

To the Editor:

From the artist's point-of-view, creating "Roxie's a-MAZE-ing Vacation Adventure" was exactly that – an adventure, with all the challenges, problems, and thrills involved in a real life adventure.

When I got Omar Curriere's email in mid October, 2010, I remembered him. Five or so years earlier I'd received a "fan" email from him. I remember noting the Netherlands location and responding (I forgot I sent a B&W maze to print out). I was very excited, because for the last few years people had been telling me what a great interactive game my maze books would make. I had even sent a couple emails to gamers, with no result. I now realize that making an interactive random maze game is not the same as an animated enhanced e-book. It is much harder to develop, and requires a lot of technical expertise and time-consuming computer work.

I immediately answered back that it would be a cool thing to do (although I was under deadline to write and illustrate a picture book about bugs), and as Omar says, we emailed back and forth, and very soon decided to do original work, rather than adapting or licensing one of my five maze books. He sent some diagrams with choices of ways we could go...linear, or up and down, or randomly moving through 16 screens – the most complex and hardest, and, naturally, the way we both decided to go.

After roughs and sketches, and a short trip I took to the Netherlands, we settled on a plan, a huge "world" - I would create the maze, which they would make a game of, animate, enliven, and add music to.



The first challenge I had was to find a sheet of paper big enough to create the whole art piece on ...we didn't want to have to "marry" or match up 16 screens on top/bottom and both sides. I usually use Strathmore Bristol board...I called the paper company and they were less than helpful and unable to supply a large board. Eventually I found a 44"x60" sheet by Coventry that was acceptable. It had more of a "tooth" (rough surface), and was a little more absorbent than my familiar paper, but would work.

I refined the sketches, scanning and emailing to the Netherlands for comments/changes. When we had all the changes incorporated, I began the inking. Each screen was sketched in pencil. I transferred them with pencil on to the giant paper one by one, using a small 8"x10" portable light table underneath each screen area. Then began inking. The paper was so huge I couldn't reach the top half bending over my main drawing table, so I taped it to a big strong piece of cardboard, and did the top half climbing up on the table, covering finished areas with tissue, lying down on the table, and supporting my arm with a pillow. At first I thought I'd have to do it on the cement floor of my studio, which Omar said didn't sound ergonomically healthy. He was right – even lying on the high table and drawing was a strain. I wound up with back pains from the tension of doing hours and hours of detail (am perfectly fine now).



You can see a 12-part illustrated “blog” on OCG Studios website, showing my studio work, their studio work, testing etc, as well as a trailer for the app: <http://www.ocgstudios.com/roxies-a-maze-ing-vacation-adventure/portfolio-1/>

When all the inking was done, I had it scanned by an industrial scanner and emailed the black and white files to the Netherlands, where they started doing the layers. Or levels. Or whatever magical stuff they do to create the interactivity. The team bought extra computers and worked days and into the night – very intense, complex, time-consuming work.

Next for me was the fun part – painting. Which went well and took about 6 weeks (at one point after returning from my mid-Nov visit to the Netherlands, I went to the studio 24 days in a row ...Monday through Sunday). I'd lay awake at night, thinking about the next day's work on the app – totally obsessed by the process.

Omar and I have a great relaxed creative working relationship...at first I think he was hesitant to ask for changes - maybe I wouldn't agree, or thought there were too many spots to illustrate, etc, but we were always in sync about what needed to be done to fulfill our vision of this app. We also had the same sense of “impatience,” energy, and optimism.



In late January, I took the huge painting and almost 350 spot illustrations to a fine art scanner in Manhattan, where they spent a couple days making the files, which were sent to Europe. Then Omar and his creative team really got to work ... (they needed about 40-50 more small spots; I did hi-rez scans of those in my studio and transferred the files to them).

I didn't have my iPad yet, so Omar did videos of their progress every few days and emailed to me. They hired a marketing person. Omar did extensive testing. At the end of March, they submitted it to the App Store, and now, as of two weeks after launch, it has already sold in 51 countries – it works in all languages; you don't have to “read.” I managed to get an iPad2, and now, every time I play I find something different – besides the maze and the finding/counting games, at the touch of a finger a helicopter rises, flowers bloom in fields, soccer balls rise up out of stadiums, penguins appear in a different place on the screens each time you play.... it's new to me all over again.

Roxie Munro  
[www.roxiemunro.com](http://www.roxiemunro.com)  
New York, NY, USA

Trailer: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yj43npwXbRc&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yj43npwXbRc&feature=player_embedded) - at=15