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DICTIONARY News

The Innovative
PASS-Q-WORD
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Roberta Stock has a Ph.D. in Linguistics and an M.A. in teaching English as an International Language. For over thirty years she has been extensively involved in curriculum development and materials preparation for foreign language teaching, both for the classroom and the computer. She has had many years of practical teaching experience in high school and at university, and established the Foreign Languages Division at Tel Aviv University, which today has a staff of about 100 teachers and 10,000 students per year (the majority studying English). She is a founding member of the Q Group PLC, which specializes in developing computer-based multimedia language courses. As the Group's CEO, she is head of publishing and is the educational designer of their products.

In just a few months, the Pass-Q-Word computerized semi-bilingual dictionary for non-native learners of English will be released to the market. This dictionary is being developed as a joint project of Password Publishers Ltd and the Q Group PLC, combining the expertise of the two companies to produce a unique product.

Password Publishers, who have had international success with its series of semi-bilingual English learner's dictionaries, have provided the textual material and editorial work. The Q Group, a public company trading in the UK with a list of over 30 multimedia language learning courses, is the designer and developer. The partnership of these two firms in the production of the Pass-Q-Word dictionary insures that the product will have the highest content quality, while being an electronic-interactive dictionary that is both technically sound and fun to use.

Pass-Q-Word contains about 25,000 entries in English, including short definitions and examples of use, along with a translation into the user's native language. The contents include hundreds of new, up-to-date entries relevant to today's life, eg: *affirmative action, AIDS, airbag, ATM, ATV, bar code, beeper, body language, car-phone, cloning, CPU, conference call, couch potato, drunken driving, e-mail, endangered species, environmentalist, genetic engineering, global village, hacker, information superhighway, Internet, intranet, IOU, labour dispute, laptop, lazer printer, netiquette, personal watercraft, politically correct, on-line, optical*

scanner, serial killer, sexual harassment, smart card, spam, surrogate mother, touch-screen, up-to-the-minute, virtual reality, voice mail, Web site, win-win, WYSIWYG, yuppie, zap, etc.

The extremely attractive multimedia environment and simple user interface allow for ease of use, with options and paths clearly indicated and marked. The original drawings provide additional semantic clues for the user, which can be optionally viewed full-screen. In addition, the dictionary includes crossword puzzles, to give the learner the opportunity to practice the new words (and hear them at the same time).

The Pass-Q-Word dictionary utilizes the interactive nature of the computer to provide the ideal tool for students of English, combining the growing demand for more efficient ways to learn the language with the increased use of the computer in all aspects of life.

The main advantage of an electronic dictionary is the availability of features that are not possible with a printed dictionary, and which significantly reduce the time required to retrieve an item. In Pass-Q-Word, all the information available for any headword is immediately accessible and presented on the screen, along with the sound of the word, a drawing (where available) and a translation, eliminating the need to "turn" pages. Furthermore, there is a direct link between the dictionary and any text that the user is working on, as well as the ability to "cut and paste".

Some of the unique features of Pass-Q-Word are listed below:

- 25,000 English headwords including the latest entries
- sophisticated search routines to find a headword or idiom
- ability to access words through the native-language index as well as via the English headword
- presentation of different meanings associated with the headword along with its part of speech
- links between words and other information associated with that word

- human voice pronunciation (British and American) of every headword
- ability to record one's own pronunciation of the headword, and compare it with the default pronunciation
- ability to copy the headword, example, definition and translation, and to use it in other Windows applications such as Word
- graphic representation of the words previously looked at (history) so that it is easy to retrieve them
- original drawings to illustrate specific items and concepts

- separate index of special categories (eg, parts of speech, punctuation)
- separate index of drawings
- separate index of the crossword puzzles
- context-sensitive help (in the native language)

Pass-Q-Word requires Windows 95. It comes on a CD-ROM, or as part of a network server. Its core can be loaded on the hard disk, to be accessed while the user is in a different Windows application.

[*Windows* and *Word* are trademarks of Microsoft Corporation.]