

FASTTALK

> Book Tech

The New Storytellers

JOHN YOO, 39, **DAVID LEVITHAN**, 36, and **RACHEL GRIFFITHS**, 33, are three of the masterminds that created the children's series *The 39 Clues*, which weaves its story through 10 books, an online game, and trading cards. The first three books have more than 2.5 million copies in print, DreamWorks bought the movie rights, and the fourth title will be released in June.

LEVITHAN: "We want to find as many readers as possible and use technology to tell stories in different ways. From the beginning, we knew the story would encompass books, a Web site, and cards. It was minutely choreographed that we'd reveal 10 clues in print and 29 online."

YOO: "We're always fascinated with how kids deal with the virtual version of a physical piece."

LEVITHAN: "Kids don't make a distinction between loving the book version of this story or the online game. The perceived gap between readers and gamers is just not that big."

YOO: "A new book rolls out every three months, and we try to create a similar pacing with the online game, so there's a constant desire and need to return to uncover more clues. In the first six months, we've had more than 300,000 registered users, and on average, kids came back 3.2 times each week."

LEVITHAN: "This structure isn't going to supplant traditional publishing, but it's going to broaden it. There are things you can do in a multidimensional format that you just can't do on 200 printed pieces of paper."

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