

## Digitizing Anne: *Anne of Green Gables, An Interactive CD-ROM Novel*

*Anne of Green Gables: An Interactive CD-ROM Novel*. Renaissance Interactive Studios (<http://www.ri-studios.com>) .

The potential of digital technologies to expand the literary experience is significant. With thousands of poems, photographs and letters, along with journals, scrap books and film clips, Lucy Maud Montgomery's work is just asking for a rich multimedia miscellany. As a research tool, a private archive, or a fan's house of dreams, anyone who can bring LMM to the desktop with an understanding of her work and a sensitivity to what the media can offer will be doing a great service to fan and scholar. What the world really needs is a good CD-ROM of her work and life.

Unfortunately, they will have to wait. *Anne of Green Gables: An Interactive CD-ROM Novel*, by Renaissance Interactive Studios (<http://www.ri-studios.com>) lacks any significant vision of *Anne of Green Gables* or LMM, and is primarily a market-focused software product. In terms of design, there is no consistency in the visual images or the interface. The level of interaction is minimal, and the hypertext links only go to a rudimentary glossary of characters and places that should be obvious from the story itself. Items that in one instance reveal some dynamic interaction are strangely dumb in the next. Often the reward for finding a potential interaction is merely a change in the colour of an object. This can be frustrating and boring, especially for sophisticated computer users like kids. The opportunity to use more relevant and exciting information and pictures, perhaps even a picture of the real Green Gables, would have tempted any LMM fan on the production team, if there had been any.

The integration of live action with static cartoon images is good. But the cartoon's lack of vitality is painfully contrasted by the exuberance of the actor who plays Anne. For some reason, the narrator is male, and the video clips of Anne are marginalized to comments and introductions, undermining Montgomery's use of the female voice. As well, the animated Anne's dialogue is not found in the text, which may confuse younger audiences for whom hearing words spoken is often an aid to reading. Finally, the abridged text narrows the scope of the novel to what might have been intended for a juvenile audience, but too much of the more difficult vocabulary remains.

Problems aside, the bilingual *Anne of Green Gables: An Interactive CD-ROM Novel* is already a success according to the reviews on the corporate website. It is easy to see that the demand for LMM material in new formats is high, but perhaps it is the fact that it has been done at all that is being praised rather than that it was done well.

---

*Jason Nolan* is the moderator of the LMM email discussion list, <http://noisey.oise.utoronto.ca/lmm/list.html>.