

The Bottom Line

News from the Nathan M. Bisk College of Business

Fall 2020

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Message From Dean Theodore Richardson



On our 40th anniversary, we celebrate the College of Business' evolution from our 1980 roots to Brevard County's premier business school. Now known as the Nathan M. Bisk College of Business, we offer degrees at the undergraduate level through doctorate, on campus, off campus and online.

Students can major in accounting, finance, business administration, marketing and more, which can lead to promising careers in all industries and at private companies. As part of "Florida's STEM university," the business college also offers many STEM degrees, such as the master's in accounting and financial forensics.

The college is accredited through the International Accreditation Council for Business Education (IACBE) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and is a member of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).

Our Women's Business Center, weVENTURE, continues to encourage and support future female and male entrepreneurs in discovering the possibilities of a future in the world of business.

The Center for Innovation Management and Business Analytics, Center for Ethics and Leadership and Center for Entrepreneurship and New Business Development not only contribute to research, but also enhance student learning outcomes.

Finally, the College of Business Advisory Board is key to informing our strategy, curriculum and direction with expert thought leaders in business today.

I hope you enjoy this edition of our college newsletter, *The Bottom Line*, and continue to imagine the possibilities for pathways to success in business.

Respectfully,
Theodore R. Richardson III, Ed.D.
Dean, Bisk College of Business

Panthers on the Rise

TOMMY LUGINBILL

Southern Maryland Education Center DBA student Tommy Luginbill is the director of TechPort, an unmanned aircraft system (UAS) business



incubator that, in response to the coronavirus pandemic, started using its 3D-printing capabilities to manufacture face masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE). Most notably, the team has developed a unique PPE sanitization device that is under review by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA).

He and his team's efforts received such an overwhelming community response that they started an official nonprofit, Southern Maryland (SoMd) Loves You.

"We've donated to homes, hospitals, nursing homes. People are very grateful to say the least," Luginbill says.

KYLE YOUNKIN

Kyle Younkin, a U.S. Airforce veteran, senior logistics analyst at AAR Corp. and student in Florida Tech's logistics management master's degree program,



was recently tasked with leading the Department of State Worldwide Aviation Support Services logistical response to COVID-19. Upon receiving this assignment, Younkin immediately applied principles from his coursework to planning, procuring and providing personal protective equipment for counternarcotic operations, diplomatic transportation and humanitarian relief missions around the world.

"The information from the coursework quickly jumped from the classroom and pages of the textbook to the shipping floor in our warehouse," Younkin says. "The team and I faced many daily challenges in this endeavor. However, utilizing the tools from academia I garnered from Florida Tech and my time as a munitions airman in the Air Force, we had the ability to overcome the challenges to operate in a near 'stock out' environment."

KYLE GRAHAM '15 MBA

Kyle Graham '15 MBA, a longtime weVENTURE mentor and former board of advisors member, has been selected to serve as one of Brevard County's business coaches



for the Small Business Administration-funded COVID Emergency Business Support Program, which is sponsoring up to 31 local businesses impacted by COVID-19 to participate in weVENTURE's IGNITE 360 program free of charge.

In this new role, Graham coaches local entrepreneurs impacted by the pandemic to determine the best strategy for moving forward during this challenging time.

SRILA LAROCHELLE '92 MBA

With over 25 years in the semiconductor industry, demonstrating effectiveness in product and business development, sales and strategic marketing, Srila LaRochelle '92 MBA was appointed vice president of strategic business development at SkyWater Technology.



"I'm very pleased to join SkyWater at this time when the company is growing and evolving so quickly," LaRochelle says. "I look forward to being an integral part of identifying key areas of strategic growth and target markets, as well as collaborating within SkyWater to further develop, and establish new, business relationships."

ADRIENNE SOMERVILLE '98 M.S.

Adrienne Somerville '98 M.S. is one of 40 women selected to receive a 2020 Women of Color STEM Award at Career Communications Group Inc.'s



annual Women of Color STEM Conference. Somerville, who serves at the Naval Air Systems Command's Commander Fleet Readiness Center, was selected to receive the President's Award, one of the organization's most notable.

"As an African American, female Naval Aviation leader, to be recognized with this humbling, distinguished award is symbolic of a culmination of my years of service to my community and contributions to Naval Air Systems Command, the Naval Aviation enterprise and our great nation."

TONY JIMENEZ '93 M.S.

After serving more than two decades and becoming a highly decorated officer in the U.S. Army, Anthony "Tony" Jimenez '93 M.S. went on to become founder, chairman and CEO of MicroTech, one of the most successful Hispanic-owned technology companies in the country.

Since MicroTech's founding in 2004, Jimenez has been named "Executive of the Year," "Most Influential Hispanic in IT," "Entrepreneur of the Year," "Small Business Person of the Year" and "CEO of the Year"

by several national organizations. Today, MicroTech is a multimillion-dollar business with contracts supporting government agencies and Fortune 500 companies.

COL. GAIL ATKINS '03 M.S.

During Women's History Month, the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* featured Col. Gail Atkins '03 M.S. as one of its "Influential Women of South Texas." Atkins, who has served as commander of the Corpus Christi Army Depot since 2018, is the first woman to hold the position in the depot's nearly 60-year history. Atkins has more than 20 years' experience in Army aviation and previously served as Force Support Division chief at the Pentagon.

"I hope that I can be an inspiration to anyone who may feel as if they can't get where they want to go," Atkins

says. "Don't let someone limit you. If you're willing to put forward the energy and effort, go get what you want."

LAURA ODELL '90 M.S., '95 M.S.

Laura Odell '90 M.S., '95 M.S., recently received Institute for Defense Analyses' (IDA's) 2019 Andrew J. Goodpaster Award for Excellence



in Research, presented annually to an individual who has demonstrated exceptional analytic achievement within the IDA research community. She also recently received the Society of

Women Engineers' WE20 Spark Award honoring individuals who contribute to the advancement of women by mentoring those around them, and her IDA research team received an honorable mention award in the Government Effectiveness Advanced Research Center challenge, hosted by the U.S. General Services Administration and the Office of Management and Budget.

"I am honored to receive such a prestigious award and be a part of an organization in a unique position to work the seams between industry, government and academia. Research is a team sport here, and IDA is truly committed to the sponsors we serve," Odell says. "As a hands-on, operationally focused leader, I am privileged to provide decision-makers with feasible solutions that advance our national security posture."

Doctor of Business Administration Program Update

In these challenging times, Florida Tech Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) students continue to persist and do amazing things in their professional and academic worlds.

With 26 graduates to date, we continue to build our program with an incoming fall 2020 cohort of 19 students. Across all three current DBA cohorts, there are students enrolled from nine states, reaching as far north as Michigan and New York.

"Florida Tech's DBA program structure allows working professionals the opportunity to explore key business topics in depth that can be applied in real time to our own professional work," says DBA student Mathew Maxwell. "It is a challenging program with all the rigor of a Ph.D. but organized in a way that it can be completed by working professionals."

It is through our continued efforts to mentor and support our students that we encourage and motivate them to pursue their academic goals while balancing all other facets of life.

Most recent dissertations written by our DBA graduates include "Navigating the Glass Ladder: A Qualitative Exploration of the Challenges Women Leaders Experience throughout the Process of Promotion in the Manufacturing Industry" by Jamie Birdwell; "Situational Judgement Selection Test Utility: Implications for Police Turnover" by Marshall Jones; "Exploring Configuration Management in Department of Defense (DoD) Projects" by Manessa Threatt; "The Effects of Firm Age and Firm Size on Strategic Agility and Performance" by Jonathan Reed; and "Strategic Organizational Sustainability (SOS) Climate: Scale Development and Validation" by Petra Brnova.

RECENT DBA DISSERTATION TOPICS

Jamie Birdwell: "Navigating the Glass Ladder: A Qualitative Exploration of the Challenges Women Leaders Experience throughout the Process of Promotion in the Manufacturing Industry"

Marshall Jones: "Situational Judgement Selection Test Utility: Implications for Police Turnover"

Manessa Threatt: "Exploring Configuration Management in Department of Defense (DoD) Projects"

Jonathan Reed: "The Effects of Firm Age and Firm Size on Strategic Agility and Performance"

Petra Brnova: "Strategic Organizational Sustainability (SOS) Climate: Scale Development and Validation"

Alumni Spotlights

WIRED FOR SUCCESS

John Russo '95 MBA Targets Narrow Niche in Broadband

Before he became the telecommunications consulting giant he is today, John Russo '95 MBA worked on his father's farm, planting corn, picking okra and milking cows.

Then, he fried doughnuts in the Publix bakery.

While he was earning his bachelor's degree in marketing from the University of Central Florida, he worked in the school's admissions office.

He worked as a restaurant server, an assistant manager at Walmart Inc. and a salesman for AT&T Inc.

Through the varying positions in multiple industries, there was one constant: He worked.

"There are all these books written out there that say, 'You've got to do this to be good in sales,' or, 'You've got to do that to be good in sales.' I say, 'bull crap'—all you've got to do is work," Russo says. "If you want to be good at anything, you've got to have a work ethic."

It is with that work ethic that Russo founded Broadband Consulting Group (BBCG), today, the largest telecommunications consulting company in the U.S. Doing what, exactly? In short, technology advising.

Essentially, Russo and his team of eight keep up with the advancements of the telecommunications industry so that their clients don't have to—advising developers on how to best outfit their buildings for the cable, internet and phone services residents desire; consulting on how to retroactively update older buildings; and negotiating contracts with major cable and internet companies.

Ready to share his lessons learned with the new generation of businesspeople, Russo recently joined Florida Tech's College of Business Advisory Board and even spoke to a global business class for which there was one takeaway: "Any one of you in here can do what I did. Just learn."



AT A GLANCE

Degree: Master of Business Administration '95

Profession: Principal/President, Broad Band Consulting Group

Recent Achievement: Joined Florida Tech's College of Business Advisory Board

Advice: "Just learn."

RISING THROUGH THE RANKS

Kelle Wendling '93, '97 MBA, Works Her Way from Intern to President

Having grown up in a small Rhode Island town, Kelle Wendling '93, '97 MBA, first moved to the Space Coast to pursue her undergraduate degree at Florida Tech. During that time, she accepted an internship with Harris Corp., today L3Harris Technologies Inc., where she has remained ever since, rising through the ranks for about 30 years.

Today, Wendling is president of Mission Networks within L3Harris Technologies' Aviation Systems segment, overseeing communications and networking solutions for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and international and national service providers. Having started as a technologist, the transition to corporate leader proved challenging, but with flexibility, drive, a positive company culture



and several supportive mentors, she was up to it.

Still involved with her alma mater, Wendling spoke at the 2019 IMPACT Summit, weVENTURE's annual leadership conference focused on empowering women in the workplace, and she was recently named the 2020 Nathan M. Bisk College of Business Distinguished Alumni Award recipient.

AT A GLANCE

Degrees: B.S. Applied Mathematics '93, Master of Business Administration '97

Profession: President, Mission Networks Aviation Systems, L3Harris Technologies Inc.

Recent Achievement: Named the 2020 Nathan M. Bisk College of Business Distinguished Alumni Award winner

Advice for women in the workplace: Don't shy away from opportunity. "That means own it. Have your responsibility. Have an opinion. ... We need to be stronger for ourselves and for others."

weVENTURE Steps Up During Pandemic

While the coronavirus pandemic has affected business-as-usual in virtually all industries, arguably, no group has felt the impact more than small-business owners. Since the beginning, the small-business community has turned to Florida Tech's women's business center, weVENTURE, for resources and advice to navigate the uncharted territory, and it has not gone unnoticed.

In June, weVENTURE was awarded \$420,000 from the U.S. Small Business Administration under the federal CARES Act to expand its services, increasing capacities for its IGNITE 360® Mentoring Program and its personalized business coaching sessions, as well as providing educational training and information sessions focused on responding to the pandemic.

"During normal circumstances, weVENTURE helps women launch and grow their businesses," says Kathryn Rudloff, weVENTURE executive director. "However, in times of crisis, we accelerate our role helping entrepreneurs sustain their business by providing access to the information and resources they need to survive these unforeseen challenges."

While stepping up these services and more, weVENTURE has had to creatively adjust some of its own operations in response to the pandemic. In June, after the cancellation of the annual Women Who Rock awards ceremony, staff hand-delivered awards to this year's five winners. Likewise, the center shifted its annual conference-style IMPACT Summit to a four-day virtual event, starting Aug. 28, that featured quality, prerecorded content designed for small groups to watch together.



WEVENTURE WELCOMES AMBER BATCHELOR

In July, weVENTURE hired its new associate program director, Amber Batchelor. Having led international teams with Oracle Corp. in Silicon Valley, managed corporate client financial and business portfolios with UPS, served as legislative staff with Congress on Capitol Hill and dedicated several years to nonprofit work through chambers of commerce in Sebastian, Florida, greater Raleigh, North Carolina, and Washington, D.C., Batchelor merges her business background with a passion for the community to connect clients with weVENTURE's resources.

Student Group Receives Merit Award

In August, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) awarded the 2019–2020 Outstanding Student Chapter Award to Florida Tech's chapter for the superior growth and development opportunities it provides to its student members.

"It was a fulfilling year, and I am incredibly grateful to the executive board team and to our advisor, Ivonne Delgado, for persevering and being results-driven," says Lida Ponce '18, '20 M.S., former SHRM Florida Tech chapter president. "Our hard work has paid off and has culminated in this incredible recognition and honor from SHRM."

The award program, which recognizes chapters based on their operations, programming, professional development opportunities and support of the human resources profession, is designed to encourage more effective



Executive council members of the Florida Tech student chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management.

student chapters and to distinguish outstanding activities and projects.

"Today's members of our student chapters are the HR leaders of tomorrow. They are the movers and shakers of the future, and we cannot understate the vital role they play in SHRM's success," says

Johnny C. Taylor Jr., SHRM president and CEO. "The Florida Tech SHRM chapter is evidence that the future of HR is, indeed, in good hands. I applaud their accomplishments and ability to fiercely move forward during a time of such change and uncertainty in the workplace."

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

As the Nathan M. Bisk College of Business celebrates 40 years, we look at the college's beginnings, connections and beyond.

By Karly Horn

In 1980, gas cost \$1.19.

Post-It notes, the Rubik's Cube and Pac-Man hit the market.

Hair was big; shoulders were padded; the tech boom was just beginning.

And in Melbourne, Florida, a visionary physicist's fledgling university was ready to broaden its academic offerings outside of the science and engineering realms.

Yes, 40 years ago, Florida Tech established the School of Management and Humanities, today, the Nathan M. Bisk College of Business.

Like the rest of the university, Florida Tech's business program was established to meet the needs created in and around Cape Canaveral by the burgeoning space program.

While science and mathematics courses were important, the business college's immediately impressive enrollment numbers were proof that professionals found development of their leadership, management and critical thinking skills equally valuable.

"I was there at the very beginning, and let me tell you, it was crazy," says Roger Manley, who worked for 33 years in the business college—starting before it was a college—and served as its second dean from 1988 to 1990.

The College of Business was built on core values of innovation, ethics, leadership and diversity.

And unlike trendy toys and hairstyles in *Vogue*, 40 years later, these values have never changed.

BUSINESS AT A "STEM" SCHOOL

Jim Stoms, the first College of Business dean, was an engineer.

Manley, the second dean, was, too.

In fact, in the first several years, the business college's faculty, like much of the university's, consisted of almost entirely adjunct professors who also worked full time at the cape and other local technology companies.

While some accreditation boards at the time thought this reflected negatively on the institution, Manley says, Florida Tech found that the structure provided students with the breadth of real-world experience to make the learning practical, relatable and applicable outside of the course's primary subject matter.

"Adjunct professors who had good academic credentials and actual life experience brought so much more into the classroom than somebody who went straight into teaching without any real-world experience to draw from," Manley says.

While full-time, academically qualified professors comprise the College of Business faculty today, it continues to reflect the college's appreciation for professors with prior professional experience.

Abram Walton, business college professor and director of the Center for Innovation Management

and Business Analytics, has worked in a variety of industries and roles, including as an EMT and, later, a manager at Walmart Inc., before entering academia.

"Our faculty don't only come from the top of the academic sphere, but they have actual business experience," Walton says. "So, the difference with Florida Tech faculty isn't just their academic depth, but the breadth of their knowledge and their ability to apply it."

And just as the college was started to introduce a complementary set of business skills to STEM-minded students, today, it also does the reverse, teaching business students basic principles of technology beneficial to careers in any field.

The Raspberry Pi project, for example, incorporates weeks of workshops teaching students to program the Raspberry Pi, a small, single-board computer developed to help teach computer science basics, before placing them in groups to use the new skills to develop unique products with potential for business development.

"Currently, only 4% of all invention proposals developed are marketable," says College of Business Dean Ted Richardson. "The goal of the course is not only to develop an idea, but also to test its ability to generate revenue in the marketplace."

Likewise, each year, international business students participate in X-Culture, which groups 5,000-plus students from more than 100 universities in 45 countries into teams tasked with developing business strategies for actual global companies, using the latest technology tools to coordinate and communicate with their international teammates.

Group projects like these, as well as those in interdisciplinary courses, foster an innovative, entrepreneurial-minded atmosphere in which students build product concepts, prototypes, business plans and, most important, lifelong connections with peers in and out of their industry.

"You'd be hard-pressed to find any other business school that has its business students learning how to build and use even the simplest of technology programs, let alone bringing their business ideas to life in their very first year," Walton says. "But here, at Florida Tech, they have an opportunity to be part of some really awesome teams and engage with their engineering peers to actually bring their ideas to fruition."

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

In the College of Business, the goal has always been greater than a degree.

“Throughout its 40 years, the college has grown with the times, making the modern changes that universities need to make, while managing to keep its character as that small, personal university.”

STEVE THOMAS '88, COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADVISORY BOARD PRESIDENT

“The university was built to support engineers who were helping NASA put people into space,” Richardson says. “To enable that to happen, you also need business people who understand the leadership, accounting and finance. So, the College of Business started off as an extension of that mission.”

Today, the college strives to make an impact on its local community outside of just NASA.

In addition to internship, cooperative education and practicum programs, the business college has established three prestigious centers that conduct important research and provide business insights to the local community while enhancing students' understandings and experiences through hands-on work.

The Center for Entrepreneurship and New Business Development is an all-inclusive center primarily focused on entrepreneurial growth on campus and in the community. The center houses the Momentum Student Business Incubator, which provides entrepreneurial-minded students with a physical location for their business ventures, as well as the guidance of community mentors and faculty advisors.

The Center for Innovation Management and Business Analytics is, essentially, a research and consulting center. Walton leads the center, serving as editor of the *Journal for Innovation Professionals* and overseeing the center's involvement with the International Standards Organization (ISO).

“In the center, we are basically writing the world standards for innovation management systems, collaboratively with other countries, on what innovation management should be for companies,” Walton says.

Walton and graduate students working at the center also host various training sessions for businesses in Brevard County and across the country and collaborate with College of Engineering and Science colleagues to merge the technological side of product development with their expertise in market analysis and innovation management.

“So, instead of creating a technology and then trying to find out if the market will use it, we try to find out what the market needs first and then try to match technology with those markets,” Richardson says.

The Center for Ethics and Leadership focuses on an oft-undervalued aspect of business that at Florida Tech is considered one of the most important.

“Aside from being the right thing to do, we've found that there is a financial component to being



School of Management and Humanities building in 1982

ethical,” Richardson says. “Most businesses with a good return on investment have a high degree of ethics with their customers and employees, and we've found that to be very important to companies' growth.”

In addition to the research and discussion conducted at the center, the college also hosts a high school business ethics competition and a business industry ethics conference each year.

“Overall, I think the centers really help us progress in terms of providing great diversity, ethics and leadership across the business spectrum,” Richardson says.

Another integral part of the college and its community involvement is weVENTURE, its Small Business Administration-funded women's business center that provides training, counseling, mentoring and technical assistance targeting local small businesses and entrepreneurs, both male and female.

“weVENTURE, in particular, has been very successful, recently receiving thousands of dollars in grant funding as a vital community resource for local small businesses struggling to deal with the ramifications of the COVID-19 crisis,” Richardson says.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

As any College of Business graduate will tell you, no business can succeed in the long term without evolving, and the same goes for the college itself.

In its 40 years, it has grown from a school to a full-service college. As such, it offers bachelor's degrees in all areas of business, as well as the Master of Business Administration (MBA)—with more than 8,000 graduates worldwide—an innovative master's degree in accounting and financial

forensics and, most recently, a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA).

Most important, it is constantly adding new courses and cutting-edge degree programs in response to ever-changing industry needs.

“Instead of being behind the market, in terms of what people are doing in business, we want to be ahead of the market and able to attack it,” Richardson says. “And that's a goal that requires constant effort.”

One such effort is the creation and continuous development of the College of Business Advisory Board, consisting of about 40 senior community members, local business leaders and alumni, who work with faculty and staff to cultivate both a vision for the college and a plan to execute it.

“Throughout its 40 years, the college has grown with the times, making the modern changes that universities need to make, while managing to keep its character as that small, personal university,” says advisory board president Steve Thomas '88. “And that's what we aim to continue.”

The work is far from done. On the horizon, the college seeks further accreditation, increased enrollment, more degree programs, more mentorship opportunities and more recognition for the prestigious institution that, in just 40 years, it has become.

“When people leave, we want them to think about their experience here and how that experience has enhanced their critical thinking, their communication, their life,” Richardson says. “We hope that somehow, this university has touched them in a way that motivated them to try, to succeed and to help somebody else. That is—and always has been—our goal.”

Expert Perspectives

OTERO, ACCOUNTING AND FINANCIAL FORENSICS DEGREE FEATURED IN SPACE COAST DAILY MAGAZINE

With keen eyes and a thirst for justice, forensic accountants sift through evidence, crack cases and bring criminals to justice in much the same way as do the crime scene investigators depicted in various movies and TV programs—but in safer conditions and for better pay.

In its June/July 2020 issue, *Space Coast Daily* magazine spoke to Angel Otero, assistant professor of accounting, about careers in forensic accounting and the Florida Tech master's degree program built to attain them.

"Forensic accounting is a specialty practice area of accounting that combines skills related to criminal investigation, accounting and auditing in order to collect, analyze and evaluate financial evidence, as well as communicate resulting findings in a manner suitable for use in a court of Law," Otero says in the article.

Touting the industry's wide range of potential employers, intriguing career prospects, \$71,550 median salary and growing demand, Otero highlighted the benefits of Florida Tech's accounting and financial forensics master's degree program (MSAFF), one of few in the country.

"The MSAFF provides students with expertise in accounting research, information systems and internal auditing, forensic accounting, fraud examination, information security and data intelligence, as well as financial management and portfolio analyses," he says. "It also offers opportunities for research, internships and one-on-one faculty mentorship."

SLOTKIN OFFERS INSIGHT INTO THE PANDEMIC ECONOMY

Like toilet paper, hand sanitizer and N95 masks in May, optimism among most experts studying the coronavirus-ravaged economy is in short supply.

So is certainty.

But there are a few things economists, such as Michael Slotkin, a professor at Florida Tech's Bisk College of Business, do agree on: This is going to be a real mess, and it's going to linger.

For the Space Coast, there are some concerns and some potential positives.

Manufacturing comprised nearly 20% of Brevard County's gross domestic product in 2018. That may be a small saving grace, Slotkin says, as work could conceivably continue in this sector amid the downturn.

Even now, there are encouraging developments, including the announcement April 24 that a new company, Aerion Supersonic, chose Orlando Melbourne International Airport for its worldwide headquarters.

However, in Brevard County, manufacturing provided fewer jobs than the education, health and leisure and hospitality sectors, according to averages over the last 20 years through March.

Tourism has been a \$2.1 billion-a-year industry for Brevard County, responsible for about 26,000 jobs. Those numbers will certainly both decline in the months to come, though by how much remains hard to gauge.

We will get through this, Slotkin says, "but I can't tell you when that is going to be."

Read Slotkin's full pandemic economy analysis at news.fit.edu.

DUTTA CO-EDITS BOOK IN 6 LANGUAGES

In the spring semester, professor Amitabh Dutta co-edited *Role of Freedom in Economic Development of India*. The book, a collection of 15 informative and empirical articles that touch on topics like the free flexibility of Indian rupees, Dutch disease, trade liberalization and more, has since been translated and published in a total of six languages: English, German, French, Italian, Portuguese and Dutch. All versions are available on Amazon.