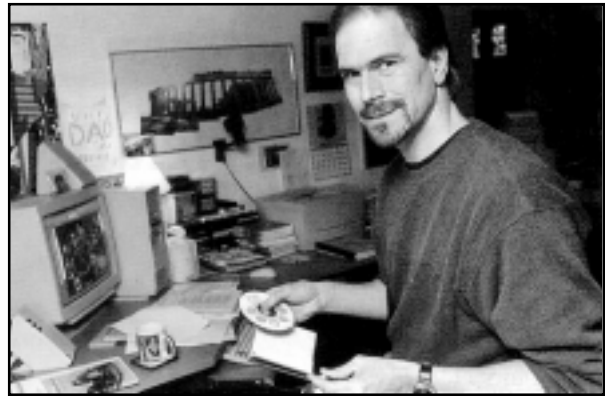


## Profile After College

# David Michalowski

by Karen E. Black

**At work** David Michalowski's home office is fully equipped with a range of technology for his multimedia projects.



David Michalowski's education in computer graphic design at RIT put him so far ahead of his peers and his employers that after nine years of working for other people, he decided to start his own business.

"My employers weren't ready to think outside of the box," says Michalowski, a 1989 graduate of RIT's master of fine arts program. "I knew the technologies were available to execute some very creative projects, but no one was ready to try new venues."

As a result, the proud entrepreneur established DM Multimedia, a computer graphics firm specializing in computer-based training (CBT), in June 1997.

"With traditional classroom training, the pace of learning is set by the slowest learner in the class," he explains from his office in his Brighton, New York, home. "But with a CD or by using a company's internal website, or intranet, the user can advance through the material at his or her own pace. Plus, it's a lot more interesting and effective than reading a chalkboard or a technical manual.

"Well-designed CBT includes visuals, audio, and interactive participation, which allows learners to skip over material already known, but won't allow the learner to proceed until understanding is achieved," he adds.

This type of training not only lowers costs substantially for his customers, like Eastman Kodak and Xerox, but also ensures the success of training.

Michalowski's spacious workstation is uniquely organized to easily access his PCs, Macs, scanners, laptops, faxes, and TTY. This is where he produces eye-catching web design, instructional

design, presentations using interactive animations, desktop publishing, two- and three-dimensional modeling for computer-generated illustrations, and virtual reality programs.

A native of Chicago, Michalowski moved to New York City where he earned his bachelor of science degree in studio arts at New York University. He then spent four years as a graphic designer there. His instincts told him that computer graphics were the future for business communications, but his employer didn't see the need to invest in the appropriate equipment.

That employer's lack of vision prompted him to move to Rochester in 1987 to pursue graduate study. After two years studying full time in interactive computer-graphic design at RIT, he once again sought employment in New York City. To his surprise, design firms there were more interested in desktop publishing and didn't even know what interactive computer graphics were.

As it turned out, one of his graduate classmates who worked at the technologically savvy Eastman Kodak Co. recommended him for a contract job as an interactive designer for its Education Center. He gladly accepted and, after that assignment, continued his work at other design firms in interactive computer graphics design and multimedia before venturing on his own.

Deaf since birth, Michalowski says he has never lost or won a job because of his deafness. He attributes his success to a strong work ethic, being reliable and responsible, and, of course, excelling at what he does. Evidently,

those qualities are what have earned him clients across the country.

His deafness, he says, has been merely an aside.

"You can't take people's discomfort with deafness personally," he says. "It's always a win-win situation when you can be patient and take the time to teach them ways to work together."

Michalowski's artistic talents were first demonstrated on the ice, when at age 10, he began his 14-year figure skating career, which included competing and placing 11th at the 1980 Olympic Trials at the U.S. National Figure Skating Championships in Atlanta, Georgia. His performance was broadcast on the ABC Wide World of Sports, along with figure skaters Scott Hamilton and Brian Boitano.

The future looks bright for Michalowski, professionally and personally.

His professional goals include designing interactive media to replace confusing product manuals. He envisions a quick and easy-to-understand virtual reality program, including captions and audio, for connecting electronic appliances.

Despite his big-city nature, Michalowski has grown quite attached to the Rochester area and its "wonderful" deaf community. He and his wife, Sheryl, who also is deaf, and their two hearing daughters Alexandra, 8, and Shayna, 3, have established a close-knit group of deaf and hearing friends. And he also enjoys community work, like designing projects on a pro bono basis for the fund-raising committee at his daughter's school.