A Child's 1st Interactive Travel Guide: To Exploring the Culture of Western Europe

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A Child's 1st Interactive Travel Guide: To Exploring the Culture of Western Europe

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Date:
Results:
An interactive travel guide that provides children with information about the cultures of Western Europe. Each trip is unique and entices the child to explore and learn. It educates children about other cultures through an animated and interactive story where the user chooses their destination. It focuses on computer based education that stimulates imagination and creative ways of learning.

Target audience:
Gender: male/female
Age: 8 to 10
Education Level: Grade School
Computer Experience: Beginner

Deliverable Medium: CD-ROM

Target Computer: Desktop/ Laptop

Platform: Macintosh/ PC

Software Used:
Adobe Photoshop
Adobe Illustrator
SoundEdit
Macromedia Director
Macromedia Flash

URL: http://www.juliepopken.com
Process:
The Child’s First Interactive Travel Guide was created for a child who is approximately 8 to 10 yrs. of age with beginner computer skills. When the project is opened, the child is presented with a colorful and imaginative interface where he or she is asked to click one of the three characters in the window of a castle. The child can pick from either England, Italy or France’s character.

This animated storybook teaches the child about the culture of these three countries. Each country has interactive animations that provide valuable information while stimulating their imagination and creativity.

All the images were either hand drawn and manipulated in Adobe Photoshop or drawn within Macromedia Flash. These images were created with specific design considerations for the child user. After much research on the best way for children to learn using a computer, I went to work on a series of sketches that would be both understandable and enticing to the child. The focus was to make the learning experience enjoyable and memorable. As the designs began to take form the results proved to be both exciting and inviting. (Some design decisions were: to use bold colors, familiar symbols, understandable language enhanced by audio, with clear navigation and instructions at all times.)

The child begins their interactive journey by clicking on one of the characters in the window of a medieval castle. The castle was hand drawn with colored pencils and watercolors and then scanned into Adobe Photoshop where it was prepared to be added into the project. The characters were drawn within Flash to appropriately represent each country. When you rollover the character they welcome you and invite you to enter and learn. The characters sound and look just like their respective countries. On the main interface the child can play with fun interactive animations. There is a quit button that gives thanks to those involved in producing the piece and also exits the movie.

Upon entering either England, Italy or France you will come to the introduction page. Here the child is asked to explore and learn. They are shown a hand illustrated image of each country. England’s illustration is of Liverpool, a friendly city that is best known for the music group ‘The Beatles’. Music by the group plays in the background while the child can study the artwork, a street scene created in watercolors and colored pencil. In Italy a watercolor painting of the canals in Venice is shown. An energetic Italian mambo plays in the background. In France a small village in Normandy is shown, the home of Claude Monet, while the National
Anthem plays in the background.

At the top of each introductory page are three choices: explore, play game, or castle. If you select castle you will be brought back to the main interface where you can select another place to visit. The explore section will teach about the country and the game section will have the child learn and interact with a fun activity.

In each game section a captivating activity is introduced to the child with clear instructions. The three games are the Eiffel Tower matching puzzle, the Coliseum jigsaw puzzle, and the Big Ben sliding puzzle. During each game the child learns interesting facts about the three famous places by playing the games. These games were scripted in Flash.

In every explore section the child will learn about the country’s geography. Such things as the country’s location, the flag, the capitol, the population and size are presented. Tons of information about the background of the country and famous places to visit is shown. A variety of imagery accompanies the information to enhance the learning experience. Many issues are touched upon including, agriculture, economy, history, climate, currency, art and culture, sports, famous monuments and much more.

In Conclusion, I feel a great sense of accomplishment after having completed this project. During the thesis show I was pleased to see how many adults enjoyed the project regardless of age. The Child’s First Interactive Travel Guide has proven a success that will hopefully become an even more elaborate project for me in the future. It was intentionally left open ended so that other countries might be added at a future date. I would like to give special thanks to those who helped in the production of my thesis project. Sincere thanks to Bob Keough, Chris Jackson, and Bob Dorsey.

Bibliography and Review of the Literature:


The Art Center of The Museum of Modern Art has pioneered in exploring new and better methods in the development of children's creative growth. This book is about understanding the creative growth of young children. It deals with one of the most important aspects of children's growth: creative expression. Children's artwork can be a guidepost towards
furthering their understanding and helping them in their growth.


This text deals with important questions about book illustration for children. Should the artwork be representational or abstract? What media is the most appropriate and why? Do these images contribute to the message or are they merely decorative? After reading this book you should have more insight into the illustrator's craft and the significant contribution of illustrations to childrens literature.


This book is a showcase of outstanding contemporary children's book illustration. Over 80 illustrators are included with illustrations from various books demonstrating an incredible range of styles, techniques and innovation. The child's appeal and involvement are significant factors to the designing of picture books. It explains how the child's fascination with the pictures expands the meaning of the text and challenges their imagination.


The objective of this book is to enlighten and inform our understanding of art education and human development. It was written by a cognitive psychologist. It explains ideas that are behind art educators today. It addresses the difference in development between cultures and individuals.


Computer technology makes information easier to access, control and disseminate. A new generation of computer literate students will enter higher education, bringing with them more sophisticated demands in this area. There are signs to increase funding to make computers more available in the schools for computer applications and the arts. This
books talks about what has been done to have computer technologies in education and what needs to still be done.


The purpose of this text is to discuss the concepts that lie behind the illustrated book for children. It addresses many questions. Are illustrations directed towards children or adults? How can you judge good illustrations from bad? This book takes a look at contemporary masters that have made a meaningful graphic statement.


Stories and illustrations in picture books can make a strong, positive, contribution to a child's early education. This text discusses how pictures in books can reveal the delights of verbal expression. It explains how picture books can have a profound effect upon a child's pattern of development. It talks about how a child's environment has a great effect upon their creativity during the rapid growth period. Therefore it is very important to stimulate creativity during this period in the home or school environment.


This book is written for practicing early educators and those preparing to work with young children. It suggests that sound principles and basic art media are appropriate regardless of the age of the artist. It is written from a developmental perspective. It explains the nature of children's art, child development and simulating creativity in children.