

## The Paper Kingdom, An Interactive Educational Game, Wins Big

An interactive computer game aimed at kids ages 8 -14 that helps dispel misconceptions about medical clinical trials has won honors from three separate organizations. Called The Paper Kingdom, the game was developed with a grant from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI).

The Paper Kingdom received a Gold Award of Excellence in the 2015 Communicator Awards for children's interactive multimedia, for which, it competed against programs developed by other health communications organizations. The Paper Kingdom was also named a Finalist in the 58th CINE Golden Eagle Awards for Professional Media and received the award at the CINE Celebrates presentation in New York City, which honored programs across a range of media.

More recently, the Paper Kingdom won two significant awards in a competition that also attracted entries from a wide selection of companies and agencies.

The Paper Kingdom was given two Silver Awards from the W3 competition, one award in the category of games or applications specifically for children, and another in the general category of games and gaming. The W<sup>3</sup> Awards honor creative excellence on the web, and recognize the creative professionals behind award-winning sites, videos and marketing programs. The W<sup>3</sup> is sanctioned and judged by the Academy of Interactive and Visual Arts, an invitation-only body consisting of top-tier professionals from a "Who's Who" of acclaimed media, advertising, and marketing firms. AIVA members include executives from organizations such as Conde Nast, Disney, The Ellen Degeneres Show, Microsoft, Wired, and many others.

“Being recognized in this way by leaders in the interactive and visual arts community is a real honor,” says Lisa Marceau, Principal Investigator of Children and Clinical Studies and the director of the Paper Kingdom project. “These awards are a testament to the creative energies of the team that made The Paper Kingdom a reality. The game is a fun way to teach kids the basics of clinical trials and to deliver important health messages in a format that engages the intended audiences.”

The Paper Kingdom was produced by Wisdom Tools, an instructional design company in Bloomington, Indiana, under the direction of Marceau and other staff. The game is available as a free download from the NHLBI website, as well as its own new dedicated website: <http://childrenandclinicalstudies.org>.

In The Paper Kingdom, everyone and everything is made out of paper. The player must find his or her “younger brother,” who has run away to the “Kingdom.” At first, the Kingdom is bleak and pale, stripped of color. During their quest, the player helps characters restore colors to the Kingdom. Along the way they must conquer a desert, jungle, ice landscape, enchanted forest, a robotic clockwork world, and a volcano, all the while learning more about clinical studies.

Concepts conveyed by the game include topics such as confidentiality, the ability to say “no,” peer or parental pressure, and why clinical research is important. By the time they find their lost “brother,” participants have been exposed to all of the content relevant to their age level.

“The Paper Kingdom represents the kind of innovative synthesis of technology and public health research at which our team excels,” Marceau says.