

Through the Looking Glass Children's Book Review has asked me to write a note about my new interactive animated 3-D app for the iPad, "Roxie's Doors," developed by OCG Studios. Here's the 60-second trailer:

<http://www.ocgstudios.com/roxies-doors/>

Our previous app, "Roxie's a-MAZE-ing Vacation Adventure," was a new maze game created from all new original art, which was based upon my 5 published maze books (BTW, an iPhone version will be out by early November). "Roxie's Doors," however, was made from a previously published children's book by Chronicle, the rights of which reverted to me a couple years ago. When I formally requested the rights back, I had also asked for the scans. Always do that if you can, because it makes it much easier and less expensive to resell, reprint, or reuse the art. OCG Studios carefully analyzed the book and came up with a creative game plan. It involved making it 3-D, which is quite labor-intensive, but adds greatly to the experience (tilt the iPad to fully appreciate it). So I had to do some more art, primarily working on the backgrounds, which I did directly on the original art, rather than redrawing everything (it did mess up the illustrations somewhat, but keep in mind that this was lift-the-flap paper-engineered book in the first place, so the art was in complicated separate pieces anyway). Here's a link on how the 3-D part was done by the developers: <http://www.ocgstudios.com/roxies-doors/making-of-roxies-doors/>

They found all sorts of cool sounds to add - dog barking, phones, sirens, singing, crunching, flushing, tapping hammers, etc. In the refrigerator, for example, the four desserts in parfait glasses (upper left) each have a different note, like a piano - when you touch them, you can play a tune! There are three choices for voice-over: silent (you can read the text yourself); you can have a guy (Dirk) read it; or be read to by the author (me). OCG Studios is in the Netherlands, and we did all the work via e-mail. The VO recordings, however, were done here in the US not far from my studio, and the files sent over. Updates are important (and free to purchasers) so we are now working on a major addition to "Roxie's Doors," which will be out within a month or so.

We've had great reviews, from SLJ, Kirkus, PW, Moms With Apps, Digital Storytime, Common Sense Media (which gave it the max 5 stars and a valued "Hidden Gem" award), and many more. With children's apps you must go beyond the usual children's book review venues, and reach out to web reviewers, many of whom interact directly with moms and dads. The institutional market (schools and libraries) isn't as important to the app market as printed books are. Web reviews are also available all over the world. This app is written/spoken in English, which limits the world-wide audience somewhat. It has sold in 40 countries (the maze app, which is wordless, has sold in 63 countries). We are currently making an app from another OOP Chronicle book, to be called "Roxie's Circus," which we expect to have out early 2012.