

Mixed Media: A Roundup of Electronic Products

By Frank Alan Bruno

This column features multicultural materials useful for elementary, high school, and college/university audiences. The multicultural titles chosen represent quality electronic products that can help educators, librarians, and researchers better understand diverse ethnic and racial groups and practices.

CD-ROM products are listed according to age range, from youngest to oldest. The web-based products, which are all appropriate for middle school and up, are listed alphabetically.

CD-ROM PRODUCTS

Little Bill Thinks Big. Danbury: Scholastic Library Publishing [P.O. Box 1795, Danbury, CT 06816; phone: (800) 621-1115; fax: (866) 783-4361; e-mail: sjames@scholasticlibrary.com; web site: www.scholastic.com/librarypublishing]. \$19.99. System Requirements: Windows 98, 2000, ME, XP, Pentium II 266 MHz or faster processor, 64 MB RAM, 80 MB free hard disk space, 16-bit color, Windows-compatible sound card and speakers, 8X CD-ROM drive; iMac/G3 233 MHz or faster processor, Mac OS 8.6–9.2.2, OS X 10.1.2, 64 MB RAM, 80 MB free hard disk space, 16-bit color, 24X CD-ROM drive. Ages 4–6.

Little Bill Thinks Big is based on Bill Cosby's award-winning show and books. Children play activities with Bill and earn five items needed to create a BIG surprise! They develop early math and thinking skills while launching a submarine, making cookies, traveling to outer space, and more. The game includes 20 engaging activities and mini-games, four adventures, and a different surprise for each season. Three levels of play automatically adjust to a user's progress. Activities address numbers, counting, sorting, sequencing, patterns, shapes, creativity, and following directions. This is a fun game that will delight children for hours.

My First Amazing World Explorer. New York: DK Media and Global Software Publishing [535 West 34th Street, New York, NY 10001; phone: (646) 792-2794; e-mail: info@gspna.com; web site: <http://learnatglobal.com>]. \$14.95. System Requirements: Windows 95/98/XP (works on Win ME), 486DX2 66 MHz or faster processor, 32 MB RAM, 15 MB free disk space, 2X CD-ROM, 640X480 256-color, 16-bit sound card (will not run without a sound card); Macintosh: 68LCO40/25 MHz processor, System 7.01 or later, 8 MB RAM (12 MB for System 7.5 or later and for PowerPC), 2x CD-ROM drive, 13 MB hard disk space, 640 x 480 pixels with 256 colors (thousands of colors recommended), 8-bit sound card (16-bit recommended), mouse. Ages 5–8.

Children begin in a bedroom, where they choose activities to explore the world. They play games, watch movies, or follow clues to find Joe, who is somewhere in the world, and deliver a package to him. By clicking on the world map, they find out about famous places, animals, and plants; natural wonders; and capital cities. Hot spots reveal a picture and narrative of the topic, which is read aloud for nonreaders. There are also stickers to find and other fun games to play.

Find a bus or plane or boat and take a journey. Your passport is stamped in each country you visit. You even learn snippets about the cultures of the countries visited.

Follow the Drinking Gourd. Lincoln, Neb.: GPN/Reading Rainbow [GPN, P.O. Box 80669, Lincoln, NE 68501-0669; phone: (800) 228-4630; fax: (800) 306-2330; e-mail: gpn@unl.edu; web site: <http://gpn.unl.edu/rainbow>]. \$25.00. Ages 8–10.

This *Reading Rainbow* episode is based on Jeanette Winter's book. The story traces runaway slaves' journey north along the Underground Railroad. Directions are hidden in the Negro song "The Drinking Gourd." The coded song gives the route for an escape from Alabama and Mississippi. Of all the routes out of the Deep South, this is the only one for which the details survived. The route instructions were given to slaves by an old man named Peg Leg Joe. Working as an itinerant carpenter, he spent winters in the South, moving from plantation to plantation, teaching slaves this escape route. Unfortunately, we know little about Peg Leg Joe.

Reading Rainbow host LeVar Burton introduces viewers to the history, heroes, events, and music. The a capella group Sweet Honey in the Rock performs the song. Interactive exercises include "Seek the Road to Freedom," in which students use their skills in sentence making to learn more about the road to freedom, and "The Quilting Memory Game," where students can increase their memory skills by matching quilt patterns. This very informative segment of *Reading Rainbow*, enhanced with entertaining games, will help students understand this period in our history better.

Cherokee Trails 2. West Union: Pharos Games/Great Mind Inc. [188 Madonna Drive, West Union, OH 45693; orders: Scholastic Library Publishing, P.O. Box 1795, Danbury, CT 06816; phone: (800) 621-1115; fax: (866) 783-4361; e-mail: sjames@scholasticlibrary.com; web site: www.scholastic.com]. \$19.95]. System Requirements: Win95, 98, ME, XP, Pentium II or equivalent, 800 x 600 screen resolution, MP3-capable soundcard. Ages 9–12.

A wise Cherokee woman transports players from a roadside flea market to a ghostly trail where they can trade with the spirits and unravel the secrets of the Cherokee Trails. The player and six friends use herbal remedies and Shaman potions along the way. If the student trades wisely, he or she will overcome all the obstacles and makes the full journey from Cherokee, North Carolina, to Tahlequah, Oklahoma, along the "Trail of Tears."

In order to ensure that *Cherokee Trails* is authentic, the software developers used the assistance of Cherokee storyteller Choogie Kingfisher, Cherokee linguist George Stopp, and well-known Cherokee musician Lisa LaRue.

Cherokee Trails is similar to the game *Oregon Trail*. Players journey across the country, buying and trading objects to reach their destination. The only difference in *Cherokee Trails* is that players must try to bring a whole party without losing anyone. The better one does in finding objects and having all members make the journey in good health, the higher the score

WEB-BASED PRODUCTS

In Motion: The African American Migration Experience. New York: Digital Library Program, The New York Public Library [188 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016. Phone (212) 592-7185; e-mail: digital@nypl.org; web site: www.inmotionaame.org/home.cfm]. Free.

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black History and Culture at the New York Public Library has put together some extensive resources on the African-American experience. *In Motion: The African-American Migration Experience* presents more than 16,500 pages of text, 8,300 illustrations, and more than 60 maps. The site is organized around 13 migration units in five sections: narratives, illustrations with captions, additional resources, maps, and lesson plans for teachers. A bibliography, a glossary, and an Internet Gateway (links) are in each unit. The migrations covered are as follows: *The Transatlantic Slave Trade*, *Runaway Journeys*, *The Domestic Slave Trade*, *Colonization and Emigration*, *Haitian Immigration: 18th and 19th Centuries*, *The Western Migration*, *The Northern Migration*, *The Great Migration*, *The Second Great Migration*, *Caribbean Migration*, *Return South Migration*, *Haitian Immigration: 20th Century*, and *African Immigration*. Visitors can browse the images, texts, maps, and educational materials separately, or as arranged by the 13 migrations. In addition, educational materials can be browsed by concentration areas—economics, geography, history, language arts, math, performing arts, social studies, sociology, U.S. government, world civilizations, world cultures, and world religions.

Issues & Controversies in American History. New York: Facts on File [512 Seventh Avenue, 22nd Floor, New York, NY 10138-1342; phone: (800) 363-7976 x 4245; e-mail: info@facts.com; web site: www.facts.com]. \$395.00 per year.

Contentious news issues from 1700 to the present are argued using primary and supplementary sources. The web resource contains in-depth coverage of topics from slavery to

school integration to Japanese internment during World War II. The database includes both sides of the issues and background information that helps the student put the issue into historical context. All articles are supplemented by primary source documents, biographies, time lines, photographs, statistical charts, and encyclopedia survey articles. Among the primary source documents included are interviews, diary entries, newspaper articles, and narratives and essays written at the time.

World eBook Library. Honolulu: World eBook Library Consortia [P. O. Box 22687, Honolulu, HI 96823; phone: (808) 292-2068; e-mail: info@netlibrary.net]. Institutional annual membership: \$1.00 FTE per year. Home users: \$8.95 per year.

World eBook Library is the world's largest eBook Consortia and an outgrowth of Project Gutenberg. There is a large array of foreign materials, with 60,000 works of literature in 104 languages. The collection hosts more than 100,000 PDF eBooks and eDocuments in all. *World eBook Library* offers institutional library memberships to public libraries, universities, grade schools, and the marketplace of America. The library is divided into five sections: *Home Page*, *Public Access*, *Members Section*, *References*, *About Us*. *Home Page* gives general information about the collection. *Public Access* has a Google-type search engine utility that searches 20,000 etext books. The *Members Section* has an additional 55,000 ebooks in PDF format with audio read-aloud capabilities; 7,000 audio books; 27,000 music files; 2,500 videos; and 6,700 poems. The *Reference* section has links to hundreds of online encyclopedias, dictionaries, and handbooks. *About Us* includes contact information. I recommend this collection for small to medium colleges and universities and home users. Larger universities need to negotiate better pricing.

World Geography: Understanding a Changing World. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO [130 Cremona Drive, P. O. Box 1911, Santa Barbara, CA 93116-1911; phone: (800) 368-6868; fax: (805) 685-9685; e-mail: jfryer@abc-clio.com; web site: www.abc-clio.com]. \$499.00 per year.

This award-winning database offers country-specific information about geographic, political, social, and cultural practices of every nation in the world. It includes more than 30,000 primary and secondary sources relating to world geography. There are 200 overviews of countries from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. There are more than 1,300 biographies of important political and cultural figures. Users can make demographic comparisons among countries and conduct advanced searches, subject searches, and map searches.

Frank Alan Bruno is the Internet/Electronic Products Editor for *MultiCultural Review* and the "Books N Things" columnist for the *Vernal Express & Uintah Basin Standard*. He is the director of the Uintah County Library in Vernal. Uintah County is on the borders of Wyoming, Colorado, and Utah near the Northern Ute Nation. E-mail: bruno@co.uintah.ut.us 