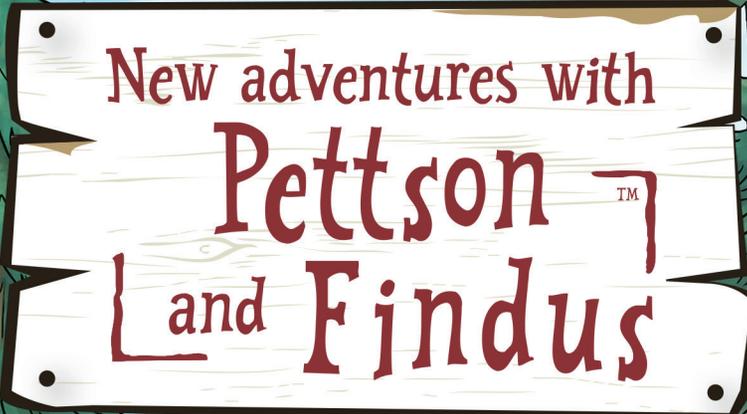


TBI Kids

Television Business International

Expanding ambitions
HBO Max on its EMEA
kids content strategy
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Trend setters
The fight to recapture
teen viewers
Page 4



New adventures with
Pettson™
and **Findus**

52 x 13'

4 x 75'





ENDLINGS

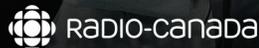
TWEEN SERIES, 24 X 22'



ODD SQUAD



4-7 YEAR OLDS 114 X 22'





Alma's Way

4-6 year olds
40 X 22'



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STORYTIME JUST GOT FABULOUS



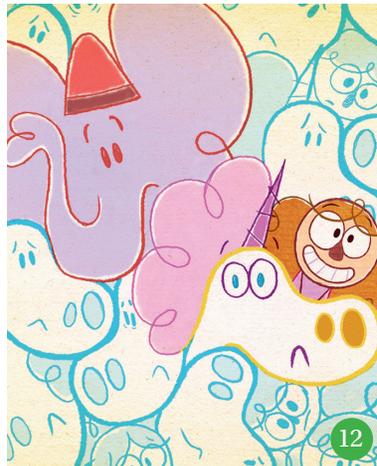
The Fabulous Show

with Fay & Fluffy

2-5 YEAR OLDS
26 X 11'



TBI Kids April/May 2022



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Re-connecting

As linear viewership among teens and tweens continues to decline, Mark Layton finds out what’s enticing this audience away from the TV set and how ‘traditional’ broadcasters are attempting to engage them

The number of teens and tweens watching broadcast TV has been on the decline for several years now. While the figures vary from country to country, the pivot away from traditional programming blocks to VOD consumption and mobile platforms has been profound.

Taking the UK as an example, research from regulatory body Ofcom reveals that in 2020/21, 92% of 12-15-year-olds watched VOD content, ranging from streamers like BBC iPlayer to platforms such as YouTube, while only 61% engaged with broadcast TV.

Perhaps the clearest indication of why this shift has occurred, however, lies in that the research also found 91% of this age group owned their own smartphone devices, with a resounding 99% using video-sharing platforms such as TikTok and Snapchat.

Today’s teens and tweens prefer to consume content where they are and when they want, rather than sitting down in front of a larger screen for a pre-scheduled period, but that doesn’t mean that they are now out of reach of ‘traditional’ broadcasters.

“We got into the radio business and we got into the television business right at the beginning of those technologies and those platforms, and I think it’s our goal to really follow our audience where they are,” explains Marie McCann, senior director of children’s content at CBC Kids in Canada.

Street Cents has been revived by CBC as daily short-form content on TikTok

Last month, the pubcaster relaunched its popular 1990s/early-2000s financial-literary-for-teens series *Street Cents* in a new format on TikTok. Rather than the previous magazine show iteration, the brand has returned as daily short-form content on the platform.

“The idea behind this reboot is to create a financial literacy movement to connect with the audience. A year from now, two years from now, TikTok might not be the place to reach that audience. We’ll always be looking for the right platform to reach our audience,” reveals McCann, who tells TBI she is invested in taking content to this audience and “not trying to get users over to a platform they don’t use.”

The lure of interactivity

The reach of ByteDance-owned TikTok is certainly not to be underestimated. Research provided by K7 Media found that the platform overtook YouTube in average watch time in the US and UK in 2020.

As of March 2022, TikTok is available in more than 150 countries and has been downloaded over 200 million times in the US alone. Of that US audience, there are around 80 million monthly active users, the largest percentage of which (32.5%) are aged between 10 and 19-years-old, showing clear engagement with the teen and tween demographic.

CBC isn't alone in its use of TikTok, with K7 finding that many broadcasters and streamers have taken to the platform in the past couple of years to repurpose their existing shows as short-form content, including the BBC, HBO, CBS, Netflix and many others.

Snap's Snapchat app, meanwhile, is just as prolific in reaching this teen audience, with the platform used by more than 90% of 13–24-year-olds in the UK as of Q4 2021, according to the company's own internal data. Globally, the number of daily active users grew to 319 million in this period, expanding rapidly to add 54 million of those users in 2021.

Snapchat's Discover area contains numerous ad-supported short-form content channels from major publishers, broadcasters and brands, alongside content created by users' personal friends.

"Discover is basically the world's best TV station and it's one that lives on your phone. It's one that reaches an audience that you can't find anywhere else," says Suzy Cox, Snap's head of programming for EMEA, India & APAC.

"There's literally nowhere else where you're going to find *Cosmo* journalists testing new lipstick, next to Sky Sports doing the goals of the weekend, next to Graham Norton interviewing the *Avengers* cast, next to Channel 4's news coverage, next to Vice interviewing doomsday cultists," she tells TBI. "There's a lot to choose from, which I think Gen-Z really appreciates."

Cox further highlights the convenience of Snapchat and its content offering for younger users – they're already on Snapchat to talk to friends and its features allows them to talk about what they're watching, when they watch it. "We often say, Snapchatters don't watch, they interact," she adds.

Snap has been working with broadcasters for many years now, including recent partnerships with M6 and Canal+ in France, while companies such as Sky have been on the platform "pretty much since the dawn of Discover," says Cox.

Most broadcasters tend to use the Discover platform to show cut-down versions of existing content, while others like the UK's Channel 4 do have some digital originals on the platform, such as *Mashed* and *How Not To Be Racist*.

Snap's curation of Discover further appeals to Gen-Z's desire to be informed around the world around them, without the risk of encountering "fake news," says Cox.

The service also houses Snap originals, including a series based on Cox's own YA novel *The Dead Girls Detective Agency*, while last year saw Snap launch its first Indian original, *Phone Swap India*, with its first UK original, *A Fighting Chance*, coming to the platform soon.



Tradition & transition

While such mobile platforms are clearly booming in popularity among this age group, not everyone is ready to give up on bringing teens back to linear just yet.

UK pubcaster the BBC relaunched its youth-skewing BBC Three as a linear network earlier this year, six years after it was made online-only.

While it is predominantly aimed at 16-34-year-olds, BBC Three controller Fiona Campbell tells TBI that the channel hopes to appeal to younger viewers. "We are looking at pre-watershed shows to either commission or reversion to make them age appropriate. This is so we can build a relationship with a younger audience so they can grow up with BBC Three."

Campbell believes 'traditional' TV is still popular and can bring in large audiences, explaining that the relaunch is "one of the key initiatives" to bring kids to the broadcaster. She cites *Glow Up* and *Young MasterChef* as the kind of commissions with potential to reach this age group and says the channel can work in tandem with VOD service BBC iPlayer to place its content in front of more young viewers.

The exec acknowledges that the mobile platforms are "an effective way to reach young audiences" and explains that BBC Three is using them as a tool, primarily to drive audiences to the channel and to iPlayer "which is our priority."

As for the prospect of permanently losing teens to these platforms as linear viewership continues to dwindle, Campbell comments: "Television has endured and whilst how audiences watch it has changed, it isn't going away anytime soon."

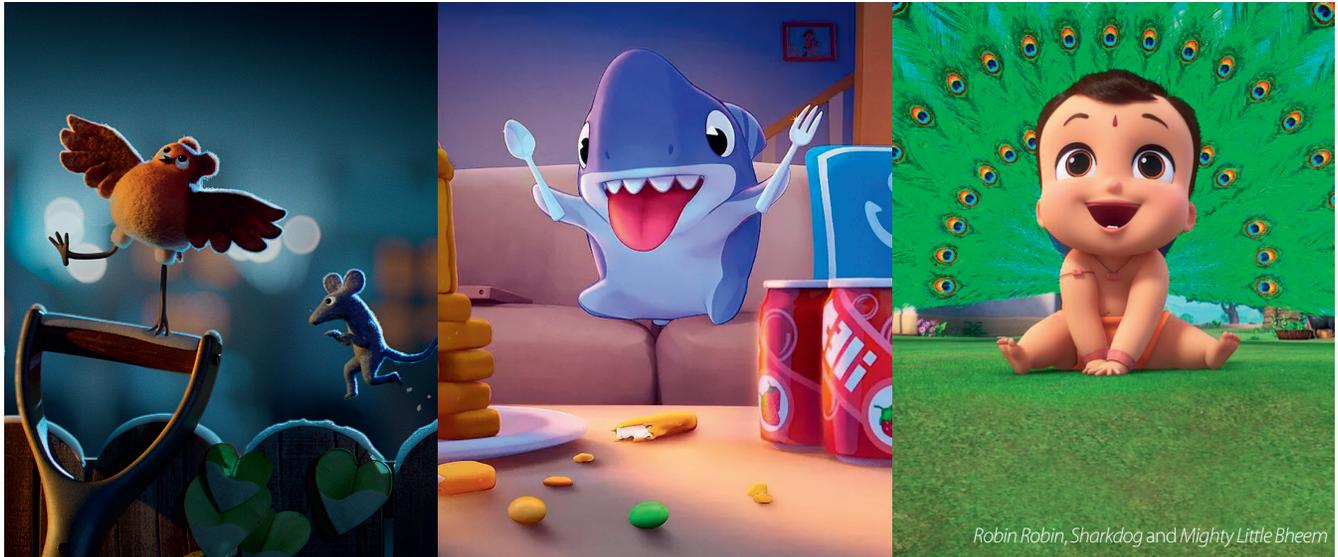
By contrast, CBC's McCann suggests we are witnessing a moment of transition: "Kids want to make content, they want a voice in all this, they don't just want to passively consume it. Once again, a generation has stepped forward and created a whole new genre of content, with new genres within it, and old media is catching up." **TBI**

Phone Swap India launched last year as Snapchat's first Indian original show

"We are looking to build a relationship with a younger audience so they can grow up with BBC Three"

Fiona Campbell,
BBC Three





Robin Robin, Sharkdog and Mighty Little Bheem

Casting a net

Alexi Wheeler, Netflix’s director & head of animated series in EMEA, shares his ambitions to support new talent and local voices, along with which children’s series are currently proving popular for the streamer

How important is Netflix’s children’s content to its overall global success?

It is a great time for animation at Netflix, we’re creating best-in-class animated content, built on a foundation of quality storytelling and diverse viewpoints.

We want to have the favourite programme of each member of the family, so we look to have shows that kids love, shows that families can watch together, and shows that parents want to watch on their own.

We also recognise that families are all different - especially if you think around the world – so in order to cater for their diverse needs, we focus on having a variety of stories, both on the TV and film side. The great thing about Netflix is you can have *Robin Robin*, *Sharkdog*, *The Mitchells vs. the Machines*, and *Yes Day* all in one place.

What are your ambitions in terms of local kids’ originals?

I’ve spent almost my entire career in the kids and family space across both live action and animation and I don’t think there’s ever been a better time to focus on authentically local stories in kids programming.

While my team is specifically focused on EMEA, we work in close collaboration with our creative partners around the world to bring great stories to Netflix.

Netflix has proven that great stories can come from anywhere and be loved everywhere, whether it’s a show like *Sharkdog* or *Mighty Little Bheem*, so our ambition is to expand upon that in the kids’ space around the world.

Alexi Wheeler leads a team responsible for producing, commissioning and developing Netflix’s original kids and family content from Europe, the Middle East and Africa



What’s on your commissioning wishlist? Are you open to pitches?

We’re always open to talking to creators about their ideas, especially as we grow in EMEA. There are so many talented voices that haven’t had the chance to tell their stories and those are the people who we want to speak to.

What upcoming shows are you looking forward to?

I’m really looking forward to more seasons of *Sharkdog*. It’s one of a handful of kids and family shows to make our global weekly Top 10 list and the combination of a highly visual kids comedy with loveable and relatable characters makes it a great fit for our audiences around the world.

What are you looking for from acquired content?

We really try to focus on what’s best for the project and don’t have a blanket one-size-fits-all approach. Shows come to us at all different stages of production and we have the flexibility to adjust based on the needs of the creators and producers.

Which children’s shows are doing well at the moment for Netflix?

The interesting thing is that some of our recent successful shows are all very different. You have something like *The Cuphead Show!*, which is highly stylised and based on the award-winning video game, but then you also have something like *Gabby’s Dollhouse*, which is entirely different. I would also be remiss not to mention *Cocomelon*, which continues to be beloved by audiences on Netflix around the world. **TBI**

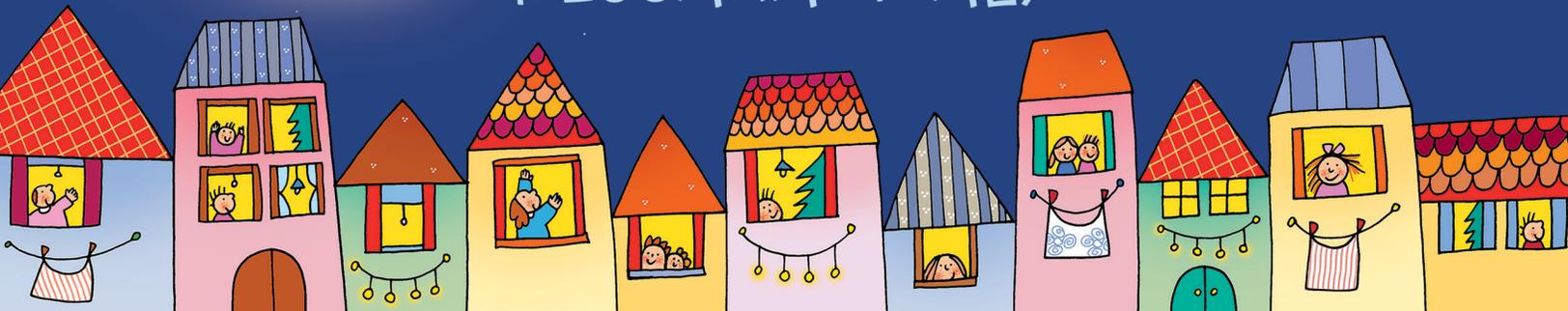
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Feeding the hungry beast

With HBO Max rolling out across Europe, WarnerMedia EMEA kids boss Vanessa Brookman shares the expanding streamer's plans and content demands with Mark Layton



HBO Max has rapidly expanded across Europe in recent weeks, with the WarnerMedia-owned SVOD rolling out in 15 countries in March, while six more launches are planned in the continent for later this year.

The recent confirmation that the service is to merge with new streaming sibling Discovery+ has understandably raised questions about its future, but WarnerMedia's SVP of kids and family, EMEA, Vanessa Brookman, assures TBI her team "is not standing still" and remains as busy as ever commissioning and acquiring programming for these new audiences and existing viewers alike.

Kids and family content plays no small part in making these global launches a success, for HBO Max and other streaming services, and Brookman says its value is now "being understood and appreciated" in a way that it hadn't been before. "Families with kids watch more and churn less and we know that parents think twice about cancelling their subscription if their kids watch the service."

With this in mind, Brookman notes that "it just makes sense to ensure that you have a really strong and compelling kids and family offer," adding that WarnerMedia is "doubling down" on its children's content and "hugely expanding" on its ambitions in this space.

Making a push into pre-school

Streaming services are hungry beasts, of course, and rolling out in so many new countries means keeping HBO Max fed with new, local content. Brookman's team launched a "massive" commissioning round last year with the aim of driving "local relevance."

Receiving about 150 submissions, the team whittled them down to five unscripted developments, including a gameshow and a project

working with local influencers, which are expected to appear on the service in 2023.

"We are really successful in the scripted space, but we wanted to compliment that with unscripted formats that kids can watch with their families," says Brookman, who oversees operational, editorial and creative for kids and family content and channels across EMEA.

Her remit covers not just HBO Max, but Cartoon Network, Boomerang, Boing and Cartoonito, while she also co-leads WarnerMedia's London-based animation label, Hanna-Barbera Studios Europe.

Brookman reveals she is very much open to pitches and while unscripted projects remain high on her content wish list, there is also a big demand for strong pre-school content and shows appealing to girls.

"We have lots of things that we need to do. We're rolling out Cartoonito (WarnerMedia's pre-school brand) across EMEA in 2022, so we haven't ordinarily commissioned in the pre-school space, but we realise that we're kind of missing half of the kid's audience by not doing that. So, we're heavily, emphatically, looking for really strong pre-school content that can be part of our Cartoonito linear networks, but can also appeal to pre-school audiences and their families on HBO Max as well."

She adds: "Then we're also looking for family content; we're looking for gameshows, anything in the unscripted space and live-action comedy. We're so strong in animation, but we really need to complement that with live-action content. That's really important for our EMEA region."

Brookman reveals that the content demand applies to both co-productions and acquisitions, while she is also developing original content out of Hanna-Barbera Studios Europe.

Looney Tunes (opposite) characters remain as popular as ever, while *The Amazing World Of Gumball* (right) is poised to make a return in 2024

“We think that there is a massive opportunity for Hanna-Barbera to bring its unique, quirky, humorous and creative take on pre-school content, both original and then looking at what we can do with our extensive library,” says Brookman.

The studio is working on kids and family content for HBO Max, including a 2024 movie and series revival of the Cartoon Network series *The Amazing World Of Gumball*, following the misadventures of Gumball Watterson and his goldfish best friend, Darwin, which Brookman describes as “the show that should never have gone away”.

The exec adds that she also “can’t wait for the world to see” its upcoming long-form series expanding on *The Heroic Quest Of The Valiant Prince Ivandoe* shorts.

“It’s such a clever show. It’s our first production from Denmark and it’s probably the funniest, broadest humour that we have. It’s one that I think will appeal to kids, but also adults who will get the slightly *Monty Python*-esque humour. It’s tested amazingly well in EMEA, and I think it’s going to be a massive contribution to our global streaming services and our local networks.”

On the acquisition side, Brookman says that HBO Max is looking to buy in girl-focused drama and pre-school content while they ramp up their original production in those spaces.

“Right now, we have really strong acquisitions like *Peppa Pig* and *Hey Duggee*, and we’ve also just announced an acquisition deal for *Interstellar Ella*, a really beautiful pre-school show from Aardman. So, we’re still going to be looking for pre-school acquisitions.”

More specifically, Brookman says that live-action series that appeal to girls are of particular interest: “We know that girls probably age out of animation a little bit early and we want to offer them a live-action alternative. So, we’re looking at those aspirational girl dramas that we think will provide a bridge between our animation and then them going off to watch *Friends* when they’re a little bit older.”

All pre-school shows for the Cartoonito brand, both acquisitions and originals, must however conform to four pillars of “human-centric learning,” highlights Brookman.

“Everything we buy, everything we commission has to support the four pillars, which is creativity, caring, curiosity and courage. From that we’re trying to inspire the kids to use their imaginations and then to treat others with empathy and respect.”

Reinventing iconic brands

As well as new commissions and acquired content, it doesn’t hurt that HBO Max can also call on a treasure trove of iconic kid’s brands, ranging from DC to Warner Bros. and Cartoon Network.

“I think we’re really lucky because we have this incredibly rich heritage,” enthuses Brookman. “One of the joys of the job is watching



creatives take these shows that have lived large in the history and lexicon of kid’s content, but just do it with a different spin for a totally different audience and thereby completely reimagine it for a new generation.”

Among the reinventions coming up this year are *Looney Tunes* animation *Bugs Bunny Builders* and *Batwheels*, which is WarnerMedia’s first pre-school series based on the DC comic book characters, following superpowered crime-fighting vehicles that defend Gotham City alongside Batman, Robin, and other heroes.

“When you think of it on paper – how to marry Batman with pre-school? But the team in the US have done an amazing job of making it look beautiful and making it really relevant for a pre-school audience.

These brands continue to prove incredibly popular, with the top performing kids and family shows for HBO Max EMEA, across Andorra, Spain and the Nordics since they launched in October 2021, including vintage characters in *Tom And Jerry* and *Looney Tunes Cartoons*, as well as DC’s *Teen Titans Go!* and the aforementioned original run of Cartoon Network’s *The Amazing World Of Gumball*.

Looking ahead, Brookman says that children seem to be responding to immersive, interactive content in shows that they can play along with, while anime has begun to “really drive viewing in EMEA, which wasn’t the case five years ago.”

Investment in anime content has been on the rise among broadcasters and streamers all over the world in the past few years and WarnerMedia is no different.

Brookman reveals: “That’s something that we’re looking to as a studio, our response in that space. We’ve hired Jason DeMarco to really lead up our anime strategy across WarnerMedia and his first show is *The Lord Of The Rings: War Of The Rohirrim*. That’s our first real anime play and then we’re looking to see what we can do with that more broadly across our slate.”

Whatever the future holds for HBO Max following the Warner Bros. Discovery merger, it isn’t going anywhere just yet. WarnerMedia clearly has plenty of irons in the fire and so long as the streamer continues its global march, it’s clear that kids and family content will remain a cornerstone of its offering. **TBI**

“We’re looking for aspirational girl dramas that provide a bridge between our animation and *Friends*”

Vanessa Brookman,
WarnerMedia





Opinion Louise Bucknole

Leveraging the power of disability

Putting disability at the centre of a show both onscreen and off brings creativity and freshness, argues Paramount UK's VP of kids programming, Louise Bucknole

Kids producers and broadcasters have a crucial role to play in the TV industry's drive towards DEI (diversity, equity & inclusion). The way we portray children in their formative years, and the messages we convey through content, leaves a lasting mark on their lives. This in turn shapes how society engages in discourse around ethnicity, sexuality, gender and disability.

On the whole, the kids industry has made strides in the right direction. While there is always more that can be done, both offscreen and onscreen, Paramount UK's audience-led approach to commissioning has meant fair representation is part of our DNA – going way back to shows like *Kenan And Kel* and *Hey Arnold!*

In 2020, Paramount went a step further with its uncompromising 'no diversity, no commission' policy. This sent out a strong message that is now reflected in the content on both Nickelodeon and Channel 5's Milkshake! block. *The World According To Grandpa*, *Go Green With The Grimwades*, *Mimi's World* and *The Loud House* are shows where DEI is baked in.

It's not just Paramount of course. During Covid-19, the BBC made a bold diversity pledge then followed it up with series like *Black History Heroes* and *Colours*. Over at Disney, there is a new DEI initiative called Reimagine Tomorrow while Cartoon Network Studios has invested in *Cartoon Cartoons*, a new shorts programme focused on showcasing diverse stories. Having discussed DEI many times with impassioned and committed colleagues at ScreenSkills, the Children's Media Conference and BAFTA, it comes as no surprise to me that more than half of kids series are now diverse.

Having said this, industry data tells us that one area of DEI continues to lag behind – and that is disability. In kids, the BBC has probably set the standard, with shows like *Pablo* and *Something Special*. But there's no getting away from the fact there is more work to be done in terms of reflecting disabilities and hiring disabled people.

This is not to say we have been inactive at Paramount UK. Whenever we see a meaningful opportunity to introduce a disabled character into a show we do it. Milkshakes!'s *Meet The Experts* featured a number of disabled contributors including gymnast Harmonie. Nickelodeon UK, meanwhile, has aired *Extraordinary Me* – a series about kids like Hester, a blind skier whose

ambition is to compete in the Paralympics. In *The Casagrandes*, a central character has Down Syndrome.

We're proud of all these shows – however we also recognise its time to go to the next level. That's why Milkshake! has just commissioned *MixMups*, a genuine advance in disability representation. Developed and produced with support from the UK Government funded BFI Young Audiences Content Fund, *MixMups*, is the first stop-motion animated pre-school series to feature disabled leads and to be made by a team with lived experience of disability. Aimed at 3-5 year-olds, it shines a light on different pre-school play styles.

The thing that really sets *MixMups* apart is that the creative team has first-hand experience of disability. Creator, writer and executive producer Rebecca Atkinson is partially deaf and partially sighted and has made waves with her #ToyLikeMe campaign, which calls for more diversity in children's toys. Other members of the team have lived experience either themselves or through their children. With Mackinnon & Saunders producing, I anticipate a series that will be great fun, enlightening and high quality.

Production has just begun and two lessons have already emerged. The first is that disability can't just be bolted on to an existing story line. It has to be integral and authentic otherwise it doesn't land. The fact that two central characters have disabilities brings a unique and fresh value to the show and uncovers untold stories.

The other is that commissioners need to make a genuine effort to mitigate the barriers disabled people face in pitching and producing content. Rebecca's visual impairment meant that presenting across Zoom was more accessible than travelling to meetings in person.

As commissioners, it's important that we look at the structures of our industry which may keep disabled creatives marginalised for a range of reasons and make flexible adaptations to our practice to address this.

We're not there yet – and writer Jack Thorne was right to hold the industry to account in his Edinburgh TV Festival MacTaggart Lecture last year. I'm convinced the desire for change is gaining momentum. Channel 5, for example, recently signed up to the disability passport. To me that suggests a new level of empathy that we are keen to build on at Paramount UK, with compelling and creative shows like *MixMups*. **TBI**

Louise Bucknole is VP of kids programming at Paramount UK, overseeing Milkshake!, Nickelodeon, Nick Jr, Nick Jr. Too and Nicktoons

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Kids Hot Picks

The latest kids shows heading to market

Top
Pick



Vegesaur

Producer: Cheeky Little

Distributor: Studio 100 Media

Broadcasters: ABC Australia & France Télévisions

Logline: Half food/half-dinosaur friends teach young viewers about playing and sharing through their adventures

Travel to a prehistoric world unlike any other, in this 20 x 5-minute CGI animated series for 4-7-year-olds, populated by part dinosaur/part fruit-and-vegetable animals.

The young tricarrotops Ginger lives in Vegesaur Valley, home to fellow vegesaur,

such as the baby pea-rexes, who embark on standalone adventures featuring relatable themes for upper pre-schoolers like mealtime, sharing, friendship and play.

Revealing the story of how this unique food-and-dino combo was brought to life,

Martin Krieger, CEO at Studio 100 Media tells TBI: “One of the creators, Gary Eck, was in a supermarket a few years ago and saw a young child sitting in a shopping trolley playing with a banana and some broccoli. He was making monster growls and roars, so clearly in the child’s imagination the banana and broccoli were huge creatures locked in battle.

“[Eck] phoned his creative partner Nick O’Sullivan and shortly afterwards the initial concept of *Vegesaur*s was born.”

“It’s an absurdly silly idea, but we still present it as a credible world for young kids to immerse in, complete with a narrator in the style of a wildlife documentary. It also provides the opportunity to spark kids’ interest in fruit and vegetables, in a unique way, which we hope may promote healthier eating and greater engagement with the natural world,” adds Krieger, who says the short runtime also makes *Vegesaur*s ideal for “linear and non-linear distribution” or as viral content.

Alma's Way

Producers: Fred Rogers Production

Distributor: Sinking Ship Entertainment

Broadcasters: PBS Kids

Logline: Bronx-born Puerto Rican six-year-old Alma shares her thoughts and feelings with viewers

Six-year-old Alma Rivera is a proud Bronx-born, Puerto Rican girl living a fast-paced city life, where her closest friend and confidant is the viewer.

Sharing her secrets, feelings and challenges with the audience watching at home, Alma adds colourful commentary to the big and small moments in her life.

When Alma's not sure what to do next, she stops to do one of her signature 'think throughs', in which time freezes and Alma pauses to look back to what's happened or to imagine what



might happen and figure out what she needs to do next.

"Alma's Way will appeal to kids around the world as it reflects the universal experience of problem-solving and creative

thinking skills," says Kate Sanagan, head of sales and distribution at Sinking Ship Entertainment. "Each episode follows Alma as she knows something needs to change but

isn't sure what to do, and we think kids all over can relate to this. Alma's think-through moments in each episode are excellent models for kids to learn self-confidence and resilience."



Margot And The Space Robot

Producer: Everybody On Deck

Distributor: Dandeloo

Broadcaster: France Télévisions

Logline: A young girl and her robot pal learn about friendship as they set out to stop an alien invasion

Danger arrives from beyond the stars in this 2D animation, in the form of two tiny, but rather cruel aliens, who land in the town of Aquaville with a nefarious plans to enslave the local population.

The only thing that stands in their way is an observant, but overly emotional, young girl named Margot and her new robot friend Gabriel, who looks just like a human boy.

As the programme’s director and writer Nicolas Rendu tells TBI, the two unlikely heroes set out on a journey that teaches them both a lot about friendship and their inner-strength.



“[It] shows us that being a friend is about listening and caring for each other’s emotions. In fact, friends help each other to be more human,” he says.

Aimed at 6- to 11-year olds, this half-hour special offers plenty to “enthral children around the world,” adds Rendu.

It also explores themes common to youngsters from all corners of the globe, as they learn to manage their feelings.

“Machiavellian aliens, lousy robots, strong robots, scooter chases, laughter and suspense... and the heart of the story, the question of what makes us

human in the face of today’s all-powerful technology.

“And, then there’s an overly emotional little girl who discovers that her emotions are in fact her strength – and rescues her parents from the clutches of evil aliens by turning their robot against them...”

Jili & Gulu

Producers: Le-Cool Culture & Zhongchuang Huashi Culture Development

Distributor: The Media Pioneers

Broadcasters: Tencent, Youku

Logline: A group of animal friends learn about the world and impart life skills while on their adventures in a magical woodland

Pay a visit to the Drip Drop Forest in this gentle pre-school comedy series following the adventures of a little lion named Jili, a crocodile called Gulu and their many other animal friends, who live happily together in the woodland realm.

There are two 52 x 7-minute seasons of the show already available, with the series aimed at 0- to 6-year-olds and offering educational elements around science, life skills and friendship.

“In *Jili & Gulu*, wherever there is adventure, there is plenty of fun and laughter in

discovering new things and learning about the world, like when Gulu discovers that you can’t grow a cake tree by planting a cake in the ground like a seed,” says Maggie Liang, founder and MD of The Media Pioneers, which also executive produces the series.

She notes: “But going on adventures and trying new things can also be scary for kids as well. The characters in *Jili & Gulu* always help each other to overcome their fears, though they all have very different strengths and difficulties, just like

all kids around the world, there is always a way to include all the friends in a new adventure and play together.”

Sharing some of the friends’ many adventures, Liang adds: “They discover a cave filled with glowing flowers where they meet a new friend called Echo, that copies everything they say.

They use the sound of a seashell to help a baby crab find his parents and take him back to the beach. They venture to the top of the twin mountains, and sail down the river in a handmade boat, but the best place for fun in Drip Drop Forest is the rainbow bridge, where all of the friends like to play.”



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SEPT 12

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A staple in the NATPE calendar, the 4th Annual NATPE Streaming Plus will return to the W Hotel Hollywood focusing on every aspect of the ever-changing landscape of streaming entertainment.

**NATPE
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3HZ

Producers: De Mensen

Distributor: Global Screen

Broadcasters: VRT Ketnet

Logline: Family mystery told across both the past and the present as a bereaved teen discovers he has an unusual window into his mother's youth

A youngster gets an unexpected blast from the past in this live-action family adventure told in two different timelines. In the present day, 13-year-old Felix spends the summer with his best friends at their hangout, a swimming pond in the woods.

There, Felix makes an amazing discovery: his vintage Walkman picks up sounds from 1989. The friends are fascinated by the weird, funny fragments from this long-gone era – until they hear something disturbing.

In 1989, someone called Walter was killed. Felix starts to

investigate and soon learns that someone else was also trying to figure this out in 1989 – his own recently deceased mother.

“The vintage Walkman, which serves as the time travel element in the series, elevates the show to a more sophisticated level,” explains Ulrike Schröder, VP of international acquisitions & co-productions at Global Screen, who says “we strongly believe that kids are capable of handling more complex stories.”

The iconic device also plays an important emotional role in the story, reveals Schröder:

“From the onset it was very important to the creators that the Walkman was more than just a gimmick.

Felix finds out, that with his vintage Walkman he can listen to the past, more specifically to his mother's youth. So the Walkman actually serves as a direct emotional link between

Felix and his mother whilst allowing the series to move between two time lines, which gives us this wonderful nostalgic look on the one hand and the modern world on the other.”

Schröder adds that the series has “huge co-watching potential,” and does not talk down to its younger audience.



Alice's Diary

Producers: Sardinha Em Lata, Alice AIE and Geppetto Film

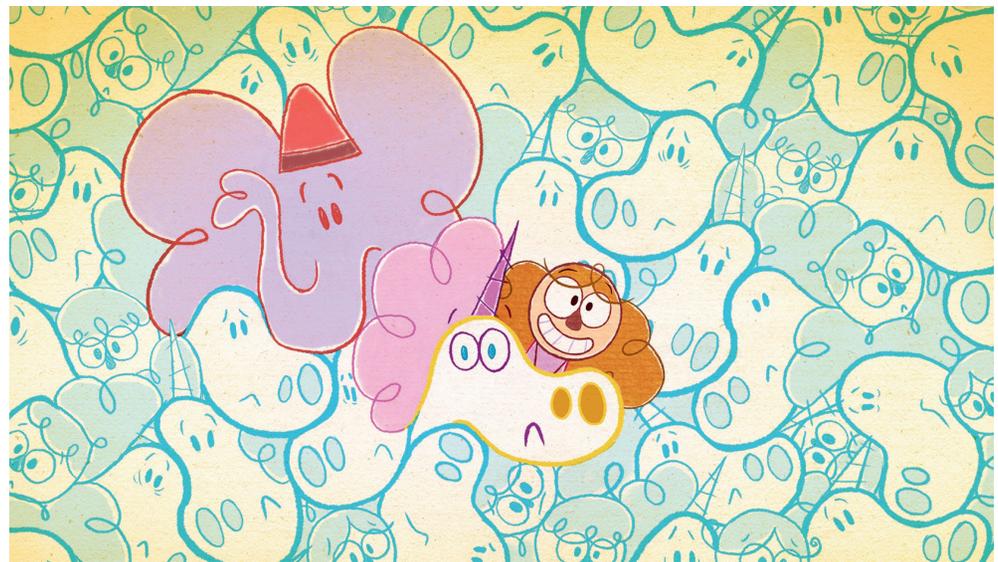
Distributor: Jetpack Distribution

Broadcasters: RTP, RTVE & Disney Junior Lat Am

Logline: A magical insight into the mind of Alice, a quirky, and highly imaginative six-year-old

This 52 x 4-minute animated series delves into the vivid imagination of six-year-old Alice through her drawings, which offer a kids' eye perspective on the world as her pictures come to life to share what she is thinking through striking and comedic visuals.

“Alice lives the life of a six-year-old girl with a big imagination, which compels her to express her feelings, fears and thoughts through art. So, her stories focus on the many things young children think about,” says Jetpack Distribution CEO Dominic Gardiner of the



upper pre-school series, which is currently bound for young audiences in Spain, Portugal and Latin America.

Alice's inquisitiveness nature and unique view of the world shines through during her off-beat and funny conversations with her mum Ana.

“Kids everywhere will relate to Alice's stories, as she openly shares her thoughts, questions and fears. This will encourage young viewers to share their own ideas and opinions with a similarly limitless imagination and a lot of humour,” Gardiner tells TBI.

“The series showcases the value of questioning and helps kids navigate the world, as they picture it. The drawings come to life through a vibrant mix of stop motion and digital 2D animation, compelling for this age group. It's an artful and heartfelt series.”

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