



Playful Invention Company
Combining Art and Technology to Spark Creative Thinking
www.picocricket.com

A PLAYFUL INVENTION KIT FOR STUDENTS

PICO Introduces Enhanced Version of Award-Winning PicoCricket Kit, With New Features Designed Especially for Schools

June 25, 2007 – The Playful Invention Company (PICO) today introduced an enhanced version of its award-winning PicoCricket Kit™, a new breed of construction kit that integrates art and technology to spark children’s creative thinking. Based on research from the Lifelong Kindergarten group at the MIT Media Lab and developed with support from the LEGO® Company, the PicoCricket Kit enables children to create and program their own artistic inventions, such as musical sculptures, interactive jewelry, and dancing creatures.

“With the PicoCricket Kit, kids can build on their interests in art and music while learning important science and engineering ideas,” says Mitchel Resnick, Professor of Learning Research at the MIT Media Lab and co-founder of PICO. Resnick will discuss and demonstrate the PicoCricket Kit at a Spotlight session today at the National Educational Computing Conference (NECC) in Atlanta.

At the heart of the PicoCricket Kit is a small programmable device, called the PicoCricket™, which fits in the palm of a child’s hand. Children can plug lights, motors, sensors, and other electronic blocks into a PicoCricket, then program their creations to spin, light up, and play music. For example, a group of girls in Boston used PicoCricket and craft materials to create an interactive garden, with flowers that danced and changed colors when you clapped your hands. At a workshop in Hong Kong, a 12-year-old student created a wearable jukebox that played different songs when you inserted different coins.



With the enhanced kit introduced today, students can collect and graph data from four different types of sensors (light, sound, touch, and resistance). The kit also includes new mechanical parts and building instructions to help students build “motion modules” – simple mechanical constructions that highlight key science and engineering concepts. “With these new features, the PicoCricket Kit is ideally suited for science activities in elementary and middle schools,” says Resnick.

The PicoCricket Kit is based on more than a decade of research in the Lifelong Kindergarten group at the MIT Media Lab. The group previously collaborated with the LEGO Company on the development of the LEGO® MINDSTORMS® robotics kit, now used by millions of kids around the world to build and program their own robots. The PicoCricket grows out of this same tradition, but with greater emphasis on artistic expression. “The PicoCricket captures the LEGO spirit: it sparks the imagination, stimulates creative thinking, and engages children in playful learning,” says Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen, owner and vice chairman of the LEGO Company.

The PicoCricket Kit, which sells for \$250, is designed especially for ages 9 and up. The kit includes a PicoCricket, four sensors, five output devices (motor, sound box, numeric display, and two multi-colored lights), easy-to-use PicoBlocks software for programming the PicoCricket, a collection of LEGO bricks, craft materials, and illustrated project guides. It is available for purchase on www.picocricket.com



PicoCricket



PicoCricket outputs

multi-colored light, sound box, numerical display, motor



PicoCricket sensors

light sensor, touch sensor, sound sensor, resistance sensor

For more information:
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