Description of LINK2©

1.
A user logs on with his first and last name. If a new user, system sets up to accept new user, otherwise it checks password. A user can look at anyones' resume´. From his own resume´ he can set his password and gain access to the network. The user is automatically authorised for network use, but has a chance to quit before entering it.

2.
A user's resume´ card is also his repository for notes, scratchpads, clipboards, and other pertinent information. When he logs on again, all of these will be reset with the information they contained when he logged off last time. This enables a smooth continuance of work begun before. Other people, of course cannot access this information from his resume´ card.

3.
The network always opens and closes with the *Ideas page. It is here that the user must learn to help himself in navigating the system. There are two ways to enter the system, either from the first page of the story or through a direct route to a specific page. Due to the nature of the objects in the story itself, it may prove to be very tedious to re-trace steps through the story in order to get to a specific page to continue on work begun at a previous session. The user has tools to facilitate the leaving of traces so as to be able to go directly to a page of his choice. The importance of this would be much clearer when many users have created many pages in the story. This functions much as the "saved game" function of games. It is necessary to return to this page anytime the user wishes to log off the network. He then has a chance to make a note to ease his shortcuts next time. The computer makes an annotation for the user, but the user must make a further note in order to explain to themselves why they wish to return to that point next time, or at least what was there of interest.

4.
Now the user enters the network proper. The "Story-Maker" module is the central node of the network, as the entire net depends on being "managed" from this module. All the other databases, while functioning as standalones, are really adjuncts to this module. You can create new objects in the databases, but they are then to be used somewhere, in the story, for example. The module can begin as an empty shell, or as a continuing shell. Either way, once opened, the module cannot be locked. It is open-ended and any and all users may contribute to it. A myriad of tools is available here. Students may do the following:

A.

Access the Sounds Stack: and thus the sound libraries. This in order to create sound buttons to place into the document. The sounds can be taken as presented in the selections windows, or modified to personal use. Any button from the sound libraries may also be used.

B.
Access the Clip Art Catalogue: this is a database based on title, or keyword descriptions of a series of graphic images. These images are the contributions of anyone who creates a new drawing. Each image is open for modification only to it's original creator, but available for use by all users. When an image is copied, it automatically creates a reference noting authorship.

C.
Access to the Puzzles. These are pre-configured logico-sequential puzzles which the student can actually "make". The students thus make student-generated "games" as mini-obstacles to further perusing of the story itself. These are placed as buttons in the story.

D.
Access to a BBS. A bulletin board system that runs under regular general board rules. Files however, are never dealt with here. A message is simply left,or read & replied to. Messages can be public, or private. User is notified of when a conference contains new messages they may read. The Mailbox is also available from many other areas. Wherever it is possible to use the "phone" button it is also possible to directly leave a message to a user (or to all) in the Mailbox. You directly create a new message, and then pop back to the story as you were working on it. This makes a sort of "simulated" continuous connection to the phone-net itself. It creates the impression of being able to transmit a message, via phone, irregardless of whether the other end responds, as the computer would simply queue the message for delivery later, leaving you free for other work immediately.

The reason file handling is not necessary is that all graphics, or sounds, or other "file" stuff, is directly available in the net itself, in the various databases. Thus only a pointer is necessary, the user would simply indicate what they are talking about, and indicate where it is. The recipient would have instant access to these if he so wished, thus obviating the necessity of "files". Thus it more resembles E-Mail than a full-fledged BBS, but retains more of a "public' nature than regular e-mail does.

E.

Access to Memos, or Stick-it-Notes are available. These are public memos which can contain text & graphics, and are for public perusal. One memo per page, but you can put memos on memos, on memos..... thus a sort of “threaded” discourse can take hold.

F.
Access to the Dictionary Maker. The user actually has an omnipresent dictionary, the moment they log on. A file is immediately set up for the new user. It starts with exactly 0 words. The dictionary is actually only a word-list. It is totally constructed by the user. Every time the user uses the dictionary to check over something, they have a chance to add to the dictionary. Note that ALL text in the network is accessible to spell-checking. A user may actually only fix his own spelling, but may check through any text that is visible. Any new word is recorded only with the user’s consent. The dictionary-maker is a separate module where the user can look through the dictionary, change some words, or simply clean it out of mistakes. It also allows the user to look at the Main dictionary. The Main Dictionary is added to directly by the user at this time, whenever he adds a new word to his own dictionary. The administrator can periodically gather up all of the user’s dictionaries into one file, and this then becomes the “Main dictionary”. This Dictionary Maker has some interesting implications.

First: since the user constructs it themselves there should be no objection to their using it whenever they so wish.

Second: Since the user made it themselves, there should be no problem in using it as a base for tests which are thus tailor-made to each particular student.

Third: It give a good idea to the educator , in a list form, of the words the children are having problems with.

Fourth: As it creates a simple text file, it can be opened by any application the teacher possesses. It is automatically sorted and changed to lowercase for the user and teacher.

Fifth: A game may easily be made of it by tracing the number of words the users are able to introduce into the main dictionary. The winner gets.....a box-full of spare letters perhaps?

It should be noted that many tools are replicated in all the different modules, and databases. Tools : Find, Print, Sort, take snapshots, Clipboard. Scratchpad, etc. are all available in the Story-Maker, and only those applicable are available in the other Modules.