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New Fashion Game Teaches the Ropes

By Anca-Roberta Vlasan
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There are thousands of online games out there, but how many let players be creative, educated and fashionable?

The *Fashion Fantasy Game* is a dress-up game in which players create shirts, dresses and outfits. Equipped with fabrics, trims, accessories and a currency called "fashion bucks," gamers learn about the fashion business by choosing to become a designer or a store owner.

The game was designed by Nancy Ganz, founder of RLilly Tuckerwear and the creator of the Hip Slip. Inspired by her tween daughter's online gaming, Ganz decided to give would-be designers a glimpse of the fashion business via the Web.

"If they're going to be on the Internet, let's make it educational," she said.

At first glance, the *Fashion Fantasy Game* may seem as though it's aimed at middle school students. The paper-doll graphics and bright colors might throw some high school students off, and the stereotypical "OMG, 2 cool!" online talk does little to help.

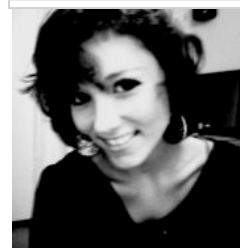
But older fashion lovers should give it a chance. The concepts and procedures give players a realistic view into the world of fashion design and marketing. New designs and fabrics frequently turn up on the site, so it doesn't get boring, and Ganz says the game will evolve.

"There's going to be a personal library where [players] can upload a fabric and use it in their designs," she said.

For students who want to learn about the business of fashion and experience a creative virtual showroom, the game is worth playing. If they're patient, fashion gamers may see a more

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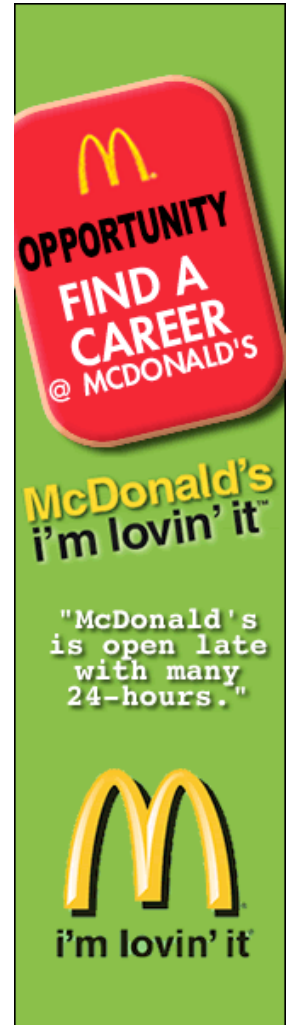
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sophisticated version in the future.

Membership is free. The VIP membership, which provides designer extras for a fee, is only worthwhile if the player is really into the virtual world.

Log on to www.fashionfantasygame.com to try the game.





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