

NEWS RELEASE

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Arizona State University Partners with McNeill Designs to Bring Language Gaming to Classrooms

'You've Been Sentenced' will now go online and into classrooms with the help of Technology Based Learning and Research and Arizona Technology Enterprises

SCOTTSDALE, ARIZ. (January 23, 2009) — In a continually more fast-paced world filled with technologically savvy youth, keeping generations of students tuned into education can become a challenge. There perhaps is no better way to stir interest in learning than by tapping into the world of gaming – something that McNeill Designs has done successfully through its multi-award-winning language game, *You've Been Sentenced*. Now, a new partnership with Arizona State University will allow for even more students to be inspired with language while engaged in a gaming atmosphere.

ASU has completed an extensive licensing agreement with McNeill Designs for Brighter Minds, allowing ASU's intellectual property management company Arizona Technology Enterprises (AzTE) to develop an online version of *You've Been Sentenced* for use in classrooms. The online version will allow students to play the game with peers from other classrooms, schools and even countries in real time. AzTE has also developed an interactive whiteboard format for classroom use and expanded the subject matter to include history, foreign languages and science.

Company CEO Don McNeill has seen the game go from a "family fun night" staple to an innovative educational tool. "When I created *You've been Sentenced!* I wanted it to be a great family fun game. But now just about once a week we get a thank you letter from a teacher or homeschooler who are reaching kids that they had not been able to reach before because now they are not making sentences...they are just playing a game!" he says. "I didn't know this game was going to have such an impact on the education community."

The game uses pentagon-shaped cards with conjugations of funny words, famous names, and familiar places. Each player uses his or her hand of 10 cards to build a grammatically correct sentence, racing the other players while also trying to score the most points per round. Sentences also have to be justifiable in meaning, making students use both creativity and common sense.

Since its creation in 2005, *You've Been Sentenced* has won several awards, including the Creative Child Magazine Seal of Excellence 2007, the Spewgie Award for Best Family Fun Game 2007, and a National Parenting Seal of Approval.

The interactive whiteboard version of *You've Been Sentenced* will be launched at the National Educational

Computing Conference in Washington, D.C. in June 2009.

The National Educational Computing Conference (NECC) is presented annually by the International Society for Technology in Education. It features workshops, lectures and interactive forums with key industry members to promote the field of educational technology. The conference also includes the largest educational technology exhibit in the nation.

The project's team of developers will be led by ASU's Paul Skiera, who is the Director of Technology Based Learning and Research (TBLR), and offers over 15 years of industry experience to the field of educational technology. He is committed to finding technology-driven solutions since the earliest stages of technology in education. TBLR is an educational technology research center at ASU that offers instructional design, content and professional development, research and evaluation, and is an expert on current and emerging trends in educational technology. "McNeill Designs is drawing on TBLR's expertise and university resources to help launch *You've Been Sentenced* successfully into the K-12 education marketplace," said Paul Skiera, Director of TBLR.

ASU President Michael Crow's vision for the university includes fostering collaboration among national and international corporations, academia and the community. According to Dr. Crow, these partnerships "represent an investment in research, entrepreneurship and sustainability, but above all, a conviction that creativity, positive synergies and innovation can only occur when people are allowed to find connections and think differently to solve challenging problems."

McNeill Designs was created in 2004 as a toy and game development firm. *You've Been Sentenced* was its first product on the market, and new spin-off versions are now in the make. Their 40+ team members continue to innovate and create new product ideas. Since 2005, a portion of all proceeds from purchases of *You've Been Sentenced* have been donated to Success Won't Wait!, a not-for-profit organization that collects and distributes new and gently used books to those in need. For more information about McNeill Designs, its products, and people, or media sample requests please contact Susan McNeill at 302-478-2757 or visit www.McNeillDesigns.com.

About Skysong: Technology Based Learning and Research and Arizona Technology Enterprises are both located at ASU SkySong, the Scottsdale Innovation Center. The center is currently home to more than 40 enterprises from 11 countries, with clusters of companies in e-learning, information communications technologies, and sustainability. ASU SkySong is an interactive business environment in which individual entrepreneurs, global and U.S. enterprises, ASU researchers, and community members connect to bring new services and technologies to the marketplace. For more information about ASU SkySong, go to <http://skysong.asu.edu>

SkySong will ultimately consist of 1.2 million square feet of research, office, residential and retail space. Higgins Development Partners and Plaza Companies are co-developers of the project in partnership with Arizona State University Foundation and USAA Real Estate Company. Located at the intersection of Scottsdale and McDowell Road, two buildings totaling over 300,000 square feet are now open. For more information, visit www.skysongcenter.com

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