



by Marion Hixon

Award for Outstanding Achievement Kim Possible World Showcase Playtest

a secret agent state of mind

Here's the good news: Dr. Drakken, evil super-villain intent on destroying the world, has grown weary of Kim Possible and her overwhelming success in thwarting his efforts. He's finally ready to retire.

Now, the bad news: Dr. Drakken has distributed his evil plans to other villains throughout Walt Disney World's Epcot, and Kim and her friend Ron Stoppable need guests' help to save the day. They are enlisted as secret spy agents and given the task of defeating bad guys residing in Epcot.

This is the adventurous setting into which children and adults entered when they took part in the play-test of a high-tech, interactive Kim Possible Showcase Adventure game at Epcot, which ran from August through September 2006. Throughout its successful test period, the Kim Possible Adventure gave visitors a hand in shaping their own experience for the day, allowing them to take part in a special story integrated into several different areas of the park.

Walt Disney's dream for Disneyland was for its guests to become participants in his film and television stories. Walt Disney Imagineering's R&D group saw The Kim Possible Adventure as an extension of Walt's vision because it allowed guests to immerse themselves and become the main characters in a Disney story at the park.

The Kim Possible Adventure was based on the popular Disney Channel cartoon, "Kim Possible," which follows a high-school cheerleader in her quests to save the world. Along with her friends Ron Stoppable and Wade Load, Kim deals with typical teenage issues, such as scheming younger siblings and grueling math classes. However, by night, she has a much heavier job title and must battle maniacal villains like Dementor, Camille Leon, and mad scientist Dr. Drakken, whose schemes against Kim involve killer robots and brainwashing shampoo.

Of all the Disney franchises and successful shows on which the adventure might have been based, "Kim Possible" was an easy choice from the onset. Developers said the show is fresh, exciting, and funny. Kim travels the world on her adventures, so the country pavilions at Epcot's World Showcase proved to be the perfect backdrops for spy stories. Designers

worked with Disney Channel executives and show creators to form consistent stories and accurately incorporate the characters.

Using wireless handsets called Kimmunicators—cell-phone like, interactive devices—players followed prompts from Kim and friends that led them to phone booths, shops, and other points in the park. Once in the correct place, they received audio, video, and text message clues that led them through the game. Participants would soon find themselves scanning bookshelves for fingerprints and analyzing the Eiffel Tower.

Imagineers wanted to give guests a 'remote control' to the theme park, allowing them to control the park experience in a way which previously hadn't been possible. Once in possession of that control, guests were hooked. The Kimmunicators proved wildly popular, and throughout the testing period,



During a test of "Kim Possible Showcase Adventure," a family gets word on their Kimmunicator to scan a nearby bookshelf for a villain's fingerprints. Photo©2008 Disney.



Marion Hixon is the communications coordinator for the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA). Besides acting as the departments editor for IAAPA's monthly magazine, FUNWORLD, she also assists with public relations and media needs for the association. Founded in 1918, IAAPA is a nonprofit association that works to help attraction owners run their businesses smoothly & profitably. Visit www.IAAPA.org.

children wanted to take them home after their journey.


Thanks to modern wireless technology, the Kim Possible Adventure entailed no visible changes to the park and its attractions. For those not participating, Epcot was still the classic Epcot. But for those wielding Kimmunicators, the park mainstays were gateways to a transformed environment. For instance, players in the United Kingdom Pavilion would arrive at the classic red phone booth and there receive a call on their Kimmunicators alerting them of a rigged golf ball clue. Soon, the golf ball would appear in the phone's coin tray and players were instructed to scan the ball in a nearby machine and analyze it for hidden plans.

In the past, Disney has incorporated interactivity here and there in its parks with, for example, "Turtle Talk with Crush," and "Buzz Lightyear Astro Blasters," but "Kim Possible Showcase Adventure" added a new layer of experience throughout the entire park via the advanced technology of its handsets.

While Walt Disney Imagineering officials haven't announced plans for "Kim Possible Showcase Adventure" to be a recurring attraction, they reported having gained valuable insight from monitoring visitors' use of the portable technology.

For instance, in tweaking the game for possible permanent installation, designers indicate that game length, which can easily last up to two hours, should be shortened. Team researchers observed parents' energy was no match for the kids, who would play the game all day.

They also found the attraction to be extremely versatile, appealing to game enthusiasts and "Kim Possible" fans alike. And although originally designed with tweens in mind, it ended up attracting family members of all ages. Entire families adventured together to retrieve clues in Epcot's Canada Pavilion, get text messages on the Kimmunicator while learning about French culture in the France Pavilion, and race through the streets of Victorian England in the UK Pavilion to reach their destinations.

While being entertained and engaged, the players were also being educated, picking up on cultural and international facts. Each player's journey ended in the Imagination! Pavilion in Epcot's Future World—an appropriate location for a game so in tune with current trends and innovative technology - where they received their complimentary, limited edition Team Possible pins, created specifically for the playtest. Kim Possible adventurers departed Epcot at the end of their visits with their missions accomplished and many things to remember and talk about. 



Brighton Centre
Masterplan



Fashion Hotel
Dubai



Rainforest House
Hannover



Sports Village
Cardiff



VW Pavilion
Autostadt



Restless Planet
Dubailand



Hafod Eryri
Snowdon



VW Brandland
Wolfsburg

ray**hole**architects

...museums brandlands cultural attractions botanic gardens
zoos safari parks visitor centres themed attractions mixed
development heritage centres science centres hotels restaurants...