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Interactive Fiction Comes of Age *“Novel” of 21st century goes mobile, also available on iPod*

(MATAWAN, New Jersey) Before there was *Doom* or *Grand Theft Auto* or even *The Legend of Zelda*, there was a computer adventure game called *Zork*. Released by Infocom in 1980 to huge success, it had no motion-captured action figures and no fully rendered 3-D environments. In fact, it had no graphics at all— it was simply text. These text-adventure games became known as interactive fiction (IF), drawing record numbers of “readers” and pushing sales figures for Infocom into the millions.

Die-hard fans compared *Zork* to reading Tolkien’s, *Lord of the Rings*, for the first time, with a twist. You could be transported to a mystical world and caught up in a powerful and addictive story with one key difference: you were the main character and you controlled the story.

Now, 25 years after *Zork* first appeared, one entrepreneur is using today’s technology to reinvent the unique genre of interactive fiction. An original *Zork* fan, Howard Sherman founded Malinche Entertainment in 2002 with the goal of introducing interactive fiction to an entirely new generation of fans.

Sherman’s first three interactive fiction titles have sold more than 100,000 copies and he anticipates that sales of his latest horror fiction title, *The First Mile* (Malinche Entertainment, July 2005, \$9.95-\$29.95) will exceed all three previous titles for one important reason; starting next month, *The First Mile* will be available for download by anyone with an iPod. Readers can also access Malinche titles with any personal computer, laptop, PocketPC or PalmOS handheld, and selected cell phone models.

“Infocom delivered the very best interactive fiction possible back in its heyday and, I am happy to say, Malinche Entertainment is continuing that tradition in ways we couldn’t have imagined,” said Marc Blank, co-creator of *Zork* and former vice president of Infocom. “Modern implementor Howard Sherman has performed an almost magical feat in bringing interactive fiction to people of the 21st century and made it more captivating than ever thanks to his relentless devotion.”

One thing that hasn’t changed is the game interface. Readers are still faced with a computer screen, a winking cursor and their imagination. There aren’t many games like that today, which are mostly simulations of real-life situations—like the Normandy invasion or a Major League Baseball game—or gory bloodfests requiring mastery of a mouse.

“Whether today’s graphics-based games are more entertaining is really debatable,” argues Sherman. “Like any good book, interactive fiction unfolds before you in a compelling narrative with plot twists and turns. Instead of being passively entertained by a traditional print novel, the reader is literally inside the story where their problem-solving and logic skills are constantly challenged.”

Interactive fiction has gained increasing media attention in 2005. The IF version of *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* won a BAFTA in March 2005 for “Best Online Entertainment.” Malinche titles are available for purchase on Amazon.com and Yahoo! Shopping. Visit www.malinche.net to learn more.

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To schedule an interview with Howard Sherman, or receive a beta version of *The First Mile*, contact Jennifer McAndrew of BookPros at (512) 478-2028 ext 221, or jmcandrew@bookpros.com.