MAPE
Newsletter

▶ Spark Island
▶ Maths software
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Spring Term 2001
Newman College with MAPE

Consumers or suppliers?

I've been reorganising my back copies of *Micro-Scope* this week. Sadly, I don't have a complete set; the first I have is Issue 6 dated June 1982.

It took me rather longer to organise these publications than I had planned for – I couldn't resist reading through many of the articles and considering changes, not only in ICT (well that's one for a start) but also changes in MAPE and its publications. Of course many of the names of contributors in those early journals are familiar to me, so too are the themes of their articles, but some real differences came to light.

Much more space was devoted to program listings, indicating a fundamental shift in perspective. Then we had to be able to program, albeit simply, the computer ourselves. Nowadays that prospect would fill me with terror. Let me give you an example. I installed a new virus scanner the other day. When I came to reboot my machine the front screen sat staring unblinkingly back at me. The solution appeared to me to be simple – I could delete the new software in MS DOS, but I found I was faced with literally thousands of files that meant nothing to me at all. I closed down the machine and reflected on my inability to do something that only a few years ago would have been child's play.

In 1982 contributors were many and varied. In issue 6 for example there were over a dozen different writers, many of them classroom teachers reporting on their use of IT in school. A comparison with the accompanying magazine will illustrate the changes.

I know how much more formal planning and paperwork is expected of teachers today. I also know that teachers are by nature diffident. I suspect that this stems from the belief held by so many uninformed people that all the world's ills can be laid at the door of teachers. Look at the other side of the coin; celebrate the good work that goes on in your classroom, blow your own trumpet loud and clear. If you truly can't manage to find the time to write something for MAPE here are a couple of suggestions.
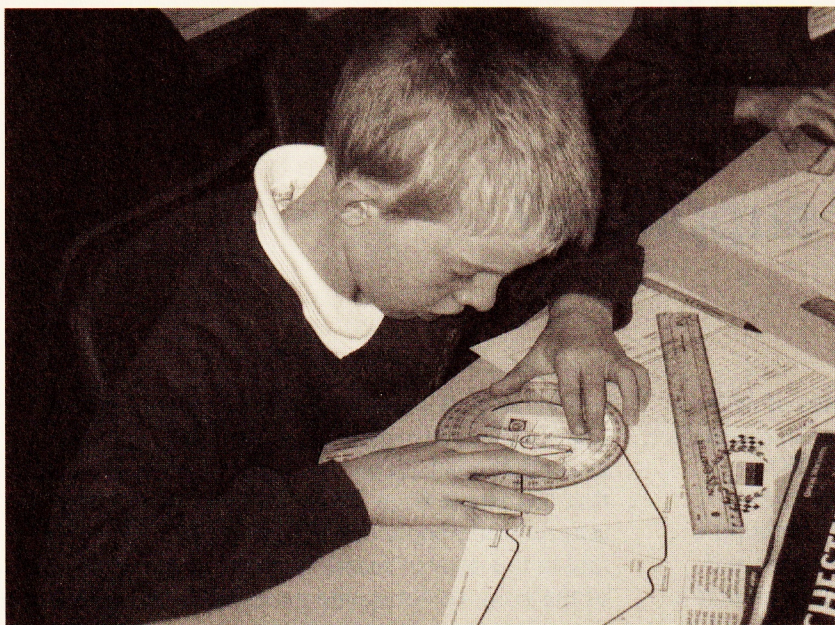
1. Ask your pupils to write a report and evaluation of the ICT work they have done. If it has been worthwhile and imaginative they should be reflecting on it anyway.
2. Draft your ideas as bullet points and then dictate a report under the bulleted headings. We can usually find time to 'ghost-write' articles.

I recently received a letter from a teacher resigning her membership as she was retiring. She thanked MAPE for many years of valuable support, but ended by saying "I wish you had devoted more space to Scottish issues." I would love to give more space to Scottish issues and classroom case studies, and … but MAPE needs someone to contribute them.

Don't just be a consumer of information – be a supplier. Tell the rest of the MAPE membership, and ultimately a much wider audience via our website, of your excellent classroom practice. I look forward to hearing from many of you.

Becta Maths Year 2000 Grand Prix Maths Challenge

Schools from all over the United Kingdom have been competing for a place in the Finals of a prestigious national competition aimed at helping children develop mathematics skills by setting up

Checking the bends.

and running a virtual Grand Prix racing car.

The winners from thirteen regional finals will go forward to the Grand Prix On-line Maths Challenge VIP final, which will be hosted by Jaguar on 5th December at their showcase centre in Birmingham. The final will also link with the DfEE 'Number Day' and we are fortunate to have Michael Wills, Minister for Learning and Technology, attending the event.

The Grand Prix On-line Maths Challenge is aimed at primary children and is being run by the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (Becta), to support the Government's Maths Year 2000 initiative. It is sponsored by Jaguar and was launched by Jaguar Racing driver Johnny
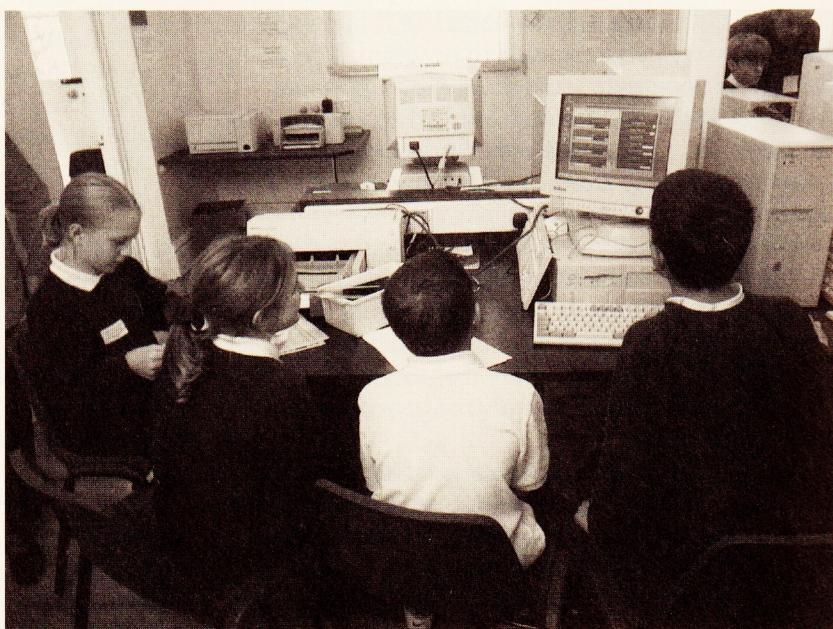
Herbert at the British Grand Prix at Silverstone in April.

The aim is to encourage the use of information and communications technology (ICT) in primary schools to support the teaching and learning of maths. Schools had to download free competition software from the Becta web site, and work in teams of up to four, using their maths skills to plan and set up a virtual Grand Prix car. Teams have to calculate the fuel requirements, pit stop timings and maximum safe speeds, for their virtual car to race on a given circuit.

The competition software has been adapted from a version of 'Maths in Motion' by Cambridgeshire Software House, who have been producing educational software for over 20 years.

First, second and third prizes of printers, web cameras, software and scanners, from PC World Business Direct, have been presented at the Regional Finals. Runners up at these regional finals also

Fine tuning the car.

received a CD-ROM of Maths software from Cambridgeshire Software House or 4Mation.

1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes will be presented by Viglen at the National Final. The 1st prize will be 2 Viglen Incepta PCs, 1 ADI LCD Monitor and ADI Web Cam, 2nd prize will be a Viglen Incepta PC and IOMEGA 2GB external Jaz drive and the 3rd prize will be an Olympus C860L Digital Camera. Runners up will receive Jaguar 'goodie bags' The overall challenge champions will also win a day out at a Jaguar Racing event in 2001.

We've won!

Maths software evaluation

Mental Maths Olympics
Publisher: Sherston Software
    Angel House, Sherston,
    Near Malmesbury, Wiltshire SN16 0LH, UK
    Tel: 01666 843200; Fax: 01666 843216;
    e-mail: sales@sherston.co.uk
Price: Separate CD-ROMs for Year 4 and Year 5,
    each costing £49.95 (excluding VAT and p&p)
    for a single user licence.

Sherston Software has designed a series of short drill and practise programs that are 'highly interactive' and have been developed specifically to 'help children practise and develop their mental maths abilities'. The software is for use in the mental Maths section of the Daily Mathematics Lesson and aims to increase children's speed and accuracy in mental maths questions.

There are 21 different mental calculation strategies covering the four operations at three levels of difficulty; teachers can also differentiate by time, as limits can be set on each event ranging from 5 minutes to an unlimited length.

The program gives teachers complete control over strategies, levels of difficulty and activities. In addition the software enables teachers to keep track of the pupil's progress through the results menu. Assessment is catered for as individual results can be printed enabling teachers to identify pupils' strengths or weaknesses.

Each pupil will compete in seven events ranging from the javelin to ski jumping and the faster they answer the more points they can gain. All the strategies are explained to the pupils, therefore encouraging the pupils to work independently, and prior to each event a coach explains the strategy clearly; the pupils have the opportunity to listen to the 'coaching' as many times as they wish.

Success is rewarded with medals: Copper award for 150 points up to Platinum award for 280 points.

Mental Maths Olympics targets Year 4 and 5 pupils; however, it is suitable for some pupils outside these year groups.

The graphics are clear and the animations portray each event well; however, only one event requires pupil interaction, the rest moving on systematically when each question is answered correctly.

Overall I think the programs *Mental Maths Olympics* for Years 4 and 5 are a fun way for pupils to practise mental Maths strategies. The User Guide is clear, strategic and helpful, making installation easy. Setting up the program is time consuming, as you need to input the names of your group or class and tick the appropriate level of difficulty prior to their starting the events.

The pupils' best or quickest effort is automatically saved on their time sheet as their work is saved into their own file when an event is completed.

Using this in the classroom, pupils found the commands straightforward and easy to follow. The spoken instructions are clear and precise but some pupils found the speech rather tedious and drawn out. (It is possible to 'Skip Coach' if the pupil already knows the strategy.)

I liked the idea of a medal system and certificate to take away because it gave the pupils an incentive to do their best. The 'crowd' also provides feedback by cheering or sighing in response to the pupil's answer.

Reviewed by Jayne Novelli

Maths Keywords – Numbers and Calculations
Science Keywords – The Material World
Publisher: Sherston Software
Subject area: Numeracy and Science
Price: £29.95

1. Brief description

The CD-ROMs are information based, exploring language associated with numbers, the number system, calculations and materials, their properties and physical processes. They concentrate on 'frequently-used key words'. The software has been designed to be used as an additional source of information in the classroom.

2. Objectives

The CD-ROMs are designed to encourage children to locate a word or phrase that they want to find out about. Using the index, the words and their explanations are simple to locate. There is a 'word search' facility where the children are able to find information related to a particular word or words that they do not understand, for example, place value or air resistance. You can also find textual and visual source material for inclusion within a child's own work that can be printed or exported into other documents. The CD-ROM can also be used to encourage interest-led information seeking.

3. Audience

The audience ranges from Year 3 to Year 6. The information contained on the CD-ROMs is general and appropriate to all years and the screens are designed to be 'child friendly'; the icons are colour coded and easy to understand. It works thanks to its 'point and click navigation system'.

4. Entry capabilities required

The pupils will need to have a basic reading ability and be able to follow simple instructions, as all the information can be heard if you click on the 'sound' icon so high levels of reading skills are not absolutely necessary.

5. Type of program

Drill and practice	no	Discovery program	yes
Game	no	Problem solving	no
Tutorial	yes	Simulation	no

6. Personal comments

Initially I wondered where teachers could utilise software like this. I felt it was rather open ended and had no real purpose – until I started to discover what the CD-ROM really had to offer by investigating particular relevant words, phrases and pictures for my year group. The screens are very 'user friendly', colourful and clear which would appeal to a cross section of pupils.

The developers of the 'Key Words' software have produced a 'quick start' handout and an 'index of words' sheet which clearly show the areas of information you can navigate to. This is a good idea as you know exactly what is on offer on each CD-ROM at a quick glance. The 'user guide' explains how to install the software in a clear and strategic way. The 'user guide' also provides ideas on how the CD-ROMs could be used to support the National Literacy Strategy, Science and ICT subjects.

These would be a valuable source of information for both teachers and their pupils. No school should be without them!

Reviewed by Jayne Novelli

PEP talk

Physical Education Primary Ltd. is an independent company with one aim — to help more teachers deliver good quality PE at Key Stages 1 and 2.

This is achieved through using the Internet as a medium for learning, in which teachers can interact closely with PE Primary and share good practice with other teachers; *www.peprimary.co.uk* is designed to allow teachers the most convenient times to develop their own knowledge, skills and understanding in PE at Key Stages 1 and 2.

We are not attempting to provide a 'we've got all the answers' and 'this is how you do it' approach. What we are trying to do is to develop the best resource possible for teachers of PE at Key Stages 1 and 2. This can only be achieved if we share our ideas: what works in PE, why and how. Our vast experience in primary education has taught us that, while many teachers need more help to teach PE, there are so many who have much to offer others, wherever the National Curriculum is taught.

Our hugely popular 'staff room' provides a 'meeting place' for teachers of all nationalities to share ideas, ask for and receive advice. We believe this innovative approach is already helping us to achieve our aim of helping more teachers deliver good quality PE at Key Stages 1 and 2.

www.peprimary.co.uk is a regularly updated web site with ideas, advice and help with PE at Key Stages 1 and 2. We have produced activity ideas for gymnastics, games, dance and outdoor and adventurous activities. We have also included ideas for warm up and cool down activities. There is help for Ofsted and Estyn inspections of PE. Furthermore, we are offering advice on lesson management and organisation, health-related exercise, and developing children's key skills through PE. There is a monthly newsletter to keep teachers fully informed of what's happening in primary PE. For access to the entire site for a whole year, our subscription rate is £10.00. We believe this offers excellent value for money — professional development for an entire staff for just 19 pence a week!

In the short time *www.peprimary.co.uk* has been running — it was established in May 2000 — we are proud to have been recognised as a quality educational resource by both the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (BECTa), and the National Grid for Learning (NGfl). We are now linked to these highly prestigious web sites; a sure sign of the quality we offer.
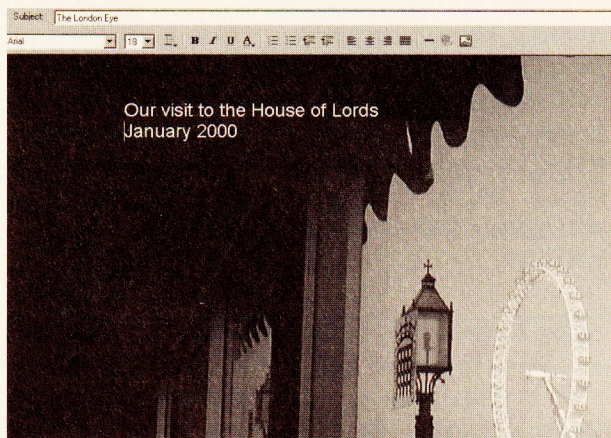
Some tips for e-mail using *Outlook Express*

1. Sending an image

- Send it as an attachment.
  Click on **Insert**
  Click on **file attachment**
  Browse to find the file you want to attach.

- Send it as a background picture.
  Click on **Format**
  Highlight **Background**
  Click on **Picture**
  Browse until you find the file to send.

You can then overwrite the image with your message. For effect you may want to change the font and the colour of your text.

You can also change the background colour of your e-mail or add a sound (if you really want to!) this way.

2. Adding a rule to sort your mail

You can automatically file your e-mail into different folders as it arrives.

Supposing you want to file all messages from me …

Highlight a message from me in your Inbox.
Click **Message** on the menu bar
Scroll down to **Create Rule from Message** …
In the first section (*Select the conditions for your rule*) the **Where the from line contains people** line is checked.
In the second section (*Select the actions for your rule*) check the box next to **Move it to the specified folder**.
In the third section (*Rule description (click on an underlined value to edit it))* you will see

'Apply this rule after the message arrives where the from line contains 'rhona@ tagteacher.net'
Move it to the specified folder'
Click on **specified**
You can then specify which existing folder the messages should be filed in or create a new one.
When you have done this give your rule a name in section four and click **OK**.

To apply the rule to previous messages

Click on **Tools**
Scroll down to **Message Rules**
Click on **Mail**
Highlight the rule and click on **Apply Now.**

3. Adding a signature

It can be useful to let recipients of your messages know who you are and how to contact you.

On the menu bar click on **Tools.**
Scroll down and click on **Options.**
Select the **Signatures** tab at the top.
Click on **Add signatures to all outgoing messages**; you may wish to click the second option **Don't add signatures to replies and forwards**
Click on **New**
In the **Edit Signature** section make sure the **Text** box is checked then type in your chosen signature.
Click **OK**.

4. Blocking messages

To stop junk mail from known sources arriving in your Inbox:

Highlight a message from the unwanted source.
Click on **Message**
Click on **Block Sender**
All messages from this sender will now be send directly to the Delete folder. This means you can still read or reinstate them if you wish.

If you subsequently wish to reinstate the sender:

Click on **Tools**
Highlight **Message Rules**
Click on **Blocked Senders List**

Highlight the name you want to reinstate.
Click **Remove**

If you are certain you don't want to receive these messages at all you can have them deleted from the server without downloading them.

Follow the instructions for creating a rule.
In the second dialogue box (*Select the actions for your rule*) scroll down and highlight either **Do not Download it from the server,** or **Delete it from the server.**

5. Sending the same message to more than one person
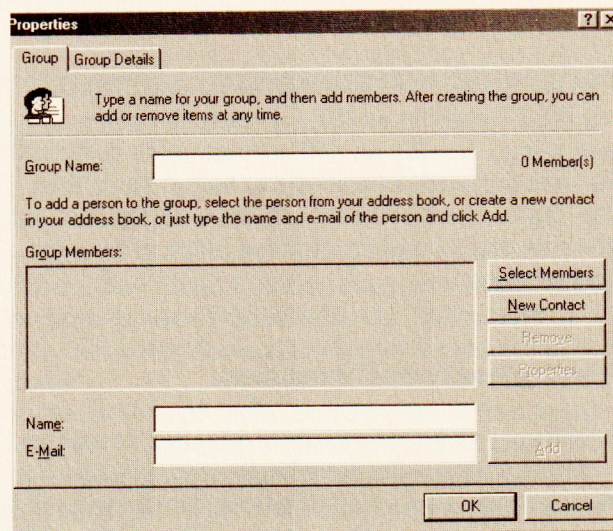You can send copies of the same message to more than one person.

If you just want to send one or two carbon copies enter the main recipient's name in the *To* line as usual, then in the line below that type in the other recipients' names.

If you want to send blind carbon copies, that is copies of your message to several people without all the names appearing on the list:
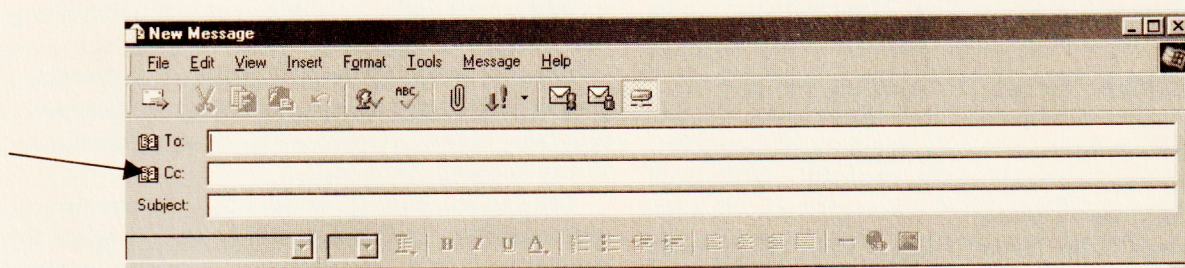
Enter the main recipient's name as usual.

6. Setting up a mailing list
If you frequently send messages to the same group of people it will help if you set up a mailing list.

On the tool bar click on **Tools**.
Scroll down and click on **Address Book**
Click on **New** and then **New Group**.
Give your group a name.

Click on the **Address Book** icon to the left of the Cc line.
Your address book will appear.
Highlight names from the address book and click on the appropriate section on the right, either To:-
   Cc:- or
   Bcc:-

Click on **Select Members**, you can now assign people to your group from those in your address book.
Clicking on **New Contacts** lets you add people who are not in your address book.
The members of your group will be displayed.
When you have finished click on **OK**
The name of this group will now appear in bold in your address book.

To send the same message to all just type in the name of the group in *To* line of your e-mail message.

MAPE Website *www.mape.org.uk*

Have you seen the latest additions to the MAPE website?
There are now several big books for use in Literacy Hour lessons.
In the Maths section of **Curriculum Support** Gill Parry has matched NNS Learning Objectives to activities on some of the most common Maths CD-ROMS to be found in schools. If you know of other activities that closely match the NNS Learning Objectives please let us know.

TagTeacherNet – update – www.tagteacher.net

TagTeacherNet was launched in January 2000 at the BETT show as an ISP for teachers, with a promise to develop an online community designed to meet the needs of teachers at home. Since then the TagTeacherNet team has been working hard and the site offers a rapidly growing range of features and services.

The TagTeacherNet Newsletter

Members receive a fortnightly e-mailed newsletter – which will soon be completely customisable. For now it offers a selection of articles and features to keep you in touch with educational and ICT trends. Every newsletter focuses on an issue – such as profit-related pay or the latest OFSTED incident. We scour the web for the original sources – whether statements by politicians, or the raw data on which their policies are based – so that you can view them with a single click. You can then vote in our Newsletter poll. Other regular features are:

Site Spotlight: the best site covering a topical subject

Resource Finder: we're constantly looking for good teaching resources on the Web – we feature the best we've found

Education in the News: a digest of the educational headlines, with links to articles

Breaktime: the most enjoyable games, the most infuriating puzzles

Bluffer's Guide: if you feel you can't keep up with new trends and technologies, use the Bluffer's Guide to make out that you can!

Technical Tip: fortnightly advice for trouble-free Web browsing

You can read the Newsletter on the website at: *www.tagteacher.net/news/*

And you can tell us what you think of it at: *www.tagteacher.net/feedback/*

TagTeacherNet resources

On 8th July we posted the TagTeacherNet Resources section. This section features links to search engines, reference tools, lesson plan libraries, specialist educational websites, child-friendly search engines, and our own guide to finding teaching jobs on the Web. This section is being constantly updated and enlarged and so please e-mail us with any suggestions for materials or sites to add: *feedback@tagteacher.net*

TagTeacherNet ISP

If you need an Internet service to connect your home computer to the Internet, TagTeacherNet is still offering an Internet connection service. Please contact Will Wharfe at the address shown below.

Coming soon

We will soon be posting discussion boards on the site, so that members can share news, views and advice. We will also allow members to create their own TagTeacherNet personal profile – which you can opt to put into a searchable database – so that members will easily be able to get in touch with like-minded colleagues.

The resources section will enable users to rate, review and submit resources via the web browser interface, putting control of the resource database firmly in members' hands.

The TagTeacherNet Newsletter will become customisable – so that you will be able to select the content you want. We are currently asking teachers' associations (including MAPE!) if they would provide bulletins to include in the Newsletter. Members will then be able to subscribe to those bulletins on the web site.

Other features in the pipeline include: a planner with the ability to input dates (seminars, conferences etc.) automatically; a TagTeacherNet web-based e-mail service; and a TagTeacherNet shop – where we will detail special offers arranged for members.

Naturally, we will let you know when new features are posted to the site through the Newsletter.

You can join up now!

If you join up now you will receive the TagTeacherNet Newsletter, and 1000 TagTeacherNet Units. On sale or flotation of TagTeacherNet, all valid Units will be converted in a share subscription in TagTeacherNet Limited on the basis of one share for one Unit.

Members are all entered into the TagTeacherNet prize draw – the current prize is a Jam Cam digital camera worth £79! Sign up with TagTeacherNet at: *www.tagteacher.net/join/*

If you would like to find out more about TagTeacherNet, please contact me:

Will Wharfe
Editorial Director, TagTeacherNet,
9 Harmsworth Street, Kennington,
London SE17 3TL
Tel: 020 7820 1365;
e-mail: *will.wharfe@tagteacher.net*

MAPE and JazzyBooks

If your school is a member of the JazzyBooks scheme you may have noticed that this term's books have been developed with the support of MAPE. If not . . . you might be interested in joining the programme.

JazzyBooks are advertiser-sponsored exercise books, distributed free to schools throughout the UK by JazzyMedia Ltd. Approximately 6000 schools are registered for the programme, although the figures increase daily. The books are free to schools because they are paid for by advertising on the colourful covers (hence the name JazzyBooks). They contain positive social messages and are sponsored by well-known companies, charities and government agencies. Although JazzyBooks are primarily exercise books for writing in, they usually have a specific theme, for example, past editions have taken the form of reading diaries or have contained activities such as puzzles or recipes.

MAPE worked with JazzyMedia last term to develop an Internet Work Book for each primary Key Stage, containing eight Internet activities interleaved with 32 ruled and blank work pages. Each activity is based around a specific website, all of which can be accessed though the portal site, *www.planetkids.co.uk* which is advertised on the covers. For some activities there are links from the Planet Kids site through to the MAPE site (*www.mape.org.uk*). For example, one activity in each book is based upon the MAPE Maths Trails

and the Key Stage 1 edition features a worksheet to support the use of the MAPE Big Books. The activities could be used in class or for homework or clubs.

Books (one per pupil) are sent out at the start of each term at no cost to the school – the only commitment is for the Headteacher to fill out a brief Feedback Card stating how the books have been used etc. Because sponsor demand fluctuates, schools are not guaranteed to receive books every term but JazzyMedia does write to schools at the end of each term to advise whether or not they will receive books for the next. The books are sent directly to the Headteacher (or their nominated representative) for approval and distribution to the children.

Each edition is specific to the term of release and it is not possible to obtain 'back copies' so unfortunately you may have missed the Internet Work Books this time. However, we can recommend the JazzyBooks scheme in general terms and since we thoroughly enjoyed working with JazzyMedia, there may be a possibility of further collaboration in the future.

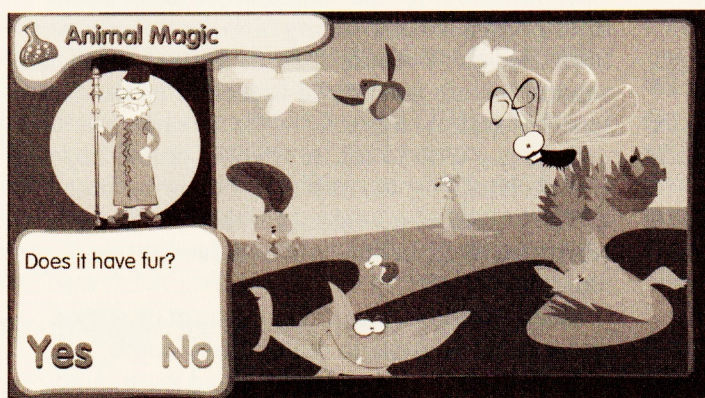To join the programme, write for a registration pack to:
JazzyMedia Ltd.
FREEPOST 26 SEA2940,
LONDON W1E 5DS
Tel: 020 7323 3223

MAPE Focus on Science

Important news for RISCOS users – Granada (sponsors of the MAPE Focus on Science which members received in Autumn 2000) have agreed to extend their reduced price offer of *Science Explorer* to the RISCOS version (there is no RISCOS version of *All About Ourselves*). The full price of *Science Explorer* and *All About Ourselves* is £49 excl. VAT. The offer allows MAPE members to purchase it at a 25% discount, making it £36.75 excl. VAT, with Extra Users available at £7.50 excl. VAT compared to a full price of £10.00. To take advantage of this offer please use the form supplied in the pack, writing <u>RISCOS version</u> prominently on your order.

Spark Island (*www.sparkisland.com*)

Spark Island is a new website for primary education which was launched on 6th November 2000. The site provides interactive learning resources for children aged 3–12, which cover the National Curriculum for Maths, English and Science. A key feature of the site is the Activity Finder that allows teachers to select activities by reference to the National Curriculum (or alternatively the Scottish Curriculum). For example, an activity can be found which addresses the 'playing with rhyme' aspect of the National Literacy Strategy Year 1 Term 1. At the moment just tasters are available but it is intended that, eventually, much of the National Curriculum will be covered.

The intention is to make using ICT in the classroom easier and to provide exciting activities to support areas of the curriculum that teachers find most difficult to teach. The site also aims to increase communication and support between parents and teachers. All the activities are being tested with children, parents and teachers in homes and classrooms.

Spark Island has been developed in conjunction with an advisory board of teachers and education experts (including members of the MAPE council) and will have some superb learning activities for numeracy, literacy and science. The site is aimed at children, parents and teachers with each having different tailor-made access routes. Teachers are currently able to register for a free three months' trial after which they can subscribe for £200 a year/school. Parents can obtain a free one month trial and then subscribe for £49 per year/home.

For schools, the site provides a range of supportive, original and relevant content. This includes on-line activities (which may also be downloaded and used off line)
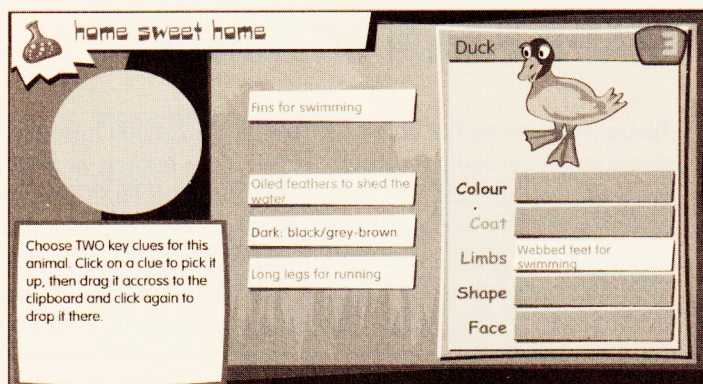
curriculum based classroom resources, lesson plans and helpful links to other educational websites. From January 2001, teachers and parents will also be able to chat and share ideas online with each other via the unique Spark Island community facilities.

For children, Spark Island has a very targeted approach for its different age groups. The site consists of 3 environments: Spark Park for 3–5 year olds, Sparklantis for 6–8 year olds and Sparkopolis for 9–12 year olds. Each area is filled with engaging characters and storylines that guide children through the activities in a highly immersive and adventurous way. The activities on the site, which will be continuously updated and expanded, provide a balance between multiple choice and 'closed' outcome activities. Equally importantly, Spark Island provides opportunities for children to explore, discover and create, using their imagination. As well as fun and self development, children will also be rewarded with a virtual Spark Island currency – the Megahop – which they can redeem in the bazaar and buy things like character e-cards.

For parents, Spark Island aims to provide information, ideas and discussion forums. There will also be detailed buying guides, recommending the best educational books, toys, and software for different age groups. The soon-to-be-launched community areas will enable parents to communicate with other parents and teachers to organize the school-run, find out about homework assignments, school trips and share advice.

Do take a look at this site quickly while access is still free. The material is still under daily development and many activities are not yet available but the titles give a taste of what is to come. For now, seek out some of the active areas. Try for example the Science activities Animal Magic (KS1) or Home Sweet Home (KS2).

Review

Fuzz Buzz – Level 2: Books 7, 8 and 9
Level: KS1, KS2, Special Needs, Scottish 5–14,
  levels A–C
Publisher: Granada Learning, Quay Street,
  Manchester M60 9EA
  Tel: 0161 827 2927; 0161 827 2966
  or see the Granada Learning website:
  *http://www.granada-learning.com/school/
  catalog/jsps/product.jsp?product=252*
Age: 5–12 years
Platforms: PC, Mac
Networkable: Yes
The program reviewed is on CD-ROM A.
  CD-ROM B supports the vocabulary for Books
  10, 11 and 12.
Price: Each CD costs £49 for a single user licence
  and an extra £10 for an additional user. It is also
  available for the home market costing £20 for
  either PC or Mac versions.

'Fuzzbuzz Level 2 has twenty fun and motivating activities, with the important facility for record keeping to monitor pupils' progress. It is an extremely useful and important piece of software for pupils who need a tightly structured reading programme'

Granada Learning website

I have used this program with individual children alongside their reading books and found it a useful tool. The graphics are bright and stimulating, bringing the books to life.

The children are able to work independently on most of the activities after brief instruction. The computer skills needed to work through the programmes are basic and therefore don't cause a problem.

I particularly like the differing levels for each of the activities becoming more complex as the children progress and gain in confidence. Being able to choose different words for some of the activities means you can tailor them to suit individual children.

Table top games such as matching pairs, both picture and word, and a combination of both are brilliant, but on the computer it reaches a higher level of the extraordinary! The children can listen to the verbal instructions which are clear and concise.

I have used some of the initial sound games as one-offs with children who are not using *Fuzz Buzz* and they have found it beneficial. As the accompanying booklet says, revision exercises are more fun and have been enjoyed by children in Year 3 doing basic phonic work.

I would not have used this program if I had not been asked to review it and I would have missed out on a useful resource.

Emma Bell
Special Needs Support Assistant
Cantrell Primary and Nursery School,
Bulwell, Notts

Future publications

Summer Term 2001
MAPE Focus on From Home to School

This publication, edited by Barry Wake and Sally Smith, will take an in depth look at some of the issues surrounding education out of school.

Autumn Term 2001
MAPE Focus on Comparisons

In a change from our usual Focus packs, which target one specific curriculum area, in Autumn 2001 we are intending to publish MAPE Focus on Comparisons. Although many ideas for this are still in the embryonic stage we hope to able to include articles and ideas for teaching:–

Literacy, Music, and Geography.

Sezoo? Sezyou.

Do you remember the Sezoo, Sezyou venture? The idea of this was to ask children to record limericks of their own composition to give a comparison between different accents throughout the UK. The response was excellent from Scotland, but patchy from other areas. We have now attempted to target specific areas to ensure that we get a much more representative collection of accents. In addition we are asking children to recite their favourite playground rhymes in the hope that this might provide a diversity of dialects.

Bernard Howes of Kearsley County Primary School has suggested that we also include teachers' recollections of the ways in which playground games have changed over the years. What an excellent idea! Please contact me with your recollections of playground games you have seen and joined in throughout your time in the profession.

Geography at Key Stages 1 & 2

As part of the Geography programmes of study pupils at Key Stages 1 & 2 are required to study places and environments at home and abroad. It is not always easy to find photographs of suitable contrasting locations, even on the Internet.

Have you noticed how most photographs are designed to show only the best features of a place, not the traffic congestion, and sometimes grimy industrialised areas? This, of course, is natural, after all these photographs were not taken with the Geography programmes of study in mind and if, as teachers, we use these in our lessons we need to be sure children realise that they are only seeing part of the picture. Children will get a very unbalanced view of some places, (think of holiday brochures for example) if all they see is the 'chocolate-box image' captured by the professional or well-meaning local photographers.

The run-down, sometimes grimy areas of most towns are part of the very essence of a place (what a pity we can't synthesise smell yet!) and must form part of the contrasting study.

As part of the MAPE Focus on Comparisons we are planning to include a library of photographs showing contrasting locations. If you have a collection of photographs representative of your geographical area that you would use in your geography teaching and would be willing to share with other MAPE members please contact me:

Rhona Dick
121 Fitz Roy Avenue,
Harborne,
Birmingham,
B17 8RG
rhona@tagteacher.net

MAPE Conference 2001

This will take place on Saturday April 7th 2001 at Newman College,
Bartley Green, Birmingham.
For further details see the enclosed booking form.