

oy Story - Chris Patmore

Title:

Toy Story Activity Centre

Publisher:

Disney Interactive <http://www.disney.com>

Price:

around £30

Availability:

High street (Disney Store, HMV, Virgin etc)

or mail order <http://www.macgold.com>

Overall rating:

xxxxx

Entertainment value:

xxxx

Educational value:

xxx

Kiddies' Korner

With the phenomenal success of the iMac there is a whole new, younger audience of Mac users. There is also an equal number of concerned parents. Concerned that:

a: the kids don't trash the hard drive or its contents

b: they don't stumble onto anything unsuitable while using the internet (so don't bookmark that Monica page!)

c: they are playing games that undermine any innocence they have left.

Without going on a moral crusade or, conversely, taking a fashionably liberal attitude, I will look at various CDs and web sites that offer a good balance of entertainment and information/educational content. After all, if the joys of your life are going to take over the other joy of your life then they might as well learn something into the bargain. I will be ably assisted by my two in house testers, my 6 year son and 4 year old daughter.

he name Disney and children's entertainment are synonymous, and although they may have strayed a little from Walt's original vision they still produce the best animated films. The themes and quality of products continues through their CD-ROM and web based multimedia projects. Disney have also had quite a good relationship with Apple (bundling CD titles with Performa 5x00 series) and Steve Jobs, CEO of Pixar and Executive Producer of Toy Story.

Which brings me nicely to this issue's CD-ROM - Toy Story Activity Centre.

Toy Story was a great achievement on its release showing what could be achieved with computer animation, so that it did not really look like computer animation. As it was already created on computer it was not really such a task to produce a version to run on computer. All the characters are there, but the show is run by Woody and Buzz. From when you first enter Andy's room you get top quality animation and the same great humour of the film. There is a great range of activities from creative to educational puzzles and games, plus some scenes from the film.

here are three main areas; Andy's Room, Sid's Room and Pizza Planet. In Andy's Room there is Marble Art, to create pictures; 5 in a Row, a strategy game between the Little Tikes and the Green Army and Sums Up, an card number game - but watch the pig coz he don't play fair! In Sid's Room are the things you'd expect from every parent's nightmare: Creature Creator for making your own mutant toys; Code Breaker, where you have to rescue Buzz from one of Sid's diabolical traps and the Sonic Boom Box where sounds and beats can be mixed and remixed to create brat pop. At Pizza Planet it is entertainment time: Battle with Alien slime, connect pipes to help Buzz escape from the Claw or watch clips from the film in the Mystic Portal Cinema.

here is plenty to keep your kids amused and with three levels available on most activities it should last quite a while before the boredom starts to set in. The more challenging puzzles also give a printable certificate for the correct answers, so the kids feel they have really achieved something. If you enjoyed the film and want to extend the experience with something to stimulate (but not agitate) the kids this is highly recommended.

All the Disney titles are of the same exceptional quality and we'll look at some others in the coming issues. Or check out the Disney web site <http://www.disney.com>

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