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For Immediate Release

***My StoryMaker* Debuts at Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh**

Interactive educational software developed exclusively for the Library allows children to create, print and share their own unique stories.

(PITTSBURGH, PA – December 14, 2007) Can a lion share a cupcake with an astronaut? What happens when a pirate meets a fox in the woods? Children visiting Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (CLP) have the power to decide -- meeting new characters, going on great adventures and creating their own personal stories along the way. Library officials will debut *My StoryMaker*, an interactive project that gives children the freedom to create, print and share their own unique stories, to the public on Monday, December 17, 2007 at 3:00 pm at CLP – Main, 4400 Forbes Avenue.

Developed by graduate students at Carnegie Mellon University's Entertainment Technology Corporation (ETC) exclusively for CLP, *My StoryMaker* is aimed at increasing literacy rates in children during their formative learning years. *My StoryMaker* uses artificial intelligence to form sentences in relation to how the child is interacting with the story. During initial research for the project, the team of ten students, faculty advisors and CLP staff concluded that children are still interested in the traditional fairy tale story that books provide, but that they were increasingly immersing themselves in interactive technology available through gaming and the Internet.

"The only limit to *My StoryMaker* is a child's imagination," says Mike Nangia, Director of Information Technology, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. "If the child directs a character to interact with an object or another character, the software will recognize the interaction and create a corresponding sentence. The child can also completely customize his/her creation for a one-of-a-kind experience. Once the child is satisfied with the story, he/she has the option to print and/or save their story, making the story available for sharing and viewing outside the Library."

My StoryMaker was made possible through a \$50,000 grant from the Grable Foundation, a Pittsburgh-based organization committed to helping children and youth to become independent, caring, contributing members of society. The Grable Foundation grant was allocated to ETC to develop a program specifically for all 18 Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh locations that would improve children's literacy rates in Pittsburgh and throughout Allegheny County.

"We were challenged to find an innovative way to reach children, many of whom have never known of a life without computers, that would be both educational and engaging," says Nangia. "The team was fortunate to play-test the initial prototype at several local elementary schools. It gave us insight on how children learn and utilize technology."

Don Marinelli, founding professor of ETC and representatives from the student and CLP team that created *My StoryMaker* will provide a brief demonstration on Monday, December 17. After the demonstration children are invited to try their hands at story making.

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Editor's Note: The media is invited to play test *My StoryMaker*. Please contact Suzanne Thinnes at 412.578.2458 to request the URL and computer specifications

About Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

Building Communities, Enriching Lives

Established as a public trust in 1895, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh serves the citizens of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County with a distinguished history of leadership among the country's great public libraries. Through its 19 neighborhood locations, including Main Library and the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh is the region's most visited asset. Each year the Library provides more than 8,000 free programs, classes and other learning and training opportunities that are tailored to meet the dynamic and diverse needs of people living in Western Pennsylvania.

About Entertainment Technology Corporation (ETC)

On the Cutting edge of Interactivity

Entertainment Technology Center (ETC), was created by Carnegie Mellon University professors Dr. Randy Pausch and Don Marinelli. The mission of ETC is to create educational entertainment or "edutainment" experiences through the advent of primarily computer-mediated digital technologies. The ETC at Carnegie Mellon University offers a two-year Masters of Entertainment Technology degree, jointly conferred by Carnegie Mellon University's College of Fine Arts and School of Computer Science, and whose graduates go on to work in such fields as computer gaming, virtual reality, 3-D animation and much more.