

## Press Release

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ENCINITAS, CA--August 10, 2008--Kinder Magic Software announced today that it has been awarded Phase I funding in the amount of \$150,000 under the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program.

The title of the project is ***The SSI Files*** –Virtual Life Science Investigations for Middle School Students. The aim of the project is to design, develop, and evaluate a unique, engaging, online program and supporting curriculum materials that are aligned with the National Science Education Standards, supplement selected adopted life science 7th grade textbook units, offer high production values, and are optimized for Web delivery. In *The SSI Files*, students play the role of scientists working as part of a research team within an appealing and realistic interactive 3D environment. The learning environment provides a hook to engage students with challenging and complex life science topics through solving mystery cases. Embedded guidance and scaffolding to support learning is provided through a community of scientists within the virtual environment.

According to Dr. Linda Bussell, Principal Investigator on the project, this software will fill a gap in currently available science education offerings. Established educational multimedia production techniques will be used in order to concentrate on creating a powerful, dynamic inquiry-based learning environment. The Phase I feasibility study will evaluate its effectiveness with members of the target student population and their teachers

- to impart scientific processing skills to students
- to induce students to acquire biology and health-related science knowledge and understandings
- to motivate students to plan a career in biology and health science related fields

According to Dr. Ilse Ortabasi, Owner of Kinder Magic Software, science software is a fast growing category of children's software titles. The pilot module developed during this first phase of the project will serve as a template for the further development of the prototype in Phase II. The full product will fulfill expectations for science curriculum. It will be inquiry-based; have a hands-on, minds-on component; and a literacy component, it will provide extensions; adapt to different ages and learning abilities; and have sufficient depth of content.

The proposed science education software's commercial application will be in public and private schools, home schooling, libraries and consumer use.

Objectives of the SBIR program include stimulating technological innovation in the private sector, strengthening the role of small business in meeting Federal research and development needs, increasing the commercial application of the NIH supported research results, and improving the return on investment from federally funded research for economic and social benefits to the nation.

The mission of the NIH is to be a steward of science in pursuit of fundamental knowledge about the nature and behavior of living systems and the application of this knowledge to protect public health. Kinder Magic's proposed project is relevant to the NIH's mission as it will foster science education, science literacy, and an understanding of how science is conducted. Additionally, the proposed software will encourage an appreciation of the role science plays in society at large.

Kinder Magic Software was founded in 1990 and is engaged in designing interactive software titles that enrich and instruct children and adults through engaging multimedia simulations and creativity/productivity tools. Previous products designed, developed or contributed to, include: *Backyard Bugs* – Discovery-based Science Explorations, *On the Job*- Office Work Environment Simulation to Assist Youth in Making the Transition from School to Work and, *Science Snoops* - Life Science Investigations for students in grades 7 and up, *Mosaic Magic*, Award Winning Creativity Tool and Math Teacher in One, Life and Earth Science Explorations; Passkey (Advanced Algebra) (Glencoe/McGraw-Hill).

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