Magic Town Launches: Virtual World Based on Picture Book Characters

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Interactive learning company Mindshapes is pleased to announce the launch of Magic Town, the first virtual world based on picture book characters. With content licensed from top publishers, Magic Town provides young children with a single destination for high quality, animated and interactive stories. At launch, Magic Town has 70 popular picture book titles, including more than 20 free stories. There will be 10-15 new titles added each month.

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In Magic Town, children meet Max and Izzy, animated guides who show them around a vibrant landscape of uniquely illustrated houses. Each house is inhabited by famous picture book characters and holds interactive stories and related games. There are houses devoted to fairy tales, original titles, and well-known series such as Aliens Love Underpants, Winnie the Witch, Elmer, Little Princess and World of Happy.

Each story in Magic Town is presented as a Livebook(TM), Mindshapes' proprietary interactive storytelling format. There are several modes for reading each Livebook. A child can listen to a narrator; read with an adult; or answer interactive questions related to the story. Magic Town was created with input from teachers and early childhood development experts, including Professor Paul Harris at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Magic Town's virtual world uses games technology to provide each child a customized, engaging experience. An algorithm tailors the selection of Livebooks, and daily visits to Magic Town reward children with additional content. In the future, parents will be able to further personalize Magic Town by selecting specific brands and stories. Parents can also find printable, off-line activities related to stories and characters on www.magictown.com.

For Magic Town, Mindshapes has partnered with numerous children's publishers and media companies, including Simon & Schuster, Oxford University Press, Hachette Children's Books, Hodder Children's Books, Orchard Books, Andersen Press, Egmont, Barefoot Books, Edzione EL, Little Tiger Press, Usborne Publishing and Illuminated Films. Magic Town also has "digital first" titles from best-selling authors, including the Superfairies series from Janey Louise Jones, and Shrinky Kid from Ian Whybrow.

David Begg, Mindshapes CEO said: "Magic Town is a ground-breaking way for families to share story time. As a father, I was searching for quality digital content for my kids, but nothing met the mark. So at Mindshapes we set out to build what we couldn't find. Parents can feel confident that Magic Town is based on sound educational principles and can inspire children to develop a lifelong passion for reading and learning through play."

Christian Dorffer, Mindshapes CCO said: "We're excited to work with some of the world's top publishers and most talented authors and illustrators. Magic Town's ever-growing collection of amazing stories and beautiful artwork gives children a single destination where they can find stories they'll want to enjoy again and again."

Professor Paul Harris, Harvard Graduate School of Education: "We've known for a long time that reading stories to children is one of the very best ways to enrich their language and stimulate their imagination. Magic Town gives parents a tool that can help them to engage children in an inspiring world of stories, a world that will expand as children grow and explore."

Magic Town is available online starting May 16th. This summer it will debut on iPad, and subsequently on iPhone, iPod touch and additional mobile devices. Magic Town offers a new, free story every day. A subscription, which allows profiles for up to four children, provides access to the entire site. There are several pricing options: One Month: 7.99 / $11.99 / Euro9.99 Six Months: 39.99 / $59.99 / Euro44.99 One year: 49.99 / $74.99 / Euro59.99.

Mindshapes:
http://www.mindshapes.com/

Magic Town:
http://www.magictown.com/

YouTube Video:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPJ7G_VDt_U

Screenshots:
http://www.magictown.com/press/#images

Mindshapes' mission is to enhance the way children and adults learn through interactive gameplay. The company was founded in 2010 and has offices in London, New York and San Francisco. Mindshapes has nine apps for iOS devices available on the App Store. In 2012, Mindshapes will also release Language City, a virtual world for adults to learn and practice their languages skills. Copyright (C) 2012 Mindshapes. All Rights Reserved. Apple, the Apple logo, iPhone, iPod and iPad are registered trademarks of Apple Inc. in the U.S. and/or other countries.

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