



Roamer

Discovery at Every Turn

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News Release

For Immediate Release

**Educators Turn to Valiant USA's *Roamer*TM Robot for
Cross-Curricular, Problem-Solving Tool for Students**

Roamer provides teachers with versatile tool for engaging K-8 students in discovery learning

FOREST PARK, Ill. (June 28, 2005) – More and more people in the United States are taking an interest in robots, which have recently made a comeback on the big screen, are being used by NASA to explore Mars, and continue to grow in popularity in schools. Valiant USA, a provider of innovative K-12 science and math-based technology products, offers one of the few robots designed specifically for educators to teach young students math, science and language arts. Rather than just teach about robots, educators can use Valiant's *Roamer* robot to teach various subjects across the curriculum as well as develop students' problem-solving skills.

From new robotic toys to a popular animated film, robots seem to be popping up everywhere. But the rise in the demand for robots has been continuing for quite some time. According to Robotics Trends, an integrated media company, robots are no longer relegated to industrial uses. As technology has evolved, more inexpensive robots have become available for use by businesses, consumers and academia. Federal funding for robotics has increased 50 percent or more in recent years at many U.S. universities, including The Robotics Institute at Carnegie Mellon University and the California, Virginia, and Georgia Institutes of Technology.

"We developed Roamer several years ago because we believed a computer-free programmable robot provided a dynamic cross-curricular tool for students to explore a range of subjects such as math, science, geography and language arts," explained Dave Catlin, CEO of Valiant. "That has proven true over time as the concurrent interest in robots and the demand for hands-on learning have increased significantly. Since then, we've improved Roamer, creating new accessories and developing new activities grounded in sound pedagogy."

Tonya Witherspoon, educational technology specialist at Wichita State University College of Education, who has helped teachers use Roamer to incorporate technology into their curriculum, stated, "Roamer encourages students to learn with their hands, move around their environment, work as a team and develop problem-solving skills. By transferring abstract concepts to the concrete, *Roamer* motivates students to learn and helps them to truly understand the subject matter. It's an interactive tool that's as fun for teachers to use as it is for students."

MORE



The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development recently reported in *Education Update* that research on the brain from the early years to adolescence is helping to uncover ways to increase student engagement in learning and knowledge retention. Studies have found that physical activities and visual interpretation exercises that support learning help students better understand concepts and make lessons more memorable. *Roamer's* on-board programming keypad allows students to move the robot independent from a computer, providing a visual and kinesthetic tool for discovering various concepts.

Students in Kenton Morrison's fifth grade class at Evergreen Elementary School in Fort Lewis, Wash. created a game with *Roamer*. The students set up chairs, which were not lined up, in an obstacle course style and the goal was to program a path to take *Roamer* under each chair, instead of around. This required a combination of several straight routes and turns. Students had to use their estimation, measurement, geometry and creative thinking skills. Without help from Morrison, his students discovered that they could write small sections of the program to drive *Roamer*, test them and then incorporate the small sections into the final program.

Nancy Kokat, director of sales for Valiant, recalls her experience of using *Roamer* in a school in Chicago: "We were working with a young boy whose social situation left him disengaged from the education process. He wanted to make the robot turn a full revolution, so he programmed it to turn eight, which only made it turn eight degrees. He was shocked at the small movement and became captivated. For 40 minutes he explored numbers, moving from single to three digit numbers and discovering important angles such as right angles and 360 degrees in a rotation."

A full range of accessories extend the use of *Roamer*, including jackets for students to create their own robot characters as well as a control box and sensors that allow young learners to program *Roamer* to react to external stimuli and activate a variety of outputs such as lights, motors and buzzers. *RoamerWorld* software allows educators and students to program *Roamer* via the computer, instead of the keypad, and to record and compare the robot's journeys.

Roamer costs \$279.95 per unit. For more information, visit www.valiant-technology.com/us/ or call 888-366-6628.

About Valiant USA

Valiant USA, based in Forest Park, Ill., is a wholly owned subsidiary of Valiant Technology, Ltd., headquartered in London. Valiant USA was established in 2004, and serves the K-12 U.S. education market. The company's mission is to provide educational technology products that help students fulfill their potential by teaching them to think, to understand and to use their knowledge in creative and positive ways. The company's science and math product line includes robotic educational tools, *Roamer*[™] and *Turtle*; the design technology kit, *Inventa*[™]; the electronics kit, *Tronix*[™]; and the *SenSci*[®] data logger and control products as well as the new math software for handhelds, *MathAmigo*[®]. Valiant Technology has won numerous prestigious awards including the Queen's Awards for Enterprise: Innovation 2002, the BETT Award for Best Primary Product in 1999 and two products were designated as Millennium Products by the British Council.

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