Kudlian Soft

Ask Oscar

Although designed to meet the needs of the branching database and decision tree element of the National Curriculum (key stage 2 in England and Wales), Ask Oscar is also ideal for use with all ages where a branching database or decision tree application can be used to re-enforce work on decision making, sorting, and identification.

Quotes:
"Ask Oscar has the ability to stimulate children with regard to data handling, at the end of each session the children were asked what their opinions were. Their response, 'Cool, we really enjoyed that, can we use it again?"
        -Carol Walton
        ICT Co-ordinator
        Bedfordshire

The Most Intuitive Branching Tree Database for Education

• Create, sort, edit, and view the tree, all in one single display.

• Children can visually see the tree growing as they enter their questions and sort the tree.

• You do not need to complete all the questions before you get a visual idea of how the tree will look.

• Each item smoothly glides across the screen as the tree is sorted.

• Each item can have a picture associated with it.

• Picture groups can be customised.
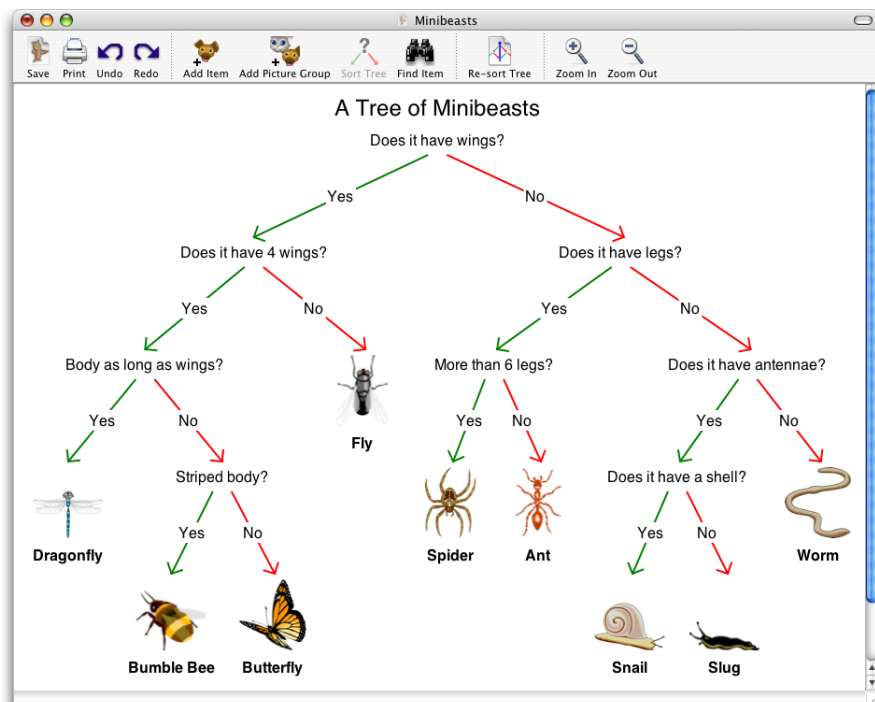
• Tree can be viewed at different scales.

• Printing options allow the tree to be tiled across many pages to create a large wall display, or printed continuously as a banner (printer dependant).

• Dual platform (Windows, Mac OS).

• MSI / RM CC3/ Network installer included on installation CD (Windows only).

QCA ICT 4C - Branching Databases. QCA Science 4B - Habitats.   **Classroom Example**

Objectives:
- To create a branching database
- To use efficient questioning
- To use a branching database to organise, reorganise, and analyse information
- To reinforce an understanding of the range of organisms found in a particular habitat

Resources:
- Ask Oscar software.
- Use a data projector or an interactive whiteboard to present clearly to the whole group and allow for interaction during the demonstration.
- As an example for teachers there are files; **Sea Creatures** 1, and **Sea Creatures** 2, which will be used for this example. These files are available to download. Visit http://www.kudlian.net and navigate to the **Resouces** section. Click on the **Branching Databases** graphic.

Preparation:
Where possible, use an interactive whiteboard to run this group lesson with the children.

Open the Ask Oscar application. Open the downloaded example file **"Sea Creatures 1"** by choosing the **Open Tree** icon (Win) from the toolbar, or using the **File** menu (Mac/ Win)

Demonstrate how to sort the database
- Click the **Sort Items** (Mac: **Sort Tree**) icon to open the **New Question** dialogue box.
- Enter the first question to split the group. Try to choose a question that splits the group as evenly as possible.
- Click the **Yes** or **No** buttons for each object.
- Continue to follow the questions until the tree is completely sorted.
- Once a "branch" is fully sorted, you will be prompted to enter a new question to continue sorting the next set of items.

NB: If you change your mind after selecting "yes" or "no" you can drag the picture file back into the sort area and change your response.

Demonstrate how to search.
When the database is sorted, stop and show the whole class the tree pattern of the database and show how one creature can be identified by using the questions. Ask one child to think of a creature (but not tell) then start the search.
- Click the **Find** (Mac: **Find Item**) icon.
- Ask the first question and let the child select the **Yes** or **No** button.
- Continue until the **Found Item** box opens. Read and confirm this is the creature the person originally thought of and press the **Yes** button. A new search can be started straight away.

Task:
To reinforce the work carried out in the science unit on habitats the children create a branching database which identifies different living organisms, both vertebrates and invertebrates, within a habitat. Others can then test the completed databases.

NB: If a mistake has been made, pressing the No button will start to add a new object. Close the New Item box and start the search process again.

In the Classroom:
- Show the children some simple keys and ask them to identify organisms from these.
- Tell the children they are going to work in pairs to produce a branching tree database to identify living organisms.
- Remind the children of the need to construct yes/no questions, and discuss the sort of questions that might be asked, e.g. *"Does it have 6 legs?"*, *"Has it got a tail?"*, *"Is it a vertebrate?"*, *"Is it's habitat the pond?"*
- Encourage the formulation of questions that sort a group into two smaller nearly equal groups quickly, e.g. asking *"Is it a spider?"* is very specific and about one creature only, but asking *"Does it have legs?"* could split the whole group into two almost equal branches.
- Present the children with pictures of about six/eight living organisms (Dragonfly, Bee, Spider, Ant, Snail, Worm (Fly, Slug)) not more at this stage as the database can become very complex. Include some vertebrates and invertebrates.
- Children work in pairs to create a branching database that identifies each living organism from a garden habitat and then test the others' databases.
- As a class follow the branches to identify properties of some creatures e.g. 'A worm does not have a shell or legs.' 'A dragon fly lives near water, has wings and legs.'

Outcomes:
- Most children will create the database using six or eight pictures from the ready-made picture file and pose the questions to sort it. They will test another pair's database. They will identify the properties of creatures at the end of each branch.
- Some children will need key words to help them create the questions. They will test another pair's database with some support.
- Some children will be given the database set up and questions to choose from and copy (Cue Card Habitats). They will test another pair's database with some support. They will identify the properties of creatures at the end of the first branch.
- Some children will re-sort the database using the same or other questions to find out if the order and type of question is important.