

## izzy bombus and the story of flight

*izzy bombus and the story of flight* is a prototype CD-ROM consisting of an animated story with associated games and educational activities for children ages four through seven. Izzy, a young bumblebee, discovers that according to the laws of aerodynamics, the bumblebee cannot fly. Dismayed but undeterred, izzy collects implements from a kitchen drawer to build a flying machine and asks her viewers for help with the construction. With izzy in the cockpit, the viewer pushes the launch button, the countdown begins, the smoke swirls... lift-off!

What happens next? *izzy bombus* is a story of resolution and innovation in overcoming obstacles. Izzy is a girl bumblebee involved in activities not traditionally considered the domain of girls, such as aerodynamics, flying, building, and exploration. The adventure is accompanied by original delta blues music by Blind Mississippi Morris. Ten games and educational activities are linked to the story and can also be accessed directly from a menu screen.

The story is complete and fully interactive to the point where it branches to the various endings. A short animated introduction leads to a menu where viewers choose between the story or the games menu. The "know it-all-bug" serves as a guide, offering instruction and advice. Games and activities can be accessed as the viewer progresses through the story or directly from the menu.

Through this project, I am attempting to make connections between my experience as a designer of traditional print graphics and new media. My

goal is to produce a viable commercial product for the children's CD-ROM market as well as to incorporate the experience into the planning and implementation of coursework in multimedia. Work began on the project in January 1996 and is continuing.

In crossing the boundaries between graphic design for print and graphic design for new media, I explored and considered the possibilities and at the same time dealt with the realities and limitations of desktop multimedia. As a graphic designer, my interest is in innovative design that combines an understanding of traditional principles of visual communication with the unique possibilities offered by the interactive experience.

With this project I have employed a collage method of assembling the illustrative elements of the story in an eclectic style. Elements are painted, drawn, and assembled from old engravings. Traditional methods are used for parts of the illustrations, while others are entirely computer-generated. The combination of techniques produces a rich, textural quality and unexpected combinations.

Another unexpected aspect of the project is the music. The blues, a part of the unique cultural heritage of the South, has gained an appreciative audience throughout the world. Although this type of music is unusual in the domain of children's products, the connection between the sound and the movement and activities of the bumblebee makes it an appropriate choice.



---

**Sandy Lowrance**  
Art Department  
Campus Box 526715  
The University of Memphis  
Memphis, Tennessee 38152 USA  
sllowrnc@memphis.edu