers news, weather reports and maps from a variety of well-known news sources including the Associated Press Online (Go APO), *US News and World Report* (Go USNews) and AccuWeather Maps & Reports (Go Weather).

There are also special interest and hobby forums, including the Family Pet forum, where you can pick up information on how to care for a variety of family pets, including dogs and cats (Go Twpets) and fish (Go Fishnet). Meanwhile, the Gamers forum offers game hints and reviews, while the Hot Games area provides an ever-changing list of shareware games that can be downloaded. For those addicted to Sega video games, there's a Sega Forum that provides product news and plays host to contests and promotions with Sega products as the prizes. CompuServe start-up software is free. The $9.95 monthly fee gives you unlimited access to 120 basic services; extended services are billed at $4.95 per hour.

Other sources

The fourth major commercial online provider, GEnie (from General Electric Information Services) has plans in the works to offer kids forums and content before the end of this year.

In the meantime, a few independent organizations have created or announced online services designed to make cyberspace a more welcome environment for kids. The non-profit Kyle Foundation in Oroville, Calif., founded by best-selling author Tom Clancy, plans to launch an online network that will target a specific niche of users: children suffering from serious and life-threatening illnesses.

The California Technology Project, a cooperative venture between the California State University (CSU) system and the California Department of Education, has created GINA, software that gives students and educators a user-friendly interface to the Internet. GINA provides point-and-click access to e-mail and conferencing services, bulletin boards, library catalogs and online databases. The software is already in use at sites throughout California, including school districts, county offices of education, and at CSU's 22 campuses. The cost for GINA is $19.95 for an annual license, with site licenses and quantity discounts available.

A watchful eye

You may think that cyberspace is a safe place for your children to explore, but beware that your offspring may wander into adult-only chat forums, access content geared to adults, or be approached online by people pretending to be kids. While commercial service providers recognize that they can't monitor every message that gets posted on their services or keep track of the activities of their subscribers, most do provide some level of controls for parents to use. These parental controls usually allow subscribers to have a certain number of screen names or aliases for each account; each alias can then be limited to only a select number of forums or services chosen by parents.

But responsibility for where kids go, who they meet up with and how much time they spend online is ultimately up to the parents. As a spokesperson of a major commercial online service said, "You'd probably be concerned if your kids were starting to get magazines wrapped in plain-brown paper in the mail or phone calls from adults you didn't know."

The bottom line? Remember that cyberspace may be a virtual world, but its impact on your children is real.

To get free software startup kits, call:

America Online: (800) 827-6364
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Connie Guglielmo is a San Francisco-based freelance writer. A former news editor at MacWeek, *her work appears in numerous publications, including* Wired, New Media, MacUser *and* Open Computing.

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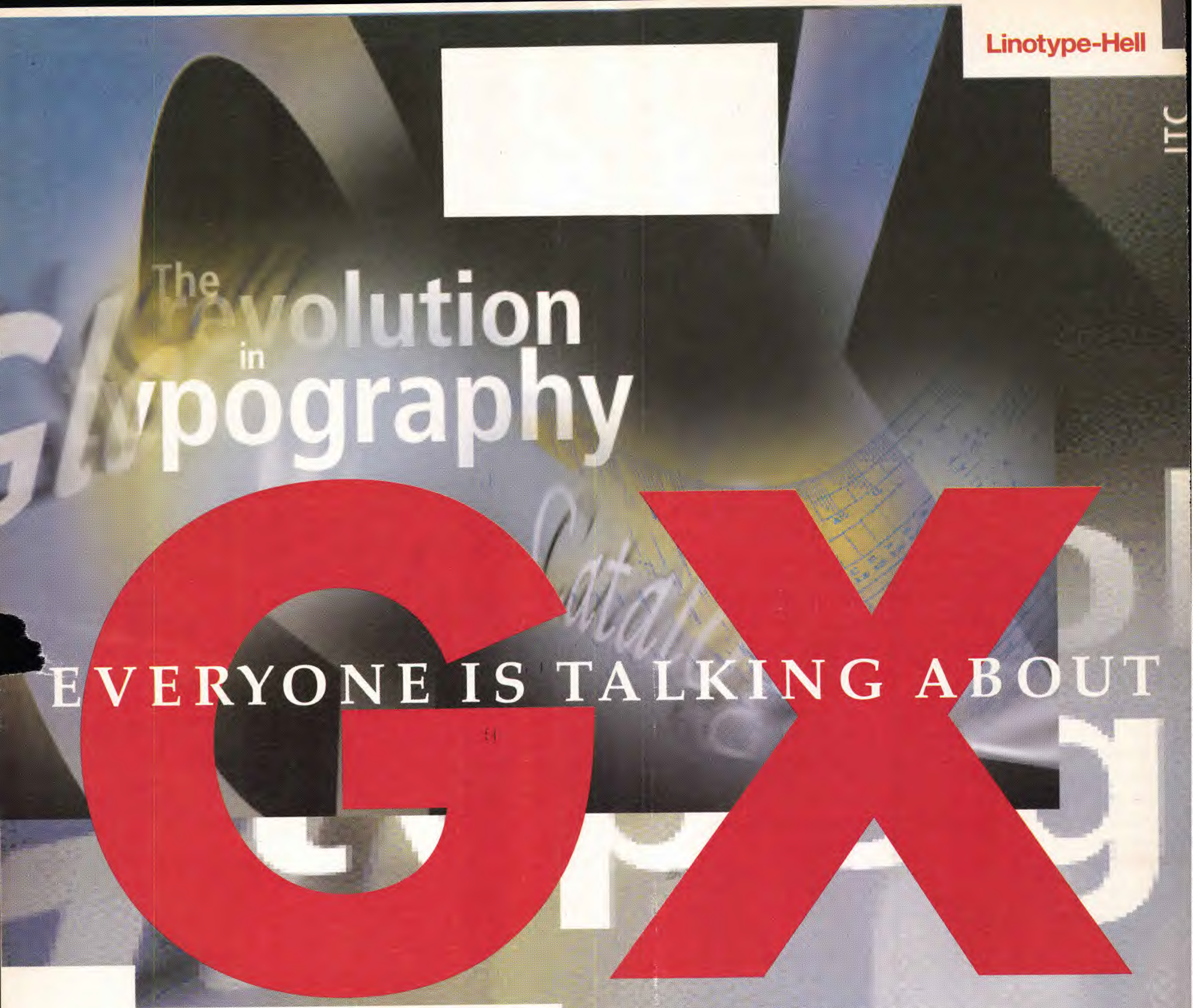

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