

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, their histories, and their traditions.

CD PRODUCTS

City Lights Software, Inc. Multicultural Screensavers. City Lights Software, 124 Elegante Way, Henderson, NV 89014. (702) 220-5834; Fax: (702) 220-5827; web site: www.citylightssoftware.com; e-mail: info@citylightssoftware.net. Minimum System Requirements: Microsoft Windows-based personal computers (3.x and Windows 95/98) with the monitor set to at least 256 colors; images will look better in 16-bit (high) or 24-bit color. Pricing: \$14.95. Grades 4-8.

This company makes three series of multicultural interest to educators/librarians: the *Collector Series*, the *Educational Series*, and the *Entertainment Series*. The *Collector Series* includes four renowned artists: Albert Fennell, Calvin Massey, Charles Bibbs, and Poncho Brown. Each artist has a screensaver module devoted to his work and includes 16-21 different artworks representing his artistic life.

The *Educational Series* has four cultures represented: African American, Asian-Pacific American, Hispanic American, and Native American. Each screensaver includes 30 full-color portraits with brief biographies of each prominent individual.

Figures in the African-American series include A. Philip Randolph, Benjamin Banneker, Booker T. Washington, Charlie Parker, Crispus Attucks, Daniel Hale Williams, Duke Ellington, Elijah McCoy, Frederick Douglass, Garrett A. Morgan, George W. Carver, Granville T. Woods, Harriet Tubman, Jackie Robinson, Jesse Owens, James W. Johnson, Jan E. Matzeliger, Jean B. P. DuSable, Langston Hughes, Louis Armstrong, Malcolm X, Marcus Garvey, Marian Anderson, Martin Luther King Jr., Mary McLeod Bethune, Mathew Henson, Scott Joplin, Sojourner Truth, Thurgood Marshall, and W. E. B. Du Bois.

Each of the four ethnic screensavers comes with a study guide so educators can incorporate the biographies into their curricula. Even though the study guides are not extensive, the programs are still a nice way to begin a discussion about these significant historical figures.

The *Entertainment Series* has four different screensavers featuring Ray Charles, All Stars of Jazz, Redd Foxx, and Dr. Funkenstine. Although there are some interesting pictures of the individual performers, I recommend only All Stars of Jazz, which includes a few notable musicians like Miles

Davis, Woody Herman, and Charlie Parker. This series could use brief study guides to make it more usable for educators. The *Educational Series* is recommended for elementary schools, while the other two series should be considered as supplemental purchases.

Grim Fandango. LucasArts Entertainment, LucasArts Company Store, P. O. Box 14797, Fremont, CA 94539. (888) LEC-GAMES; Fax: (925) 686-1042; web site: www.lucasarts.com; e-mail: store@lucasarts.com. Minimum System Requirements: Pentium 133 or faster; Windows 95 or 98; 32 MB RAM or higher; Quad speed or higher CD-ROM drive; 2 MB PCI graphics card; Windows 95/98-compatible 16-bit sound-card; Windows 95/98-compatible keyboard; optional support for joysticks and gamepads. Additional requirements: DirectX 6.0; Optional 3-D graphics support requires a 4 MB PCI or AGP 3-D accelerator; your system may require the latest Windows 95/98 drivers for your particular hardware. Pricing: \$9.99. Grades 7-8.

This award-winning game is based on the Mexican *El Día de los Muertos/The Day of the Dead*. It incorporates different Mexican cultural practices. Manny Calavera, travel agent at the Department of Death, sells tour packages to souls on their way to eternal rest or damnation. The problem is that the trip can take either four hours or last four years. Manny becomes involved with a beautiful client, Mercedes Colemar, who mysteriously disappears. The game-player helps Manny try to find his lost client by solving hundreds of clues/puzzles. The program has 55 cartoon characters with 90 different scenic locations and includes over 7,000 lines of dialogue. Artist Tim Schaffer uses Aztec as well as Mexican motifs throughout the adventure-packed program. The graphics and audio are of high quality. The user navigates through the game by pushing a button to help Manny pick up something, describe something, or talk with someone. Due to the content and cast of characters, this program is for upper grade schoolchildren and is not for the squeamish. I guarantee this game can get intense.

The Israel Museum, Cycles of Jewish Life. Torah Educational Software, 455 Route 306, Monsey, NY 10952. (845) 362-6380; Fax: (845) 362-6337; web site: www.jewishsoftware.com; e-mail: info@jewishsoftware.com. Minimum System Requirements: Windows 95 or higher, Pentium 133Mhz or better; Mac OS 7.5.2 or better and PowerPC 90Mhz processor. 2 CDs. Price: \$129.95. Junior high, high school, colleges and universities.

This CD set is an excellent multimedia presentation of the

Jewish life cycle and Jewish holidays. The program begins with a brief seven-minute tour of the Israel Museum's Judaica and Ethnography Section and a few of its interesting artifacts.

The topics presented in the set include Jewish and Israeli holidays, major fast days, and major Jewish life events.

Major topics are divided into subtopic screens, which are further divided into object screens. A ? icon offers help. There is a very basic search and there are hundreds of objects that can be viewed in detail by rubbing a magnifying icon over them. A radio icon allows users to access a couple of dozen recordings including prayers, blessings, and a reading from the Book of Esther.

The *Life Cycle* CD covers childbirth, circumcision, redeeming a first-born child, childhood, *bar mitzvah*, *bat mitzvah*, marriage, the Jewish home, death, and mourning.

The *Cycle of the Jewish Year* CD covers *Shabbat* (the Sabbath), *Rosh ha-Shanah* (the New Year), *Yom Kippur* (the Day of Atonement), *Sukkot* (the Festival of Booths), *Simhat Torah* (Celebrating the Torah), *Hanukkah* (the Festival of Lights), *Tu bi-Shevat* (the Festival of Trees), *Purim*, *Pesach* (Passover), *Holocaust Memorial Day*, *Israel Independence Day*, *Counting the Omer*, *Shavuot* (Receiving the Torah), and *Tish'ah be-Av* (Mourning the Destruction of the Temples).

This is an excellent resource for learning about Jewish customs. It is instructive for both Jews and non-Jews in grasping the customs and holidays of Israel.

Many Places, Friendly Faces. Steck-Vaughn, P. O. Box 26015, Austin, TX 78755. (888) 363-4266; Fax: (888) 578-2638; web site: www.steck-vaughn.com. Minimum System Requirements: Windows 486/66 MHz, Windows 3.1/Windows 95, 8 MB RAM for Windows 3.1, 16 MB RAM for Windows 95, 4X CD-ROM drive, 100% Sound Blaster compatible audio, 640x480 color monitor, speakers or headphones, microphone (optional); Macintosh 7.1, (Power PC recommended), 8 MB RAM for 68040, 16 MB RAM for Power OC, 4X CD-ROM, headphones (optional). Pricing: Single CD \$79.95; 5-CD Lab Pack with 1 User's Guide, \$239.85; 3 Lab Packs (15 CDs) \$399.75; 5 Lab Packs (25 CDs) \$559.65; 10 Lab Packs (50 CDs) \$719.55; Network Version \$639.60. Grades 2-4.

Children from ten different countries (United States, Mexico, Italy, Sweden, Ghana, Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, and India) describe their homeland's people, culture, and physical geography in a pictorial database featuring photos, drawings, maps, text, narration, video, and sounds. Students can find the flag or hear the national anthems or read descriptions to help them master basic facts about the countries.

A teacher's guide offers several activities and questions for generating discussion. The program allows students to create multimedia reports to share with their classmates using material from the database as well as slides and music imported from their computer files or the Internet. The program has a very basic search tool that can do single search terms or a more advanced search where users can combine terms. This program has been adopted into the curriculum of many school districts the last couple of years and is highly

recommended for elementary schools and school libraries.

Restaurant Empire. Enlight Interactive Inc., 8725 Yvonne Court Way, Parkville, MD 21234. (410) 661-3301; Fax: (240) 282-2287; website: www.enlight.com; e-mail: distribution@enlight.com. Minimum System Requirements: Windows 98, 2000, ME or XP (Windows 95 and NT not supported); Pentium 500 or faster; 128 MB RAM or higher; Quad speed or higher CD-ROM/DVD-ROM drive; NVIDIA GeForce, ATI Radeon, or 3D cards of the same grade; 32 MB video RAM; 700 MB storage space; DirectX 8 compatible sound card. Pricing: \$19.99. Grades 8-12.

Armand LaBoeuf, a young chef, is trying to expand his recently inherited restaurant into a small chain with new cafes in Paris, Rome, and Los Angeles. This is a sophisticated game in which students learn how to design a restaurant and run everything from décor to the menu to ordering supplies to hiring personnel.

The program comes in two game modes—a sandbox mode and an 18-scenario campaign mode. A tutorial offers suggestions as you make choices. Even a novice user will get the hang of the intricate details involved in starting up a restaurant.

Scoring or success in the process comes from the rating of the restaurant. The rating is driven by quality of the food, cleanliness, ambience, pricing, and clientele. The higher the rating the better the final score.

This is a very realistic opportunity for students to taste the experience of running a restaurant and finding out how they would do without losing actual money. It also teaches students about food from other cultures. I highly recommend it for its educational value and fun factor.

WEB-BASED PRODUCTS

Consulta: A Virtual World of Information for Spanish Speakers and Students of Spanish. Gale Group, P. O. Box 9187, Farmington Hills, MI 48333-9187. (800) 877-4253; Fax: (800) 414-5043; web site: www.gale.com; e-mail: galeorder@gale.com. Pricing for the academic and public markets can be purchased via a simultaneous user model, a population served model, or for unlimited use. This is dependent on the type of library and its specific needs. For example, simultaneous user pricing in the public and academic library market starts at \$5,000 for two simultaneous users and goes up accordingly with each additional user. Many libraries opt for unlimited user pricing, which is based on number of FTEs (academic market) or population served (public market). Pricing, therefore, can range from \$5,000 upwards of \$20,000, depending on these many variables. Pricing for K-12 institutions is at a reduced rate. High schools, community colleges, colleges and universities.

Gale has teamed up with Spanish publisher *Oceano Grupo Editorial* to offer high quality Spanish reference tools. This Spanish language database provides basic high school and undergraduate materials for students and researchers writing on Spanish topics in Spanish.

The web site is laid out with a simple search (*Búsqueda*

Simple), an advanced search (*Búsqueda Avanzada*), Biographies (*Biografías*), Photo Gallery (*Galería*), Chronology (*Chronología*), Dictionaries (*Diccionarios*), and Help (*Más Ayuda*). The company is working on an English interface for those with less facility in the language.

The product is set up much like the *Gale Resource Center* with tabs and such. There are over 100 Spanish-language journals to mine for information. A couple of notable Gale reference sources, *The Gale Encyclopedia of Alternative Medicine* and *U-X-L Encyclopedia of Science*, have been translated into Spanish. Several *Oceano Groupo* reference sets are also included: *Enciclopedias de las Naciones Latinoamericanas*, *Historia Universal*, *Geografía Universal*, *Manual Merck de Información Medica para el Hogar*, *Gran Enciclopedia Interactiva Oceano*, *Las Razas Humanas*, and *Grandes Personajes*. The *Chronologia* includes more than 10,000 historical events. There are 6,200 full-color photographs, maps, and artwork in the *Galería*.

There are several bilingual Spanish-English dictionaries and French-Spanish dictionaries included. I looked up several colloquial phrases and a few cuss words. I was surprised that the results were so comprehensive.

Ellis Island.Org. The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Inc., Attention: History Center, 292 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10017-7769. (212) 561-4588; e-mail: historycenter@ellisland.org; web site: www.ellisland.org. Pricing: Free to look up genealogical records; framed copies of passenger manifest available, 11"x 17": \$25, 17" x 22": \$35. All ages.

If your ancestors came through Ellis Island, this site may have them listed on a ship's manifest and you will be able to find out where they came from as well as information about them, including name, gender, year of arrival, age on arrival, port of departure, name of ship, name of departing town, and address of sponsoring person. The records cover the period from 1892 until 1924 and were transcribed under the volunteer auspices of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

An interesting feature of the database is that if your exact name doesn't produce any results, a name permutater offers variant spellings of the last name. I was able to find my relative Gaitano Gaita under the listed name of Gaetano Gaeta from Palermo, Sicily.

With a little bit of perseverance a researcher might be able to find a long-lost relative, and the service is free.

Latino Literature: Poetry, Drama, and Fiction. Alexander Street Press, Sales and Marketing, 3212 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA. (800) 889-5937, ext. 2 / (301) 585-4450; Fax: (240) 465-0561; e-mail: lawrence@alexanderstreet.com; web site: http://alexanderstreet.com. Pricing options either to subscribe or purchase. Annual subscription: \$1,000 to \$3,995, scaled to library budget, with further discounts through consortia. One-time purchase of perpetual rights: List price \$50,000, with consortium prices savings from 20% to 40% or more, depending on the group. Community colleges, colleges and universities.

This new collection includes novels, short stories, poems, and plays written by Latinos. The authors represent a cross-

section including Mexican Americans, Cuban Americans, Puerto Ricans, Central Americans, and South Americans. A few noteworthy authors included are Sandra Cisneros, Rudolfo Anaya, Oscar Hijuelos, and Luis Valdez.

A powerful search feature, semantic indexing, allows the user to search logical phrases such as "list all feminist novels by women authors born in New Mexico" or "list all Cuban-American novels with the word *machismo* in the text." When completed, this database will have over 100,000 pages and will be an important collection for all libraries to own.

Spanish Books in Print. R. R. Bowker, 630 Central Avenue, New Providence, NJ 07974. (888) 269-5372; Fax (512) 339-8616; e-mail: info@bowker.com; web site: www.bowker.com. Pricing: One single simultaneous user/single site for one year \$995, each additional user \$150, each additional site \$300. Unlimited user access including remote patron access for 1 year \$3,095. One campus/5 users for 1 year \$1,899, each additional user \$150, each additional campus \$600. High school, community colleges, colleges and universities.

This is an exceptionally useful source for finding more than 188,000 Spanish-language titles from the United States, Spain, and Latin America. Links to sources for purchase in the United States save you having to use a foreign jobber. The information is updated daily, and there are enhancements including 887 author biographies, 64,482 annotations, 8,000 cover images, and 16 bestseller lists with awards. A very useful feature is full-text reviews, from six leading sources including *Criticas*, *Library Journal*, and *Choice*. This is a valuable resource for students and researchers who want to find out leading authorities' assessment of books in Spanish.

A few bells and whistles include the ability to download titles directly into your integrated library system, and a link to your OPAC through a "Hooks to Holdings" facility to check whether you already own the item. The check availability feature shows in-stock availability for major distributors, including Adlers's Foreign Books, Bilingual Publications Company, Books on Wings, Compulibros, Continental Book Company, Downtown Book Center, Giron Spanish Book Distributors, ILeon.com, Lectorum Publications, Mariuccia Book Imports, Powells.com, Puvill Libros, and Schoenhof's Foreign Books.

This is a very useful resource for checking details about a specific book, including title, author, edition, ISBN, price (U.S. dollars), and publisher. You can create a list and then save it, annotate it, print it, or e-mail it to yourself. Its greatest value is that a user can find in-print books, forthcoming books, audio and video products, and out-of-print books and thus improve the quality of many personal and library collections.

I recommend this product for anyone doing more than a few thousand dollars of collection development, including school districts, junior college libraries, and college and university libraries.

Usborne Quick Links:

Doherty, Gillian and Claybourne, Anna. *The Usborne Book of Peoples of the World Internet-Linked*. ISBN 0-7945-0025-0, \$14.95 (pb).

Turnbull, Stephanie and Helbrough, Emma. *The Usborne Internet-Linked Children's World Atlas*. ISBN 0-7945-0318-7, \$22.95.

Wilkes, Angela and Watt, Fiona. *The Usborne Internet-Linked Children's World Cookbook*. ISBN 0-7945-0098-6, \$13.95 (pb).

Educational Development Corporation, 10302 E. 55th Place, Tulsa, OK 74146-6515. (800) 475-4522; Fax: (800) 747-4509; e-mail: edc@edcpub.com or ubah@ubah.com; web site: www.edcpub.com. Free Supplemental Website: www.usborne-quicklinks.com. Grades K-8.

This product consists of a variety of print titles linked to a web site. The *Children's World Cookbook* covers basic recipes from 25 countries. It has one or two favorites from featured countries, such as New York cheesecake and chocolate brownies (United States), lebkuchen (Germany), shish kebabs (Turkey), Bbhuna gosht (India), and fried rice (China). The choice of recipes seems to be common foods young children will recognize and be able to prepare.

The *Usborne Book of Peoples of the World* teaches children about different peoples and their ways of life. It is divided into the six populated continents: North America, South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australasia and Oceania. People from major regions on each continent are featured, with such information as language, ethnic groups, popular culture, religion, and making a living. Extensive photographs and quality maps throughout supplement the text. Detailed captions next to every illustration help the reader learn useful information and facts about the people in those regions.

The *Children's World Atlas* teaches children geographical skills and the value of maps and atlases. Children are instructed in how maps are made, recognizing different scales, how to use latitude and longitude, recognizing different time zones, and using different kinds of maps including physical maps, political maps, thematic maps, environmental maps, and satellite maps. Each of the five regions of the world covered contains a satellite view, one or two physical attractions or sights, and a few maps. The photographs are colorful and eye-catching. The maps use shades of bright green, red, yellow, and orange as well as varying shades of blue. With their bursts of color, the maps are quite dramatic and will capture young students' attention.

All three books direct children and their parents to a common web site: www.usborne-quicklinks.com. At the homepage the user types into a basic search box a term associated with their book: for the *Children's World Cookbook* the term is "world cookbook"; for the *Peoples of the World* the term is "peoples"; for the *Children's World Atlas* the term is "atlas." The user is then given a list of links to web sites where they can find information to supplement that found in the book.

The web sites are regularly checked and reviewed by the Usborne editorial staff. Since sites change, the publisher gives a disclaimer that it is responsible only for the publisher's own site. In addition, Usborne suggests that for safety reasons, parents view material with their children.

The homepage is set up for readers from different countries, including the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, France, Italy and Spain. After users click on the national identity, they are taken to a page in which they enter a keyword to find links for their book. I entered the term "atlas." Next I was taken to a page in which I was to "enter a page number here." I wasn't exactly sure which pages actually had links associated with them so I tried pages 1, 5, and 60. Only page 60 had anything associated with it, which was an Internet link to "Take a tour of the Forbidden City's most Famous Buildings."

These virtual tours are interesting, but there should be a better way of finding the links. I was frustrated and disappointed when the first five pages didn't show me anything, and some pages don't have any corresponding links. Children may not be looking for an Internet Links box in the text to clue them that there are corresponding web sites for a particular page. The introductory text didn't explain to look for a box. Faced with these obstacles, children might lose interest in pursuing information.

The *Peoples of the World* is a slightly better resource with more thematic breakdowns, including General, Languages, Food Around the World, and Religion and Festivals. The books are superior products in terms of visual stimulation and provide good basic overviews of foods, peoples, and geography.

I recommend the books very highly. They can actually stand on their own. The supplemental web site is limited because of format problems. Also the site needs more development with additional links to content in the books and on the web.

MICROFILM-BASED PRODUCTS

African American Culture & History: The L. S. Alexander Gumby Collection of Negroiana: From Holdings of the Rare Book & Manuscript Library of Columbia University. Primary Source Media, 12 Lunar Drive, Woodbridge, CT 06525. (800) 444-0799; FAX: (203) 397-3893; e-mail: sales@gale.com; web site: www.gale.com/psm. 22 Reels, \$3,080. Colleges and Universities.

Alexander Gumby, a noted New York City African-American book dealer, attracted many famous literary and artistic celebrities to his salon on Fifth Avenue. Drawing on his association with these famous people, he began collecting scrapbooks about African-Americans and other black figures. This microfilm collection includes the highlights of his interest, which began in 1901 and ran until 1950. The scrapbooks are organized by specific persons and organizations or by topic.

A few noteworthy individuals worth mentioning include Lawrence Dunbar, Joe Louis, Josephine Baker, Paul Robeson, W. E. B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes, Ralph Bunche, Frederick Douglass, Marcus Garvey, George Washington Carver, Jackie

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Robinson, and Booker T. Washington. A few sample topics are basketball, black artists and their works, lynchings and race riots, the Negro as soldier, Harlem, Greenwich Village, the Negro and communism, interracial marriage, jazz, and libraries.

There is a wealth of information here, including newspaper/journal clippings, photos, playbills, pamphlets, letters, and manuscripts. This collection should be purchased by libraries interested in black history or ethnic studies.

Immigration and Refugee Services of America, 1918-1985. Primary Source Media, 12 Lunar Drive, Woodbridge, CT 06525. (800) 444-0799; FAX: (203) 397-3893; e-mail: sales@gale.com; web site: www.gale.com/psm. Full package: 354 reels, List price: \$50,960 (negotiable). *Part 1: Foreign Language Information Service (FLIS):* 30 reels, List price: \$4,200. *Part 2: Common Council for American Unity (CCAU):* 128 reels, List price: \$17,920. *Part 3: American Federation of International Institutes (AFII):* 49 reels, List price: \$6,860. *Part 4: American Council for Nationalities Services (ACNS):* 147 reels, List price: \$21,980. Large University Research Libraries.

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African American Heritage

FOUR STEPS is designed to educate and entertain with its mix of nonfiction articles, interviews, and activities. The magazine's single-theme approach allows for more in-depth explorations into all aspects of African American life. Each issue includes historical photographs and artwork, illustrations, maps, activities, and primary source documents to highlight the articles

5 Issues \$13.95
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This is a rich source of primary documents about the Immigration and Refugee Services of America. The organization helped immigrants to assimilate into U.S. culture, teaching them how to pay federal income taxes, become naturalized citizens, and apply for federal benefits. It tackled social issues such as intolerance, discrimination, interracial problems, and anti-Americanism. It helped bridge the language gap by providing translation services for government documents.

The microfilms are arranged chronologically by the four organizations and then by department within them. The collection follows the provenance of the original material housed at the Immigration History Research Center at the University of Minnesota.

This specialized collection is recommended for large research libraries interested in immigration studies. 📖

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