FINDING CAMELITTLE: CHILDREN'S TELEVISION IN A DIGITAL AGE

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This thesis is dedicated to all those who have worked in children’s entertainment before me. From the Saturday morning cartoons, to feature length movies, I would like to thank the people who not only gave me a childhood, but also gave me passion and direction as an adult.
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Finding Camelittle: Children’s Television in a Digital Age

Long ago and far away there was a land called Camelot. It was a kingdom ruled by the great king Arthur who was a virtuous and wise monarch. His reign was presented as idyllic and he was considered the model ruler. Many have used the imagery of Arthur’s Camelot to describe prosperous times in history, from the JFK presidency to the “Golden Age of Television.” For young children, the world is shaped by much smaller things than presidents or politics and, for myself; the world existed not only in my home or at school, but in the wonderfully imaginary places created in cartoons. The mornings spent watching *Looney Tunes* or *Nickelodeon* remains in my mind as peaceful and happy times, my “Camelot.”

However, things have changed since the time I was younger. The thought of watching cartoons on anything but a television didn’t seem possible. Except, one day when I was in grade school I went over to a friend’s to play on their computer. Unlike my house, their family had just subscribed to Internet service and I was curious to see what this was. My friend and I logged online and our first act was to click on a button for Cartoon Network. Suddenly there was the option to type questions to our favorite cartoon character and he would immediately respond. This changed my life forever.

Modern day children’s television is far different than it was when I was growing up. Instead of waiting for certain times of the day for favorite programs to be on, children can DVR their shows, access seasons of them online immediately from their video game consoles via Netflix or go to the shows’ websites and watch exclusive content. There are not only television channels dedicated to children’s
programs, but channels dedicated to many different facets from educational and young children, to tweens, to boys action enthusiasts, to old style cartoons. Not only is it possible for children to have an interactive outlet for their television shows, it is considered obligatory. The average consumption of media by children has radically increased, and how they consume it is dramatically different from my days of Camelot.

These changes have caused a rapid expansion in the children’s media industry. The outlets in which content can be distributed have spurred the expansion of already existing content and new content to be created. The tools have grown and become more advanced, forever changing the process of production. The 2D animation of my childhood has given way to 3D animation and the 2D that remains has become a hybrid of hand drawings and computers. Everything has gone digital from distribution and production to the children watching the shows.

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze children’s television in the digital age. The reason I have selected this area to develop is multifaceted. The first is to understand the business behind my Camelot and second to apply this knowledge to my own work. The media industry is a complex and ever changing business. In my opinion, in the collegiate setting, the children’s media industry is often an overlooked market. With children consuming considerable hours of media on multiple platforms, the industry is growing exponentially. This thesis will examine the changing nature of children’s television and describe the development of a particular children’s program – Camelittle.
To accomplish this goal I must step beyond simply examining the content of a show. This effort must also explore the business apparatus that is in place in the children’s television industry. Consequently the primary source of my research comes from interviews and seminars at the KidScreen Summit that was held in February, 2011. This conference was a gathering of more than 180 children’s entertainment companies from around the world, with a variety of seminars focusing on business practices. After attending the conference I have decided the best way to provide an overview of the industry is from three different angles: a description of the children’s media industry; the child audience; and the production process for Camelittle This first section of this thesis will examine the children’s media industry (Chapter 1); the making of an animated program (Chapter 2); and creating content in the digital age from the initial idea through marketing and production (Chapter 3). The purpose here is to illustrate the widespread effects of the digital age on the industry in every facet of production, demonstrating ways in which modern entertainment entities turn revenue. Real world examples will be provided to emphasize different strategies and success stories that have recently occurred within the industry.

The fourth chapter will examine the media’s relation to its audience, the children themselves. The industry changes as children change. I will examine the ways children use media and interact with the new digital outlets. Other important factors to consider when dealing with children’s entertainment are child development stages and the age and gender of the child. The primary ages of focus in the scope of this thesis will be children ages six to twelve, as this is the crowd that more likely watches
entertainment programs, rather than educational programs. Each of these characteristics will be discussed in relationship to creating content for children.

Finally, Chapter 5 will demonstrate how this information is structured in the project Camelittle which will be synthesized into a project I developed in collaboration with others. Camelittle is an animated children’s television show that takes place in a medieval boarding school called Camelittle where children learn to become knights, princesses, wizards, peasants and other roles of the medieval era. This project will serve as an example of how a show develops as well as a show bible for children’s television programs. The reason I have chosen an animated children’s television show is because of my lifelong passion for cartoons and well as my professional interest in the structural workings of children’s entertainment. By looking at the development process of children’s shows, relating it to children and how they watch media, and providing an example of a show developed with these perspectives in mind, I hope to illustrate how children’s media operate in the digital age. Looking through the digitally dominated world we live in I hope to not only show the workings of children’s business, but also to find that place that existed when I was a kid, where the world was only as complicated as a child’s imagination. In essence I hope to find Camelittle.
Chapter 1. The Industry

The first focus of my research will be on the business of children’s entertainment. The approach includes the examination of two different aspects of production. First is the development process of a children’s television show. This will focus primarily on animated television as it is one of the most enduring mediums of children’s television. The second part will be on industry practices.

Animation

A (Brief) History of Children’s Animation on Television

Since the advent of television in the 1940s, the primary function of programs has been to sell advertising. While television executives may deny this, it would be impossible for the programming to exist without the funding from advertisers. Because of this inescapable fact, the history of children’s television was likewise dependent on the perception of marketability. In the early 1950s, the main target of advertisers was adults watching their primetime programs, as they were the viewers with the power to buy the products being promoted. However, it was observed that children could influence adult purchases, so family-friendly programming became a prime forum to attract the child of influence as well as the adult with spending power (Pecora, 1998, p. 14).

In the late 1950s, advertisers began to implement advertising practices aimed at younger audiences to build brand loyalty for when they matured and had spending power (Pecora, 1998, p. 16). At this time the primary forms of children’s television were variety programs with live action hosts such as the “Captain Bob Show in
Buffalo, *Banjo Billies Funboat* in Miami, *Uncle Willie’s Cartoon Show* in Beaumont, Texas” (Woolery, 1983, p ix). These live action hosted shows would fuse together a wide variety of content within their shows such as games, songs, crafts, and storytelling all of which were too expensive to produce individually on the local level (Woolery, 1983, p ix). Among these segments existed the first television cartoons, all of which were almost exclusively reruns from theatrical releases (Woolery, 1983, p ix). There were a limited number of animated packages to be played, but the theory at the time was that children enjoyed the repetition of recognizable cartoons.

In this era, the opinions of the networks and local affiliates were that cartoons were only for children. Because of this philosophy, programs such as *Barker Bill’s Cartoon Show*, were relegated to afternoons or other timeslots, when adults would be less likely watching. Two rare examples of prime time animation would be, the Walt Disney Company’s *Disneyland* in 1954 hosted by Disney himself became a primetime success featuring some of Disney’s theatrical cartoon reruns and launched *Mickey Mouse Club* soon after (Woolery, 1983, p. x). And The *CBS Cartoon Theater* featuring Dick Van Dyke which scored major ratings as a primetime show featuring animation. The first Saturday morning cartoon success occurred in 1955 with *The Mighty Mouse Playhouse* on CBS, featuring a back catalogue of cartoons (specifically Terrytoons).

**Limited Animation**

Aside from *Crusader Rabbit*, in 1949, the children’s animated cartoon market consisted of reruns of theatrical cartoon releases. This changed in 1958 with the
emergence the “limited animation style” and the popular short *Gerald McBoingBoing*. This new limited animation style created a more cost effective means of animated production by limiting character movements and recycling backgrounds and drawings (Erikson, 1995, p. 18). Soon after Hanna-Barbera created *Huckleberry Hound, Quick Draw McGraw* and *Yogi Bear* using this technique for their stand alone cartoon shows without a host. The Hanna-Barbera cartoons proved to be a huge commercial success for animated television shows. With minimal costs to voice talents and large capacity for reruns of cartoons came the decline of the now more expensive live action hosted programming (Woolery, 1983, xi). It is also notable that Hanna-Barbera’s *The Flintstones* achieved primetime success as the only all animated television program. In the 1960s sponsors took notice of the marketability of children’s Saturday morning programming. In 1964, CBS created a two-hour block of cartoon programming, reusing the successes of Hanna-Barbera cartoons as well as original content in between these tried and true standbys. As cartoons were still viewed as a children’s medium, Saturday morning was viewed as the least likely time adults would be watching television and enjoyed significant commercial success. Fred Silverman joined CBS in 1966 and took a financial gamble by expanding the Saturday morning cartoon timeslot to four and a half hours long with three hours being entirely new content developed for television (Woolery, 1983, p. xii). This resulted in a huge ratings increase, which caused ABC and NBC to scramble to match the cartoon output. Production of cartoons made specifically for television grew rapidly and
viewership of top Saturday morning programs in 1968 would reach 14 million viewers (Woolery, 1983, p xii).

**The Growth of the Industry**

With the ratings so high on kid-specific programs, the toy industry began to experience huge growth around this same time. Previously, there had been no regulation on children’s programming. One group, Action for Children’s Television, was formed to advocate for higher quality, less commercial programming (Bryant, 2007, p. 15). The movement gained momentum and in 1974, the FCC formed a permanent children’s branch and released the Children’s Policy Statement, though it failed to explicitly introduce legislation regulating children’s entertainment (Bryant, 2007, p. 15). With mounting fear of hearings from the FCC, FTC, or Senate networks turned to self-regulation (Pecora, 1998, p. 27). For example, the *Hot Wheels* show was dropped by ABC as soon as there was controversy surrounding the program, replacing it with a less controversial show (Pecora, 1998, p. 42).

In the late 1960s and early 1970s there were rising production costs. With networks more aware of possible regulations affecting advertising, costs of producing an animated show rose from $70,000 per half hour to $100,000 per half hour (Woolery, 1983, p. xii). Even Hanna-Barbera, the trailblazer of low-cost animation and largest producer of animated television, needed to cut costs to meet demand. With the invention of technology such as the photocopier, the studio was able to, in essence, get rid of the inking departments of their studio (Hanna, 2000, p. 192). And in 1971, the studio began an overseas partnership with Australia, to help cut costs of production...
as well bolster the staff (Hanna, 2000, p. 198). This practice was already adopted by many companies and has been a constant in animated television since (Erikson, 1995, 36).

Along with the government rulings in children’s television, in 1976 they issued Prime Time Access Rule and Financial Syndication Rulings. These were put in place by the FCC to break the monopoly hold the networks had on program production and distribution. The Prime Time Access Rule (PTAR) limited network control of prime time while the Financial Syndication (Fin-Syn) Ruling limited networks investments in syndication (Pecora, 1998, p. 28). These two rulings created a boom in local independent broadcast stations, all of which needed content In the late 1970s the Olympics and presidential coverage began taking away from advertising time on the networks, driving up advertising costs. This caused advertisers to turn to the growing independent stations for an outlet (Pecora, 1998, p. 43). Another significant change about this time was the partnering of toy companies and animation studies to develop toy-based television programs. These were attractive to independent stations because of their low cost in syndication For example in 1983 the networks for fear of government interference rejected He-Man Masters. However it was picked up by 65 different independent stations and received 82% of market coverage by the second year (Pecora, 1995, p. 71). In 1983, the FCC repealed their Federal Communications Report and Order first initiated in 1972 after Hearings generated by Action for Children’s Television, this lead to the development of other toy-based shows such as The Care Bears and Transformers. The toy industry thrived from the
animated children’s boom in the 1960s, establishing the first national chain of toy only stores, Toys R Us (Pecora, 1998, p. 50). Between 1975 and 1985, Toys R Us revenues grew from 200 million to 2 billion dollars, solidifying profitability of year-round toy sales (Pecora, 1998, p. 50). Television and the toy industries formed a symbiotic relationship with programming based on toy production. For the toy companies, toys featured in television programs had a significantly longer shelf life and marketability (Pecora, 1998, p. 51). For television, shows based on toys were incredibly popular earning additional revenue. Products would often feature a larger ensemble, which would allow for a larger selection of toys. Around the age of 6, children naturally develop the tendency for starting collections (Chumsky 2011). Toy companies were able to tap into this tendency by creating a wide variety of products to collect (Pecora, 1998, p. 22).

**Cable’s Contribution**

Meanwhile in the early 1970s, Ted Turner launched cable programming founding TBS and the TBS superstation (Bryant, 2007, p.147). A number of other cable channels followed, but children’s entertainment was relatively unaffected the development of the children specific networks, Nickelodeon and the Disney Channel. Nickelodeon, which had begun broadcasting in 1980, was relatively unpopular live action programming such as *Jackson’s World of Sports* and *Stand By: Lights, Camera, Action* (Bryant, 2007, p. 146). In 1984 Nickelodeon began becoming commercial and in 1985 Geraldine Laybourne took control of the network (Bryant, 2007, p. 146). Laybourne conducted research to find out what children liked and revamped the
network with programs including *The Ren and Stimpy Show*, *Double Dare* and *You Can’t Do That On TV* (Bryant, 2007, p. 148). In 1991 Nickelodeon achieved huge marketing success with the animated show *Rugrats*, which would regularly hit top levels of viewers of both cable and network programming (Bryant, 2007, p. 148).

Disney likewise launched a cable channel in 1983, but received only moderate success due to the fact that it existed as a premium channel, which cable subscribers would have to pay extra to view. Disney’s audience increased in 1995 by offering their largely popular movies on their programs and began phasing out the premium fees (Bryant, 2007, p. 151). In 1991, Ted Turner purchased the financially struggling Hanna-Barbera Company and used their massive back catalogue, along with the purchase of the Looney Tunes, to found the first cartoon only network, aptly named Cartoon Network (Bryant, 2007, p. 152). The animation staff of Hanna-Barbera was absorbed by the network and later utilized to develop original programming for the network.

**CGI: Computer Animation**

With the establishment of cartoons as well as children’s networks by the 1990s, the animated landscape had formed into a solid industry. In 1995, the Canadian-developed program *Reboot* became the first fully computer animated television show. The technically innovative show met with critical and audience success, along with the hefty price tag of $10 million for the first 13-episode season (Bernstein, 1994). The costs were more than double a high end Saturday morning show and suffered a falling-behind production schedule on its first season airing on
ABC (Berstein, 1994). Despite the initial costs of production, the computer animation program allowed significantly quicker production after the initial set up. For example, after programming a character to walk, anytime they needed this function during the entire series, they only needed to enter the walk program (Murphy, 1995). *Reboot* was cancelled on ABC after its purchase by Disney and went on to air on Cartoon Network.

The next computer animated television show, *Beast Wars*, was able to capitalize on the toy market. *Beast Wars* was the successor to the *Transformers* series of the 1980s and featured many returning characters. *Beast Wars*, like its successor, was based on a toy line. *Beast Wars* was also awarded an Emmy for Outstanding Achievement in Animation ("PBS early Daytime Emmy leader," 1998) solidifying the computer animated genre as a viable option for animating. As technology in computer generated animation has developed, it has become more cost effect and efficient to produce content. As with *Reboot*, animated cartoons require initial investments to create assets, which, after creation, can be used over and over again.
Chapter 2: Making an Animated Program

Animation, as a medium, has always been a popular genre for children. As illustrated by the history of animated content on television, it is the classic animated work starting from the very beginning of the animation history that endures today. Animation provides one of the few true evergreen genres of television (Davis, 1995, p. 45). The animation process is now in a constant state of evolution ever since the advent of computer generated animation. In order to understand how to develop an animated show, it is crucially important to have an understanding of the process and personnel that go into each production. The purpose of this section is to illustrate how the animation business model is carried out as well as discuss some modern business practices, such as transmedia, licensing, merchandising and branding.

Doodles to Storyboards

Every animated project begins with core concept art. This art ranges from characters to backgrounds to props. The concept artists who create this artwork, are employed to create the initial drawings that shape the entire production. These concept drawings are reviewed by the director of the project who is in charge of overseeing everything, approving the artwork, and keeping a cohesive vision and art direction throughout the project (Winder & Dowlatabadi, 2001). Once the artwork reaches finalization stage, the storyboarding team begins to storyboard the script.

Storyboarding is the process in which artists draw every shot in the entire script that will be appearing in the final product. This process goes through many revisions as directors and artists work to finalize shots. These storyboards are then often taken and
turned into what is called a story reel, a movie version of storyboards playing back to back like a flip chart to give the director and storyboard artists an idea of how the shots flow. The story reel is usually set to rough audio of the dialogue to help figure out timing issues or any other problems with the shots. If shots require complex movement, an animatic may be created. This is a more advanced story reel, which includes some motion and camera movements within the storyboard panels. Animatics are helpful for planning big shots and help the director make shot decisions before money is spent animating (Winder & Dowlatabadi, 2001, p. 198). This practice is used in both traditional hand drawn animation and computer animation.

**Audio and Animation**

Before the animators can begin illustrating, an audio track should be recorded in order to animate mouth movements. The animators need the final audio to synch mouth movement as well as animate to the emotion of the actors voices. Because of this it is also common for the director to film actors reading lines as a reference for animators to match up facial movements and expressions based off the actors (Lehreh, 2010). It is also the responsibility of the audio team to create Foley for the entire film. Foley refers to making every noise and sound effect that is heard in the movie. This is especially important in animation; there is no reference audio since all characters and environments are created from nothing.

**Cel Animation and Stop Motion**

Cel animation is the “traditional” form of animation in which every frame is drawn by hand. In a film or movie there are 24 individual pictures or “frames” appear
on the screen per second and in television there are 30. Creating variations of what is in each frame mimics movement. In order to create character movement in traditional Cel animation, an artist must draw every individual frame of the entire film, changing the position of each character slightly between frames. This process is labor intensive requiring large amounts of time and staff power to complete, which is why in the early days of animation, networks would often just recycle animation already made from movie features. UPA and Hanna-Barbera’s “limited animation” technique cut costs by reusing backgrounds and limiting character movements. For example, in the cartoon *Yogi Bear*, Yogi’s iconic collar and necktie are added not for characterization reasons, but rather for budgetary reasons. Instead of having to re-draw Yogi’s entire body from shot to shot, they would simply use duplicates of the body and only have to re-draw his head each frame (Davis, 1995, p. 22).

Stop motion animation is similar to cel animation in that the production is created frame by frame. However, the practice of stop motion requires sculptors to build every asset for the shot out of clay and pose each character, take a picture, and move it slightly for the next frame. The timeline for creating stop motion is likewise a time consuming process because not only does every individual frame need to captured, but everything in the shot needs to be painstakingly sculpted before a shot can be made. Because artists need to be able to move each figure, everything in stop motion is created in miniature.
**Computer Animation**

Computer animation allowed the animation artist to create the same kind of motion and movement without having to draw every individual frame. Computer systems were developed to move digitally created characters into different positions, with the computer calculating movement for all the frames in between. 3D computer animation programs also allowed the creation of digital lights and texturing, which has provided more photorealistic animation. However, the 3D animation process still remains costly and time consuming as it requires not only the artists to hand draw all characters, but also computer animators, modelers, texture artists and lighting specialists. Despite the large amount of labor and time that goes into the creation of a computer animated show, there are distinct advantages. For example, after the characters and backgrounds are made, they can be re-used indefinitely. Computer animation also allows for the re-use of movements, such as walk cycles, which allows for animators to save time after their initial creation. Finally, computer animation also allows greater control of camera angles within a project, allowing the director to change angles without having to re-draw the entire scene.

Before animation can take place, the characters, props, and setting must all be digitally modeled. These models are based on the hand-drawn artwork of the directors and concept artists. Then the characters and objects must be rigged in order to be manipulated. Rigging is the process in which a model is given controls. These controls constrain the properties of manipulation in order to keep characters operating within the limits of believability while eliminating some of the more technical aspects of the
computer program. It also provides animators with controls that can more easily simulate realistic movement. Depending on the studio, sometimes the riggers and the animators are the same for budgetary or workflow reasons.

After a character is rigged it continues to the animators who work on perfecting the movement. As each scene is completed, the coloring and texture department begins adding colors to the characters. This process is not simply adding colors to a model but also adding textures and how each surface interacts with light. This is done with every individual surface that exists for the entire production. The scenes are then given to the lighting experts who add all sources of light in each individual shot and camera angle. In the early days of computer animation, a lighting technician would create lights, and then would need to wait several minutes in order for the computer to process how the light looked. Today this can be done almost instantaneously with computer technology (A Pixar Story, 2007). Then after the lighting for a scene is done, the effects artists add in any particles or special effects for the shot.

The final step in the computer animation process is rendering. Rendering is the process in which the computer takes all of the data from the individual frames and compiles them into the final video file for the shots. The industry standard for rendering a full quality shot on a dedicated computer is generally seven hours of computing time per frame of animation but can sometimes take up to 39 hours depending on how complex the shot is (Lehreh, 2010). At 24 frames per second, that’s a minimum of 168 hours per second or 10,080 hours per minute. For this reason, most
3D production companies use what the industry refers to as “render farms,” which consist of rooms full of connected computers that render 24 hours a day (Lehreh, 2010). Rendering takes such a large amount of time and computing power because it is taking every single element from the animation process, and combining them to make the full quality versions for distribution.

**Key Personnel in the Animation Process.**

A key aspect of understanding how to manage and run an animated production is being able to indentify the jobs and responsibilities of key roles within the project.

**Producers.**

The first role discussed will be the producers. There are generally four levels to this key role: executive producer, producer, co-producer, and associate producer. The first is the executive producer, who oversees the entire project from start to finish. Responsibilities generally include overseeing the hiring of all key creative staff, and they typically have input on every stage of the process. The next level down in the hierarchy is the producer, who is responsible for the budgeting, scheduling and all contracting. The producer has as much creative input as the director and is in charge of making sure the project is completed. Sometimes the producer will work as a “creative producer” in which the producer also takes on some of the director’s responsibilities as well. There is sometimes a line-producer or co-producer whose responsibilities are to work primarily on scheduling and budgeting and have little to no creative input. Finally there is an associate producer who focuses generally on managing workflow (Winder & Dowlatabadi, 2001).
Directors.

The director of a project is in charge of overseeing the creative decisions during the production process. This includes developing the story with the writers, overseeing the style of the animation, casting and working with actors. Along with managing the creative affairs of a production, it is also important for the director to work with the producer, to keep the production on budget as well as meet deadlines set by the producer. It is possible for there to be multiple directors on any given project and the role division of labor is generally negotiated.

Production Managers.

Another key person is the production manager, who works closely with the producer. It is the job of the production manager to not only work on the master schedule with the producer but to work within the various departments making sure that they are on schedule and meeting their deadlines. It is also the job of the production manager to assess if departments and individuals within the departments are meeting their work quotas. Larger products may also require department supervisors to manage within their departments and work closely with the production manager. There is also a production coordinator whose job is to collect work and make sure it’s shown to the right people in order to continue production.

Subcontracting.

Subcontracting is a common practice for animation studios. Subcontracting animation is hiring another studio to work on animation in collaboration with the production company. This is financially beneficial because it allows studios to hire
cheaper labor when their project is behind schedule or over-budget (Winder & Dowlatabadi, 2001). Often it is far more cost effective for a studio to subcontract overseas where labor is significantly less expensive. The disadvantage is that the director and other creative heads have less control when their work force is on another continent. One of the growing countries in the animation labor department is India, in which the animation industry is worth over 50 billion US dollars (NAASCOM, 2006). This is due to the large development of animation studios and education abroad. There has also been an influx in educational opportunities as well as a growing entertainment sector, which has allowed international markets to update production practices and facilities with the same technologies as the United States of America (NAASCOM, 2006). An example of the significant division in labor prices in India can be illustrated by the example that an episode of animated television produced in America that costs $250,000 to $400,000 would only cost around $60,000 to animate in India (NAASCOM, 2006).
Chapter 3: Developing Content in a Digital World

As demonstrated by the rise of computer animation, technology is driving the industry forward. This is not merely in terms of production, but the development process as well. The development of any show begins with just an idea. Whether it’s for a short cartoon or an hour-long drama any television show has always started with just the idea. Initially a show was self-contained, existing in its medium. Today, however, this is no longer the case. Because of the advent of the Internet and the rise of interactive media and digital distribution methods, it is no longer possible for a television show, especially a children’s show, to be successful unless it embraces multiple platforms. This trend is referred to in the industry as “transmedia.”

What is Transmedia?

Transmedia is best defined as “a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience” (Jenkins, 2007). To simplify, transmedia is the process of propagating an intellectual property on multiple platforms. There are multiple outlets in which this takes place. For example, *SpongeBob SquarePants* can be watched on television, DVD, streamed instantly through video on demand, viewed as a feature length movie, played as multiple video games spanning numerous systems, experienced as an interactive website with games, accessed via eight different iphone apps, and otherwise enjoyed through a myriad of toys, books and a theme park ride. *SpongeBob* serves as a prime example of how a children’s franchise can so thoroughly and successfully exist in multiple platforms.
This transmedia practice has grown in the Internet era, but goes back to 1950s. Early examples of transmedia have been simple relationships between books, movies, and television. Arguably the first modern large transmedia movement was the creation of Disneyland and the birth of the theme park. Disneyland served as a bridge between the Disney movies across the medium of film into the real world, creating a massive multiplatform environment. Today The Walt Disney Company has one of the largest transmedia bases with the Disney Princess franchise.

As the Internet becomes global, the world of transmedia has vastly expanded. It is now no longer possible for content to exist in a vacuum, away from the online community. The rise of bloggers and social media has made it more difficult to control the narrative of a show. This is because users are able to create and access online communities where word-of-mouth reaches a broader audience. It is expected for any developing show to have an online presence even in the pitch process to be considered (Selig, Show 2011). A show’s online presence will often be used by companies to monitor its audience reception before it premiers, so no online presence is considered risky. It is also expected for any developing show to include a social media component. This is especially true in children’s entertainment as both media professionals and children use outlets such as Facebook as a means to following and learning about content (Kleeman, 2011). It is a growing practice for shows to begin by posting content online and, if successful, improving their chances of being signed by a studio.
Interactive Children’s Media and the iPod

An important aspect of transmedia for children is an interactive component. A recent study from The Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop shows that by age 8 the average child in America consumes 11.5 hours of media a day (Gutnick, Robb, Takeuchi, Kotler, 2010). This takes into account time spent on multiple devices (surfing the Internet while the TV is on counts twice) and illustrates the staggering demand for multiplatform entertainment. One of the largest growing outlets for developers to tap is the mobile market. A specific case of is the iPod/iPhone/iPad revolution.

A recent study shows that 59% of the apps sold in Apple’s App Store are targeted towards children (Shuler, 2011). Of this 59%, it is interesting to note that 35% was aimed at toddler and preschool children. This coupled with Walmart releasing that their top-selling toy is an iPod touch sheds light on the growing interactive phenomenon. Not only are younger people turning toward mobile devices for interactive media, but the average age at which children begin to explore this media is as young as preschool. The Apple devices in particular have grown in popularity because of their increase of content with around 21,000 games available. What makes this media so appealing is that these devices have touch interactive interfaces that are easy to navigate. Because of the huge success of the Apple devices it has become standard for children’s television shows to include app support of some kind. As of 2009 Disney, Nickelodeon, and Cartoon Network had all entered into the
app store. One of the primary challenges currently posed to the app world is that a profit has yet to be made from all of these apps.

**The Disney Princesses, Transmedia within Transmedia**

Arguably the largest success in children’s transmedia occurs in the Disney Princess franchise. Since *Snow White* debuted in 1937 the Walt Disney Company began a series of movies that featured princesses who were also prominent figures in their parks and franchises. By the end of the 90s Disney princesses had sold 400 million dollars in global merchandise combined (Aheam, 2011). In 2000, Disney launched a new campaign in which each princess no longer only existed within her own universe, but existed with all the other Disney princesses as well. This first took form in an ice show at which eight of the Disney princesses were banded together to create one narrative. This is an example of transmedia within transmedia wherein characters exist from different universes and combine together in a new medium. The show’s concept proved successful and today, having the Disney Princesses together has sold 4 billion dollars in global merchandise (Aheam, 2011).

Not only are the Disney Princesses far more successful together financially, but they serve as a prime example of market saturation. It allows the use of new characters to reinvigorate older characters by including them in the new franchise, making even their oldest properties able to still turn a profit. This also encourages audiences to go and revisit older platforms as well as including content from previous films. For example, a Disney Princess album (of which there are many) contains songs from each of the princess movies and introduce newer songs. Online, each princess
has a theme and a world that can be fully explored with an interactive story and games just by selecting a princess from the main princess page disney.go.com/princess/home/. The Disney princess franchise is the perfect example of how a company can ideally introduce characters across platforms.

**Club Penguin**

One of the biggest original online social media outlets for children was the Club Penguin phenomenon. Club Penguin is an interactive online social media structure wherein children create penguin avatars and interact with each other in an online world. The interactions in this world are limited by pre-approved statements children pick out from a conversation wheel, which is used to combat any abuse or privacy violation. Along with being a safe place for children to interact, there is a wide variety of customization. There is a variety of different clothing options children can use to adorn their penguin persona as well as decorating options for their igloo. The catch is that in order to purchase these items in the virtual world they must pay with real money. Club penguin offers children the ability to play for free if they’d like to but also offers them the opportunity to pay for more content. Statistically about 90% of Club Penguin’s 12 million subscribers choose to have free accounts (Reid, 2007). The Club Penguin franchise also sells toys, trading cards, and items for their online world at toy stores.

**In-App Purchasing and The SmurfBerry Controversy**

One of the models is used by app developers to turn a profit is in-app purchasing. This means they charge fees for additional content within their
application. This model can be used to garner profits for “premium” content on mobile devices in a fashion similar to other online games. In the iTunes app store the highest grossing game, “Angry Birds,” was recently toppled by the children’s app “Smurf Village.” However “Smurf Village” is a free game and so all of the profits come from purchasing “SmurfBerries” in the game. The game can progress and fully be accessed without paying for any content. The caveat is that the Smurf’s villages will grow slowly unless a player wants to purchase SmurfBerries to allow them to progress faster in their game.

Controversy arose in 2011 when a child racked up a $1400 bill from buying SmurfBerries in the game “Smurf Village” because the child was able to spend money linked to the parents’ credit card with a single tap of a button (Svensson, 2010). In “Smurf Village” there is an option to spend $99.99 for a giant wheelbarrow full of SmurfBerries. Due to the fact Apple users’ payment information remains for 15 minutes after any purchase, it allows children to make purchases without their parents knowing. This had led to many parents complaining that their young children are spending real money without knowing any better and that $99.99 was far too much to charge for items in a game intended for children (Groen, 2011). “Smurf Village” is not the only profitable in-app paying game:

Of the 10 highest-grossing apps in the App Store, six are games that are free to download but allow in-app purchases. Four of those are easy, child-friendly games. Two of them, "Tap Zoo" and "Bakery Story," have buttons for in-app purchases of $100 in just two taps (Svensson, 2010).
Capcom, the studio behind “Smurf’s Village,” claims that the $99.99 purchase option is intended for adult “power players” (Svensson, 2010) The controversy still remains as companies work toward monetizing the app world.

**How Transmedia Affects The Development Process**

Because of the influx in transmedia into every facet of projects, the development process has shifted. The movement of existing shows online has also caused younger people to look for content online. Because of this it is now possible for shows to get their start or gain a following online. This may or may not lead to them being developed further into television series or movies (Davis, Murphy, Snyder, Forte, Schwartz, 2011). One of the difficulties posed with pushing content that is exclusively online is the cost it requires it advertise (Schwarczek, 2011). Generally speaking, online shows need to spend just as much money promoting their show online as they need to spend producing it. Even if the show invests large amounts in marketing, there still is no guarantee that they will reach the target audience. So although it is possible that content is able to succeed online, it is still often difficult to enjoy mainstream success.

It is not just online, however. Other outlets such as games, and toys are also developed into cross media entertainment enterprises. One of the most successful modern examples of a video game branching out is the *Pokemon* franchise. The global craze started with the Nintendo Game Boy games. The success of the games led to a comic book series, then a television series and 42 games total. The television series went on to air in 74 countries and is currently at around 700 episodes (Gantayat).
Marketing

While transmedia is central to current program development, many programs still begin with the traditional idea of a television concept. After a show has entered into the production phase, the marketing and licensing division begins the process of selling the show to the audiences. When thinking in terms of marketing many different aspects must be taken into consideration. Of these the most pertinent is the target audience of the show, including both age and gender. Recently children’s content has become increasingly stratified between the genders and preferences in television format such as live action vs. animated. This will be discussed more in depth when discussing the audience in the next chapter.

The marketing phase of production has evolved in recent years and has begun to be introduced earlier in the process. It is not uncommon for the producers to incorporate a merchandising plan during the pitches of the show. The Traditional way consumer products were that the deals were signed once the ratings and the buzz for a show were confirmed. This would lead to products for a show launching a year or more after the show has aired. This practice is the “safe” practice as it allows buyers to work with products with a confirmed popularity (Aheam, 2011). The contemporary way in which consumer products are launched are to get licensing partners and retailers involved very early on in the process. This allows the partners to work in development with the production companies to discuss marketing plans including how to incorporate social media with the show. This strategy is used to build on early success of products when the show first airs to immediately start making money.
Though it can be beneficial and time effective to involve the marketing team earlier in the process, it also runs the risk of spending money on a product that might not be a success. An important factor that must be taken into consideration after the show begins to air is licensing and branding and how to turn a profit on merchandising.

**Branding**

A specific type of licensing that is prevalent in children’s media is brand or character licensing. Character licensing refers to “television related properties, in addition to merchandising programs based on films, classic characters (Mickey Mouse, Looney Tunes, Peanuts, etc.), and comic book characters” (Bryant, 2007, p. 166). Brand licensing on the other hand refers to brand names, logos, and trademarks such as Nickelodeon or Disney. From the licensing revenue 46% comes from character licensing and 6 billion dollars comes from royalties. Brand characters profitability can be determined by an equity index. The equity index is a number assigned to a character based on the child’s awareness of the character, the character’s appeal to a child, and whether or not the child would like to see more of the character (Farrell, 2011). Currently the character brands with the highest equity in children among 6- to 8-year-olds are Alvin and the Chipmunks, Carly Shaw (of iCarly) and Scooby Doo. The characters with the highest equity among the tween audience is Carly Shaw, Captain Jack Sparrow (from Pirates of The Caribbean), and Alvin and the Chipmunks.
Although a television show might be popular, each series does not always lend itself to branding. For examples, the popular Nickelodeon show *The Fairly Odd Parents* attracted much commercial success but never was a strong licensing property (Wiebe, 2011). When considering whether or not a show will be successful in the retail market, licensers consider a variety of factors. First, the more “real” a show is, the more challenging it is to merchandise. This is despite the fact that children will watch reality, but are more likely to buy for fantasy (Aheam, 2011). Another key component is whether or not the show is focusing on one or two characters, or has an ensemble cast. It is easier to sell an ensemble cast for licensing because it provides a wider variety of options to sell. However, often a retailer will choose to pick only a few of the characters to feature in their stores due to the physical limits of shelf space (Wiebe, 2011). Much like the shows themselves, girls may sometimes buy boy products but the converse is rarely true (Aheam, 2011).

**Licensing**

In the United States of America licensing is a billion dollar industry (Aheam, 2011). Licensing is “a contractual arrangement that allows copyright holders to loan out their intellectual property for another company to use” (Bryant, 2007, p. 166). In exchange for this agreement the company receives a royalty fee, which is generally 15-20% of the wholesale cost of the item (Pecora, 1995, p 55). The top five leading licensing companies in the world –Disney consumer Products Worldwide, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, Nickelodeon & Viacom Consumer Products, Marvel Enterprises, and Sanrio - all have products in the children’s entertainment industry
(Bryant, 2007, p. 166). In children’s television the three main categories are soft goods, media products, and toys. Soft goods refer to products such as t-shirts, footwear, swimwear, and watches. Media products refer to items such as DVDs, digital distribution, interactive and mobile games as well as publishing (Aheam, 2011). Not only is licensing a strong source of revenue but it also allows for shows to increase the presence of their intellectual property, while making money doing so.

There are generally five main factors considered when licensers look into a property to decide whether or not it is marketable. The first factor is the characters in the show. Are they characters that children aspire to be like or characters who the children would like to have as a friend (Aheam, 2011). The second factor is how the stories play out looking into messages and whether or not they are empowering children (Chumskey & Matthias, 2011). A factor that is important for marketing is what kind of gear the characters in the show have, which can translate into toys. Fourth, an important consideration is the costumes or clothing that the characters wear. This can especially be true of superhero franchises. Finally, the last but one of the most important factors is whether or not the show has a “buzz factor.” This is an amalgam of critical, audience and online reception and is used to help determine the potential audience of the products (Aheam, 2011).

Generally speaking when it comes to profits from licensing, 80% of revenue is generated by 20% of the products (Aheam, 2011). This is in reference to the fact that a program may be associated with a wide variety of products from DVDs to clothing to cereal, but generally a specific item tends to be more profitable than others. For
example, *SpongeBob* has a wide variety of t-shirts, but it is the shirt that is yellow and has just his face on it that generates more sales than all of the other shirts combined (Aheam, 2011).

**The Rise of Co-Productions**

In television and film there has recently been a growing trend of relying on co-productions to produce content. A co-production is any project in which two or more studios split the cost of production. This has become increasingly common because it allows studios to minimize their risks by spreading the costs, although the downside is that if a show hits big, it also minimizes profits. As transmedia took over and children began to become more globalized, the co-production deals also began to expand to a larger global scale. Co-productions can also lead to content being picked up in new countries along with partial payment taken care of. There are essentially three levels of co-productions. The first level is that content is made locally and is designed to open on the market side-stepping national quotas. The second level is more in depth as it involves international development of content that is beneficial to both countries. The third level is to create content specifically for an international market (Pecora, 1995, p 142).

Many of the larger companies are now entering into deals for co-productions with smaller companies. An example of such a deal is Nickelodeon’s acquisition of the British television series, *Peppa Pig*. *Peppa Pig* is an animated five-minute show that is aimed at younger audiences. The show initially had problems receiving funding complicated by the fact that, in the United Kingdom there is little to no government
means of funding projects. *Peppa Pig*'s production company, Astley Baker Davies Limited, turned to Nickelodeon who agreed to pay 30% of the cost of the show in return for 10% of the profits (*Lofts, 2011*). Along with splitting costs of production Nickelodeon agreed to pay for the costs of airing the show in the afternoon if the studio paid for the costs to air it in the morning. This deal helped launch *Peppa Pig*, which is now shown in 180 countries (*2010, April 27, BBC*).

**Government Funding and Co-Productions**

Each country has a different system of funding television. In the United States funding for the Public Broadcast System comes from government subsidies as well as corporate and private citizens, private foundations and the Corporation For Public Broadcasting (*PBS, 2011*). In the children’s media world, funding from PBS involves very close adherence to their educational and content guidelines. Any educational content must have a curriculum and proven research on its positive effects on children. For strictly entertainment purposes, a children’s show is still under very close scrutiny, must be appropriate for children of all ages and contain a positive message (*PBS, 2011*).

In other countries funding varies. Other factors besides education can take precedence for government funding, especially in Canada. In Canada much funding is available for development and production of shows based on how “Canadian” they are. This means Canada has strong regulations to encourage a strong entertainment industry in Canada and keep the labor from being exported to other countries. In Canada, television stations are required to air 60% Canadian content, and 60% of
FINDING CAMELITTE

primetime must feature Canadian content (Bianchi et. al., 2011). In order to determine what is Canadian, there is a 10-point system upon which each proposed project is graded. The high the number the project receives, the more funding they are eligible for. A co-production from another country can receive 10 out of 10 if it uses Canadian labor, offering incentives for multinational collaboration with Canada (Bianchi et. al., 2011).

In Britain there is a similar culture battle to produce content by British laborers for British children. Currently there is an organization called, Save Kids TV, which was founded to keep children’s television airing in Britain, made in Britain. This has developed because restrictions are growing on what advertisers are allowed to include in commercials for children’s programming on the main network channels. This coupled with a wider access of global media, the amount of children’s content produced in Britain has been gradually sinking the past several years. This widening of the market has also fragmented the advertisers’ diminishing profits to any specific networks, decreasing overall revenue in children’s entertainment. This trend has caused the formation of the group Save Kids TV, which exists for the purpose of promoting children’s shows made specifically in the UK (Wilton). The UK also has a system set up for bilateral co-productions with Australia, Canada, France, India, Jamaica, New Zealand, and South Africa. A bilateral co-production is an agreement between two countries that each country equally owns the content being produced. Setting up a bilateral co-production treaty then proves to be beneficial as it allows for each country to equally own a product. This increases the revenue for both countries
because co-productions and products generally travel better within these countries, but also abroad (Solot, 2010).

The Bible

One of the keys in both the development and production of every series is the show’s bible. The show’s bible is the book that holds the collective knowledge regarding production and the inner workings of the program. Each show bible begins at the inception of the production and carries on through the entire process. As each show bible is unique to the show, they often are written and designed to fit in with the core concepts and designs of the shows. For example, the sci-fi television program Battlestar Galactica had an in depth 50-page bible outlining every facet of their fictional universe and how it worked together, containing series and season story arcs (Moore, 2003). Meanwhile the television show Freaks and Geeks is written in an informal style focusing primarily on characters and how each relates to each other (Fieg, 1999). Both styles of writing worked well for their shows because each give potential buyers an idea on how the show will function, from the detail oriented massive world of Battlestar Galactica or the heartfelt character-driven Freaks and Geeks. There often exists two iterations of each bible; the first is the sales bible and the production bible.

The Sales Bible

The sales bible for each show is begun during the development phase of any pitch or idea. The targeted groups for whom this bible is written are any potential investors such as broadcasters, merchandise licensees, and executives who can buy the
rights of a potential series (Bryant, 2007, p. 82). The contents of each bible are unique to the show that is pitching and may contain as much or as little information as the writer sees fit. Often in the pitch process, a show’s bible can replace a pilot episode, which is a single episode put into production to show the potential of a series. The costs of producing one minute of television range from roughly ten to fifteen thousand dollars (Schwarczek, 2011). Because of this, a single episode pilot for a half hour or an hour television show can be very costly. Even a trailer for a show usually ranges roughly from a minute to a minute and a half. It is a financial gamble to invest a lot of money in a concept before a studio has agreed to produce it, especially in animation, because if the studio likes an idea but wants to change something such as a character or location, then the creator has already spent money to create a product that they have to redo. Another reason is that having completed content and bringing it to the pitch is not always a viable move. Most studios prefer developing a concept with the writers and are less open to accepting a concept they feel they will not be able to provide input. Because of these reasons it is far more cost effect to simply use the show’s bible as a tool to illustrate the show and its potential, rather than creating content. If the studio likes the bible, they may ask to see a script and if they like to see a script they may then ask to see a trailer.

The bible used for a pitch will often be a shorter iteration of the sales bible sometimes referred to as a “mini bible.” While most show bibles are up to 40 pages long, the mini-bible is generally around 8 to 10 pages and is arranged in an entertaining and visually stimulating way. This is conducive to the relatively short
nature of pitches as well the very limited time of most executives. As Josh Selig, creator of Little Airplane Productions, said, “people in television don’t want to read, that’s why they are in television” (Selig, 2011). For this very reason the mini-bible is used generally to convey only the most basic information of the show as well as roughly outline the pilot. If the executive is interested, or the meeting stretches longer, the longer sales version of the bible may be presented. The shorter version is generally ideal for pitching while the longer version is more for developing the show.

As a rule of thumb the creators of the bible are generally the show’s creator or head writer. After a show has been picked up and enters development, the show’s creator sits down and develops the storytelling standards around which the series is focused. It outlines a storytelling blueprint for all future writers of the project as well as a tool for anyone who is brought in to work on the show. Often the bible is used by casting directors as a tool to make casting decisions or as a reference for actors brought onto a show. Writing the show’s bible is also beneficial for the writer as it immediately gets them enough credits to join the Writers Guild of America, which is a national organization formed to protect the writer’s rights (WGA, 2006).

**The Production Bible**

After a show is finally given the green light and put into production, the show’s bible becomes the production bible. The production bible contains all of the basic information that the writers/sales bible contained, but it is constantly being updated and changed. As the show continues and characters change or grow, these are added to and kept up in this ever-evolving bible. Often this is updated to chronicle a
show’s continuity and serve as a training tool for any new writers added to the show. These bibles can also include information about how each episode is made and structured. For example, a bible for a daily show would most likely include segment names and average length so that different crews can be rotated in on a daily basis.

**The Children’s Show Bibles**

Just like their counterparts from other genres, each children’s television bible contains unique information based on their types of shows. Children’s television is often far more likely to contain visual stimuli than their adult counterparts, such as animation. Because of this, one of the primary differences for a children’s show bible is that it is far more likely to contain concept art and designs. This is especially true for animated television shows, which exist entirely in the realm of the show’s creators. Every animated show starts with a bible before any animation can begin, as it has multiple animators who need to match their work to a single source. Much like show bibles for adult programming, they contain story elements such as characters, setting, and plot points but also have artwork to accompany these. This helps illustrate characterizations as well as art styles for the project.

In children’s educational television, the writer must also take into account a curriculum. A curriculum for children’s television is developed by specialists from various fields (i.e., science, math) who also have experience in education or child development. “During the early stages of development, content specialists define the educational goals or curriculum that guide the selection of topics to be addressed in the series, as well as the way which those topics will be handled.” (Bryant, 2007, p.
97) The bible’s writers work closely with the specialists at every stage of the writing process in order to ensure that their show remains true to both its story and its educational value. Most executives will not consider an idea for an educational show unless the proper research is done into the educational merit of the shows content (Bryant, 2007, p. 97). Like each show, the presence of these specialists may be as large or as little as the show sees fit. *Sesame Street* for example was developed under very heavy supervision and research and is constantly being revised and revisited. Or a show’s creator may feel able to include “pro-social” values without the input of a curriculum advisor. Shows, which do not attempt to promote or sell themselves as an educational television show, do not need to include any sort of curriculum.
Chapter 4: The Audience

Arguably the most important consideration for a show is the audience. From the very onset of development a show is carefully crafted to make sure it will have a core demographic that will appeal to advertisers. Children present a unique audience as they are still emotionally, cognitively and physically developing. Children also experience greater gender identification as they mature. Because of this it is important to take into consideration age and gender when a show is targeting an audience. This chapter will briefly review children, their development, viewing habits, and their online behavior.

Boys vs. Girls

One of the biggest identifiers for audience in children’s media is gender. Boys and girls develop differently and form different social relationships, so naturally they look for different characteristics in the media. As a rule of thumb, young boys will not watch a show they perceive as a “girl show” whereas girls may still watch a show they perceive as a “boy show,” especially if there is humor. Boys and girls generally also look for different characteristics in storytelling. Boys seek good vs. evil themes, role playing and humor (Aheam, 2011). These traits are often associated with action shows and super heroes. Girls on the other hand prefer aspirational, nurturing, cute, or humorous storylines. This trait set lends itself far more to shows in which friendship is emphasized, or there is an idol to emulate. Although there seems to be little difference between aspirational storytelling or role playing, it is most easily demonstrated with
the following example. Girls want to be *like* pop star Hannah Montana; boys want to *be* Spiderman.

**The Boys**

This gender divide also originates from developmental differences in boys and girls. At the ages of six and seven, boys and girls start to identify more strongly with their own gender, helping to explain why preschool programs are more gender neutral than programs aimed at age 6+ children. Developmentally, boys and girls tend to experience different social interactions as well. At around this age, boys begin to play in large groups and choose games that are more complex than those of younger boys, with more complicated rules. They begin participating in more fantasy-based play that revolves around high stakes and action. Because of these developmental traits boys are naturally drawn toward the action-adventure based shows.

When it comes to boys action shows, the most profitable tend to be those that feature a built in toy market. One of the most successful boys franchises of the past were *G.I. Joe* and *Transformers*, which were little more than thinly veiled half hour television ads, but programming for the boys action TV market has become more sophisticated in recent years. For example, one of the most popular boys shows right now is *Ben 10*, a program in which a young kid named Ben discovers a device on a camping trip that allows him to transform into 10 different aliens with their own unique set of powers. One of the principle tenants of marketing to boys is featuring recurring gear in the show (Aheam, 2011). Not only does *Ben 10* feature the Omnitrix, which allows Ben to transform, but it also has 10 unique recurring characters, allowing
for a wide variety of action figures. From a storytelling standpoint *Ben 10* resonates with its audience because it stars an “average kid” who wields the power to become a super hero. It offers an identifiable character and the fantasy play outlet that young boys seek while incorporating a line of toys to enhance this play. *Ben 10* also lends itself to the ultimate empowering form of role-playing, videogames, which allows boys to actually control Ben and all of his alien forms.

**The Girls**

At an age when boys are competing and playing superheroes, girls are at a different place developmentally. Socially at around six or seven girls are encouraged to play in pairs, perhaps with a “best friend” rather than in large groups. They choose to play games that focus more on collaboration than competition and their fantasy play revolves more around relationships and drama (Chumsky & Matthias, 2011). As previously stated, girls fantasy still can revolve around aspirational role play but may tend to focus on the emulation of characters and roles rather than specific characters.

Like television aimed at young boys, there have been girls shows that have existed for the sole purpose of selling merchandise. The *Care Bears* and *Rainbow Bright* of the past have given way to more sophisticated concepts. One of the best-marketed programs for girls is the *Hannah Montana* series. While designed for an older girl audience, younger girls tend to watch. This series focuses on the dual life of the main character Miley Stewart and her pop star alter ego Hannah Montana. Conflicts in the show generally have tended to focus on friendships and other relationships as Miley deals with her secret life as a pop star. This show hit perfectly
for young girls who are developmentally reaching the age where friendships and relationships become more important. That, coupled with the fact that Hannah Montana is a pop star, gives girls a role they can mimic when they are playing. Hannah’s status as a pop star provides the potential for huge profits from related songs and music, which have been wildly successful with their target audience. *Hannah Montana* has also been successful branding a wide variety of clothes and toys such as the Hannah Montana microphone.

**The Differences in Ages and the Lost Audience.**

When marketing to children, age is key. Younger children are attracted to more androgynous characters and are receptive to an overtly educational program. Most children at a younger age (2-5) like the idea of learning something their parents might not know (Simensky, 2011). However, once children reach about 8 years, they are less attracted to shows that are marketed as educational becomes (Bryant, 2007, p. 61). This is most likely due to the fact that they begin dealing with school and no longer want to watch anything perceived as an extension of school. The next audience age grouping is 6-11 year olds, which generally tend to be the most lucrative audiences (Bryant, 2007). The new market that has developed in recent years is the “tween” market which ranges anywhere from 9-12 (Pecora, 1998, p. 4). The tweens are the audience most likely to be the audience to watch the relationship-driven live action shows. By this age boys are more likely to start watching live action shows, illustrated by the statistic that 45% of the audience for *iCarly* is male (Holmes, 2011). Because of the differences in ages and preferences, it is very important for a show to know its
market. This is especially true because advertisers will not pay money to reach tween audiences on a children’s network and vice versa (Wiebe, 2011).

An interesting phenomenon has occurred in the consideration of age demographics. This involves the passing over of 6-8 year olds when making content. When marketing towards 6-11 or even the tween demographics, the emphasis is generally put on the older ages rather than the younger ages. This is because those in charge “assume that older children control the set, an assumption related to the axiom that younger children will watch ‘up’ (in age appeal) but older children will not watch ‘down’” (Bryant, 2007, p. 60). The problem with this practice is that it groups together children who are in first grade and sixth grade, despite the large developmental differences between them. For example the younger audiences are still learning to read and are developing muscles while at the older end of the spectrum, 11 year olds, are strong readers and are starting to develop socially and having crushes (Chumsky & Matthias, 2011). For this reason if, a production is marketing to younger audiences it is important to take into consideration this developmental gap. The younger children tend to gravitate toward content that allows them to explore safe risk-taking and empowerment. It is also important to remember that younger children do not aspire to be teenagers but rather aspire to be empowered children (Chumsky & Matthias, 2011).

The Live Action /Animation Rift

In recent years, a growing trend has been younger viewership of live action programming. At younger and younger ages, children are beginning to watch live action content for their entertainment (Weibe, 2011). Driven by gender, this trend is
more prevalent in girls than it is boys and has become more prominent as illustrated by the recent success of \textit{Hannah Montana} and \textit{iCarly}. These shows are so successful because they are the “sitcoms” of children’s television. The humor borrows many elements of their animated predecessors, such as extensive physical comedy, while also employing the relationship story lines that girls developmentally connect with at a younger age than boys (Wiebe, 2011). This is why in order for an animated show to successfully appeal to a female audience, it needs to include an element of humor, as this appeals to children of both genders.

Another influential factor contributing to children watching more live-action programming at a younger age is co-viewing with a parent or adult. In Canada currently, the number one show with children ages 2 to 5 is the drama \textit{Greys Anatomy} (Isenhower, et. al. 2011). Children don’t watch this show because they are interested necessarily in the storyline, rather it’s what their parents are watching and they want to spend time with their parents. Once again, humor is generally what will draw a parent to watching a children’s show with them (Isenhower, et. al., 2011).

\textbf{Children Online}

Children as an audience are spending increasing amount of time online. This has become a larger consideration for targeting them as an audience. Statistically speaking:

Among very young children (0 to 5) who use the Internet, about 80\% do so at least once a week. At age 3, about one-quarter of children go online daily, increasing to about half by age 5. And by age 8, more than two-thirds use the Internet on any given weekday. Children ages 5 to 9 average about 28 minutes online daily. In 2009, the oldest children in our review (8 to 10) spent about 46 minutes on a computer every day.” (Gutnick, Robb, Rakeuchi, Kotler, 2011)
With such young children online, one of the biggest concerns is monitoring what they are able to access and how often they use the media. One of the ways parents can control what their children are viewing online is through kid specific browsers and pages. For example, the web browser KidZui provides children with access to only content approved by their editorial staff (McAllistor, 2010). Parents can also purchase monitoring software such as Net Nanny, which along with filtering content, can also be set up to limit time online. Finally there are also kid friendly versions of search engines such as Google for Kids and Yahoo! Kids, both of which filter any undesirable content.

While parents work to monitor the content their children are viewing, the companies themselves are equally involved in making sure their content is safe for children. The websites for Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network and Disney all contain parent guides to safety as well as advice to children on how to avoid Internet danger. It is important for these companies to create brands that children enjoy, but also that parents feel are suitable and safe for their children (Wiebe, 2011). Long established companies such as Disney will not risk their names for any new property and will not consider content that would do so (Coleman, 2011).

**Online Activity**

As previously stated, a majority of children are now online. Of these children accessing the Internet, 83% are browsing at home (Kelly, 2009). The primary reason most children go online is not social networking, but to play games. In fact 82% of the children who go online state they do so to play games (Kelly, 2009). This statistic
splits right through the gender divide with boys constituting 50.1% of children gamers and girls, 49.9%.

So with the large online community of children gamers, where do they go and how do they get there. Of the websites that children browse, 3 of the top 5 were sites for television shows (Disney, Nickelodeon, and Cartoon Network). This comes as no surprise, however, as many children begin browsing because of advertising they are exposed to during their shows. In the 6-7 year old age group, 50% were motivated to go online because of an advertisement, while the number rises to 62% of children ages 10-11 (Kelly, 2009).
Chapter 5: Camelittle

Camelittle is a project I have been developing for over a year now. It is the culmination of hundreds of hours of labor completed by myself and the crew. The reason I have included Camelittle in this thesis is that it serves as a model of how everything that has been discussed so far comes into play into a specific project on a smaller scale. Before I begin synthesizing my research into my work I will discuss my role in the production of Camelittle briefly, in order to describe the perspective from which I am writing.

Camelittle arose from my fascination with animated cartoons and frustration at the lack of an outlet to work on them. My experience to this point had been primarily as a producer and writer, never having ventured into animation. I wanted to be able to create an outlet in which people with perhaps less animation experience, such as myself, could gain practical knowledge. My co-creator for the concept was the producer of the children’s educational show, Confused, for the student-run group AVW Productions. Neither of us had any idea how to develop and produce an animated show, but we each had general television production experience and a background in children’s entertainment. We recruited an artistically talented student and the three of us set about writing the script and developing the characters. I took on the role of the show’s producer and the other two principals became the directors. As producer I worked primarily on building up a crew as well as overseeing the entire production.
In addition to serving as the show’s producer, I was also the head of animation. Since we were opening up our show for anyone who wanted to work on it, we realized that we would have to have to teach. Before working on the show I had never animated a single thing in my life, so the program became a practical laboratory in which to learn. I took every animation class the University offered and required the directors to enroll in an introductory class so we would be able to understand every component of the production process. With help from my professors I was able to master the software used for animating Camelittle and am proud to say that in the final episode I personally animated many of the shots. However, I have had the benefit of an extremely dedicated and hard working crew to make the show a reality. Not only has it been rewarding personally, but also academically, as it has allowed me to directly apply my research. Now, we will take a look at how the research from the previous chapters applies to Camelittle.

**Animating Camelittle and the Hybrid Model**

The production process of Camelittle is a hybrid of traditional animation and computer animation. Camelittle started as concept art and every character was planned out, drawn and re-drawn by the show’s illustrators until a consistent animation style was achieved. Our storyboard artists worked closely with the director and me, planning out the shots for the episode. After these shots were planned out, we took them to the illustrators who created drawings to accommodate every angle of the show. Camelittle exists as a hybrid of computer and 2D hand-drawn animation with every character, facial expression, and prop hand drawn by the illustrators and then
digitized for computer animation. In order to digitize the hand-drawn pictures, they were scanned into the computers and then digitally colored in Adobe Photoshop to create digital copies of the characters for coloring. The coloring process involved coloring every individual piece for all 15 characters, all of which had to be colored for four angles each, sometimes more.

Each of these colored pieces was then segmented by layers. In computer animation, segmenting describes the technique in which each character was broken up by body part in order to allow each one to be “move” independently of each other. These files were then taken into Adobe Aftereffects, where they would be assembled into moveable rigs of the characters in order to create motion. Each animator was in charge of deciding the complexity with which they wanted to rig their characters for their assignments. As the characters were being colored and rigged, the backgrounds for each scene is created digitally in Photoshop, with each one of the elements in the background separated by layers as well, allowing the animators to manipulate the environments.

Each scene was divided up into shots and most scenes ranged from 15 to 20 shots long. The shots were then assigned to animators who would be given a series of shots to complete for the scenes. These shots would be set up and animated to the corresponding storyboards for the scene. Due to the relatively small crew and time constraints there was not animatic created for the episode. However, consultation as well as critiques occurred regularly among the storyboard artists, director and myself. The production was broken down so the crew was always working on one scene at a
time. For example, the animators would be working on one scene, while the colorists and background artists would be working on what was needed for the next scene. At any given moment there were up to seven different people animating a scene, three or four coloring characters for the next scene, and one or two working on backgrounds.

After the animators completed the roughs of each scene they would be pieced together and then reviewed as a whole. Then the animators would be asked to change and tweak details in order for the episode to flow better or to clean up animation. As there were varying levels in crew experience sometimes it would be necessary for more senior animators to help a less experienced crew member. Despite the efficiency of using computer animation technology, it would take one hour of animating to create one second of rough footage, on average. Since the episode is about ten minutes long, this equates to roughly 600 hours of animating just to produce a rough cut.

**From A Marketing Standpoint**

*Camelittle* contains many positive attributes to make it marketable. It features an ensemble cast of characters, which creates a wider possibility for licensing. The genre is fantasy, and features many popular elements that are already familiar to children, such as princesses, knights and castles. These elements also lend themselves to the creation of toys and costumes to sell. The show is a comedy, which is more likely to appeal to boys and girls. We also have male and female leads to help bring in audiences from both genders. The show’s primary audience is 8- to 11-year-olds, however there is also a draw for younger audiences by incorporating physical humor and the trend that younger children are watching up.
Because *Camelittle* creates a fantasy world, it opens itself up for multiple platforms of digital integration. For example, the idea of *Camelittle* as a school would allow a website where children could create avatars, becoming students online and exploring the world interacting with characters and playing games. This could provide a stream of revenue by increasing the fan base as well as possibly introducing elements where children could purchase items for their avatars. There is also the ability to make console games because of adventure fantasy themes in the show.

**Camelittle and Non-educational children’s shows**

*Camelittle* is purely a children’s entertainment show. Whether or not children are conscious of it, while watching a show they are going to learn from it. This is why general children’s entertainment programming still strives to promote “pro-social” values such as the importance of friendship, and attempts to empower children (Chumsky and Mattias, 2011). As mentioned earlier, *Camelittle* is about entertainment, but it is built around values such as accepting others despite where they come from and the importance of following dreams. By having positive messages along with humor we hope not only to get a market for children, but also create trustworthy content that parents would allow their children to watch.

**The Premiere**

The *Camelittle* premiere was set up to be an event to entertain our audience, children. In addition to screening the episode of the show itself, the premiere was an event that had games and crafts for children. We decided to do this because we wanted to provide not only a show for children, but also an event for them to enjoy.
Everything earned at the premiere was donated to the Make A Wish Foundation, which is an organization that benefits children with cancer. This was something that all of us felt very passionately about, since our dream of creating Camelittle came true, why not help make someone else’s.

The Camelittle Sales Bible

Camelittle, like all animated shows, has a fairly in-depth show bible. However, like most bibles, it came about in a unique way. Camelittle was initially conceived from the pretext of wanting to create something from the medieval area. The rules for the world and the setting were well established before any characters were established. This fits though, as the protagonist of the show is the Camelittle School itself, rather than any one character. What is meant by this is that the show has a wide breadth of focus and the one constant is that it always takes place at Camelittle. This also allowed for more of an ensemble cast that can grow and change as time progresses. It was only after the setting was established that characters were created to populate the world.

The character designs shown in the bible were designed as each one became more and more fleshed out and the story became more developed. One of the difficulties with working on an animated show, especially in college, is the steep learning curve of computer animation and the lack of time in which to work.

Regarding a sales bible, the show has yet to develop one. When the show was pitched to the student group AVW Productions, it was primarily verbal with some concept art. This winter during my travels to New York for the Kidscreen Summit, I was able to expand the pitch further. I had a 10-minute pitching session with a VP of
development at Nickelodeon Studios for which I created a one-sheet, a single page poster-like description of a show that includes some sort of artwork. Often, pitches can be entirely verbal, though this is not ideal for animated shows. However, one of the most important tenets to the pitch is that if you aren’t presenting production quality work, then it’s wise to not show them art (Coleman, 2011).

The Show Must Go On

Camelittle’s production bible contains fairly detailed instructions on a step-by-step guide to completing the show. The reason is to create a show that can be carried on by students after the current management crew leaves. It is also important because, by the very virtue that animation takes so long and student tenure is short. This constant revolving door of crew makes it even more challenging to maintain show continuity. One of the primary focuses when developing the show’s bible was to make sure that it had very clear descriptions of the characters and settings so that we were able to teach new people quickly. It was also important to outline how the show runs, so that younger people can continue to work on it after the current generation graduates. The trick was balancing the volume of information with the need to provide it, so that it would not become overwhelming and no longer useful.
The Camelittle Show Bible

The working sales bible for Camelittle provides an example of the structure and contents for a typical children’s television show. It includes characters, settings and audience considerations. It is also serves to bring the conceptual picture of Camelittle as a show into a well-rounded representation of the show.

The Concept

We all start somewhere. Before he was the greatest knight of all time, Lancelot was just a squire. Before Arthur was king he was just an orphan boy. Even the old and wise Merlin had to learn magic from somewhere, and what better place to learn that at the castle of Camelittle?

Camelittle is a half-hour animated comedy show that takes place at a boarding school in the medieval era where children go to learn to become knights, wizards, princesses, peasants and all of the jobs of the feudal age. Camelittle is a school very much like any you would find today, with classes, homework, bullies, and extracurricular activities.

The show’s protagonist, Clifton, is a peasant boy who is being sent to Camelittle to become a manure farmer, but who secretly dreams of becoming a knight. He meets up with Thea, a young duchess who is being sent to school to become a Lady, but who also dreams of becoming a knight. Eventually these two decide to work together to follow their dreams while building a bond of friendship.

The show incorporates hyper reality/fantasy sequences, which occur usually once per episode. These sequences involve cuts between reality and what the
characters are imagining. For example the characters may envision themselves climbing a mountain, but in actuality they are simply climbing some crates. This device is used as both a tool for humor and to create dynamic fantasy sequences.

**Characters**

Camelittle is an ensemble show with primary focus on several characters. While the first several episodes center around Clifton and Thea, the scope of the show increases to other characters and storylines as time goes on. For this reason, the real protagonist of the show is Camelittle itself, as it remains the constant. Throughout the course of the series, it is possible to introduce any number of popular historical or literary figures (Lancelot, Joan of Arc, etc.) as well as a number of new students. The following characters consist of the core cast for the initial few seasons.

**Clifton**

A 12-year-old peasant boy who dreams of becoming a knight, Clifton serves as one of the show’s primary protagonists. Cheerful and easily distracted, Clifton is genuine and kind albeit not the sharpest pitchfork in the manure patch (ewww). He often spends his time daydreaming rather than paying attention to the task at hand. Despite having no predetermined skills that would qualify him to become a knight, he has determination in spades, as only a 12-year-old can, and this often pays off in unexpected successes. He considers the thought of having to be a farmer just like everyone else in his village incredibly boring and resents his natural talent toward manure farming (eeuw). He is kind to anyone who wants to be his friend, despite the fact that he is often oblivious to their needs.
Thea

Thea is a duchess in training who is determined to become a knight. Unlike Clifton, Thea possesses natural talent for being a knight, though she is incredibly temperamental about the fact that no one seems to notice. She is a little rough around the edges and is prone to saying a harsh word when anyone implies she is not capable. Despite her general no-nonsense behavior, she cares deeply about protecting the downtrodden and believes very much in equality. She initially views Clifton with annoyance and contempt but is eventually won over by his good nature and determination. Clifton often finds himself entranced by Thea, not that he would ever admit it (even to himself).

L.W.

His real name Cornelius Anlawdd Wledig Pendragon but everyone calls him L.W. (short for Little Wizard), which he is all too happy to accept (he likes being referred to as a wizard). Studying to become a wizard, L.W. is the quintessential nerd. Nothing makes him more excited than the thought of learning more about wizardry and, much like his long name, L.W. has a penchant to ramble on and on about it. It would never even cross his mind to be mean to anyone, even though he is often the object of ridicule himself. He immediately latches on to Clifton and only latches on tighter after Clifton defends him against some bullies. L.W. sees everyone as his friend but usually hangs out with Clifton or Thea.

Forthwind & Borin

Forthwind and Borin are two characters rarely seen apart. Forthwind is an
incredibly talkative little knight in training who remains completely oblivious to his diminutive size and the limitations it might pose. Borin is a giant, strong and silent squire who is always faithfully at Forthwind’s side. Forthwind is prone to temper tantrums and is apt to blame his current perceived woes on Borin. Borin is incredibly laid back and remains unphased by Forthwind’s high-strung personality. Although it seems as though Borin would make a far better knight, he has no wish to do so (mainly because he dislikes horses) and always supports Forthwind’s efforts (albeit often with a grain of salt). The two are the best of friends despite their strange dynamic, not that they really talk about that kind of thing.

Muriel

Although she comes from nobility and should behave properly, Muriel spends most of her time with her head in the clouds, blissfully day-dreaming. Muriel is genuinely nice to all she meets, when she isn’t mentally in some far-off place. She has the startling capacity to say perceptive or insightful things one moment and be talking about butterflies the next. Although she seems like she would be a target for ridicule, her class position and sunny disposition generally discourage anyone from bullying her further than name-calling, as she rarely notices anyway.

Uther

Uther is the most talented knight in training at Camelittle and is very aware of that fact. His natural skill and good lucks have instilled in Uther the notion that he can do no wrong and, as is often the case when one thinks they can do no wrong, he frequently does. A world-class bully and all around jerk Uther spends most of his time
showing off and bullying others. He finds the idea of a peasant being a knight hilarious and a girl even more so, putting him at odds with Clifton and Thea on a regular basis. He also enjoys bullying the wizards, but usually only to look good in front of the ladies and to impress the other knights.

**Princess**

The school’s only princess and a stuck-up snob, Princess is easily the most popular girl around and decides that this is a mandate to treat everyone else beneath her with very little respect (as she was raised to). She constantly spurns the affections of Uther and is constantly scheming on how she can marry a prince. She views Thea is a lesser being, as she does all of the duchesses who constantly follow her around, although Thea is the only one that does not think highly of her. As for Clifton or L.W. she mostly sees them as negative space and not worthy of her attentions.

**Marlin**

The eccentric headmaster of Camelittle, Marlin’s primary claim to fame is that he is Merlin’s twin brother and has used that fact as proof that he too must be a great wizard, although evidence proves otherwise. Marlin is deeply committed to the school and truly cares about the students. His behavior is rather erratic and he could likely be saying something one moment and then the complete opposite the next.

**Duchesses**

The girls who are just on the cusp of being popular, the duchesses constantly follow the princess and absolutely adore her despite how mean she can be sometimes.
They generally don’t think much for themselves and are perfectly content to listen to gossip and swoon over knights.

**Knights**

Much akin to the “jock” stereotypes, the knights are athletic and generally dumb. They idolize Uther, who is far more intelligent than they, and ignore anyone else (unless they are picking on them because Uther is.)

**Peasants**

The amalgam of commoners embodied in one clump. The peasants all talk together at the same time, walk together at the same time, and move together at the same time more or less resembling a multi-headed person. The peasants do what they are told by anyone who tells them and never think to do any other wise.

**The Setting**

The entire series takes place in Camelittle School. Camelittle is a large castle and its chambers and grounds serve as the both the classrooms and living areas for the children who attend. Much like feudal culture itself, the classes (both social and educational) are highly divided and enforced. However, despite this division, it most often manifests itself humorously rather than oppressively. For example, while the knights are training for how to joust, the peasants are learning “groveling 101” and the duchesses are being taught to swoon. These comedic differences are used to show why Clifton and Thea would want to break out of their social roles and also of course, to be funny.
The student social classes closely mirror the stereotypes you would find in any TV show. There are the Knights, who are the schools jocks; the nerdy wizards; the popular girl princess; wannabe cheerleader duchesses; the cliquish minstrel band children; the average kid peasants; and of course the class clown court jester. Although the setting is in the medieval era, quite frequently there are obvious nods to modern culture such as this. This is both to poke fun at modern culture and to create a humorous relatable world for the audience.

Despite the fact there are many trials and tribulations Camelittle can poke fun of in the medieval era, the castle should never feel as though anyone is in any actual danger. The atmosphere is meant to be lighthearted and the children, for the most part, are under very little adult supervision. There are of course teachers, which can include anyone from Marlin to Lancelot, but they are generally uninvolved in the day-to-day activities outside of class. In fact, for the most part, the teachers themselves have just as many quirks as the students. Marlin acts as a sort of omnipresent force, always involved in some way or another, but rather than being the wise old sage of the school, he often serves to make things more complicated with his eccentric behavior.

One of the primary things to keep in mind about Camelittle is that the school is the constant. The show is not perpetually stuck in one year, where every day is the same as the last. The initial ensemble cast should provide an anchor for the beginning of the series but it is possible to bring new students in to flesh out storylines. Characters with goals can gradually advance toward them throughout the course of the series, otherwise we would be sending the message that following your dreams never
leads anywhere. Whenever a new character is being introduced it is important to remember: is the role already being filled by an existing ensemble member, what is their relation to the already existing characters, what are the characters’ goals and how do they plan to achieve them at Camelittle.

The parameters of what is possible at Camelittle are limited only by what a character can do, and by imagination. For example, having Clifton discover and slay a dragon doesn’t really fit into his character’s capabilities, however if he is imagining fighting a dragon when in reality he is doing something else, then it works. Camelittle takes place in a world where dragons can exist as well as trolls or any number of magical creatures, the only rule is consistency. If a troll is an eight-foot tall monster one episode, it cannot be a small smart aleck race?? later.

The Audience

The audience of Camelittle is primarily 8-11 year olds with a focus on boys and a nod towards girls. Boys 8-11 are the prime market for animated shows, especially action shows. Camelittle provides the action outlet by being set in medieval times with adventure and slapstick elements. The imagination sequences that occur in the series also allow for grander action sequences that might fall outside the “reality” of the show. Humor is also a large factor in attracting an audience of this age group and so we incorporate physical gags as well as situational humor in order attract a wider age range of children. Because girls are trending toward live action at a younger age, we have included a strong female character to provide a relatable outlet for the female viewers. As the show is also a comedy, it is more likely to attract more female
viewers than a straight action show. Because of this it is important that the show always remains lighthearted and accessible for both genders as one of the primary themes is inclusiveness.

The Production Process

The production of *Camelittle* has attempted to follow the structure of a commercially produced animated children’s program – even though we are unpaid and over-worked students. is structured similarly to most animation shows with roles defined as follows.

Producer

The producer of the show is in charge of content and organization. It is the producer’s duty to understand every step of production and make sure that each group is meeting deadlines as well as creating the content that is consistent with the show. Should a dispute arise, the producer has the ultimate say in a decision. It is also the job of the producer to organize meeting times and deadlines for the project. It is ultimately the job of the producer to oversee all legal and financial matters, although subcommittees may be formed. It is possible to have more than one producer.

Director

The role of the director is to guide the visual direction of the show as well as work with the voice actors. The director has final say on shots, character designs, color and sets unless it is ruled against by the show’s producer for content reasons or time constraints. Along with supervising the show’s production the director is directly responsible with all interactions with any of the show’s actors. This includes
scheduling any rehearsals and working with the audio team on recording the actors in a timely manner. The director must work closely with the storyboard artist and the animation supervisor. It is possible to have more than one director.

**Animation Supervisor**

It is the job of the animation supervisor to oversee the day-to-day work of the animators. It is crucial that the animation supervisor has a thorough understanding of how each of the programs works and is able to answer any questions from the animators. The primary job of the animation supervisor is to make sure that the animation remains consistent from animator to animator and that the animation is up to standards with the rest of the production and follows the storyboards. The animation supervisor is responsible for answering to the director(s) for any questions about animation and to make sure the director(s) instructions are being carried out. It is possible (and most often necessary) for the animation supervision to also animate parts of the show.

**Animators**

It is the job of the animators to work with the director and animation supervisor to animate the content of the show. The animators must have an understanding of computer animation and be able to meet deadlines established by the producer and director. It is the animator’s job to create and animate shots based on the episode’s storyboards.
Illustrators

The illustrators are in charge of physically drawing all characters, props and other reference material used for animating. The illustrators must follow a schedule established by the director and create content under their supervision.

Colorists

The colorists are in charge of digitally coloring the work drawn by the illustrators. It is important for the colorist to have some knowledge of Photoshop and to understand layering and segmenting. The colorists must meet deadlines set up by the director and animation supervisor.

Head of Audio

The head of audio supervises all recording and mixing for the show. They must work closely with the director to organize all recording sessions as well as make sure all Foley and music is being taken care of. It also falls to the head of audio to make sure they final mix is created.

Data Manager

The data manager must make sure the shows files are organized in a cohesive manner and backups are created. The data manager must regularly check the show’s database (server, hard drive, etc.), make sure files are correctly organized, and ensure that no extraneous files are created.
Editor

In charge of piecing together the episode, the editor must work with the
director and storyboard artists to make sure the final product reflects the overall vision
of the show.

Animation/Workflow

The animation in Camelittle is done entirely digitally using Adobe After
Effects. The workflow is as follows. The script is written and approved by the
producer. A director is then assigned to the episode or segment (it is possible to have
multiple directors). The director then assigns a storyboard artist or creates storyboards
themselves for the episode. After this has been finalized these are shown to the
illustrators.

The illustrators must create comprehensive drawings based on the storyboards.
The director will make sure props, characters, and backgrounds are drawn to cover
every angle. As the illustrators are drawing, the data manager must make sure their
work is being digitally archived for the colorists.

The colorists then use Adobe Photoshop to digitally color all the illustrators’
work. It is important that they follow the director’s instructions in terms of color
choices, and all work must be approved. It is also important that work is vectorized by
coloring with the pen tool and that the image size is large enough to reduce
pixelization. The director then works with the animation supervisor to begin dividing
work among the animators.
Next, the animation supervisor and the animators begin working on the project by scene, using the finalized work of the colorists and the storyboards and guides. During this time the director must promptly provide either scratch or finalized audio of the characters in the scenes for the animators to use. Each shot of the scene must be animated and approved as a rough before advancing to the next scene.

After each scene is roughly animated, the animation supervisor will divide up the work by scene and have one animator per scene fine-tune the scene as a whole, making sure continuity is established between shots. After the animators are finished, they must submit their work for the animation supervisor for approval, after which it will proceed to the producer and director. After a picture lock of each scene has been approved, it will be given to the editor to cut together. Once the editor is finished and the producer and director approve the cut, the episode is ready for premier.
Conclusion

As my research shows, the world of children’s television has come a long way from the early days of Captain Kangaroo and Hanna Barbera. Instead of merely watching the classic Hanna-Barbera cartoon, The Smurfs, children are now buying Smurfberryes on their iPads and watching them on Netflix via their Nintendo Wii. Companies create digital worlds for children in which to sell products, and a small web show can be a smash hit with millions of viewers.

These capabilities are far beyond the world in which I grew up, where my favorite shows might release a VHS with three or four episodes on them for me to watch. Just like everything else, even these shows I watched as a kid have advanced to the digital age, becoming available on demand anytime online. My childhood in essence, grew up with me. However, looking through the business world of children’s television I cannot help but be struck by the opportunities the digital age brings to children. Transmedia practices have allowed more diverse options for children, promoting higher quality programming. The globalization supported by digital technology has made multinational content a reality, exposing children to new perspectives and ideas. Educational and development research is being adopted and made standard among children’s media companies to help make the best possible shows. When examining the business of children’s television, one of the primary considerations to remember is that it is, in fact, a business. There are the rules, regulations and practices employed to make products. But the products made are based on the same qualities that entertained and inspired me as a child. The programs that
teach children life lessons or perhaps simply make them happy. The goal of making these programs for children is still the same, just the means and scope have changed. But to a kid, none of this matters, because like myself years ago, they just like the shows for the shows. And that is Camelittle.
References


