

Moptown's moppets teach kids logical reasoning

By John Lombardi

Can Gribbits and Bibbits teach children logic? Apple Computer's Special Delivery Software provides a nifty little game called Moptown that tests a child's skill against the moppets of Moptown.

The moppets come in various shapes, colors and types. You can have 16 different moppets that combine red or blue, fat or thin, tall or short, Gribbit or Bibbit (Gribbits have tails).

The trick to this game is to develop rules for the combination of these

to moppets displayed on the screen. If you build a correct twin, you get a pleasant set of beeps and flashes as a reward; if you goof, you are chided and you can try again.

Other games in Moptown let you figure out what is different about a set of moppets or who comes next in a series of different moppets. As the games become more complex, the reasoning required to figure out which combination of characteristics is called for also grows more complex. The last game, Moptown Hotel, re-

quires a several-dimension combination of characteristics.

The sequence of games, with color graphics by a gifted 11-year-old, provides an excellent experience for elementary-school children. In a thoroughly unscientific sample, I tested this game on a mildly computer-literate sixth-grader who found most of the games fun, exciting, intriguing and "neat."

My 13-year-old, with the disdain appropriate to this age group, found the programs too easy, although he had to

admit that they were well presented and designed.

Who can tell how effective games like this are in teaching something as complex as logic and reasoning? Still, if you use the games with other classroom activities that develop similar skills, they could provide a pleasant reinforcement.

EASE OF USE: Any elementary school child who can turn on the computer and play a game can use this program. Its prompts are usually clear.

See Moptown, page 59

InfoWorld

Software Report Card

Moptown

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Documentation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ease of Use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Error Handling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

System Requirements

- Apple II or II Plus
- DOS 3.3
- 48K RAM and Applesoft in ROM or 48K RAM and 16K RAM Card
- One disk drive
- Color video monitor or color TV

Price: \$50

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characteristics for a variety of purposes. Each game teaches a different aspect of logical reasoning.

FEATURES: The package consists of a master disk, a backup disk, a complete and useful manual and the programs. The programs work on an Apple that has at least 48K, one disk and Applesoft. Although you can play some of the games with a green screen or black-and-white monitor, the package really requires a color monitor or TV.

PERFORMANCE: The Moptown programs work well. Although the manual is good and complete, most children and their parents or teachers won't need the manual because the on-screen instructions give the necessary information. Moreover, these instructions are almost always available during the game at the touch of a key.

The graphic presentation of the various scenes and figures shows imagination and skill. Each game in the progression of activities that constitute Moptown illustrates some aspect of logical reasoning. The games use the 16 different combinations of characteristics that pertain to the inhabitants of this make-believe town.

For example, the game Make My Twin allows the player to build twins

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