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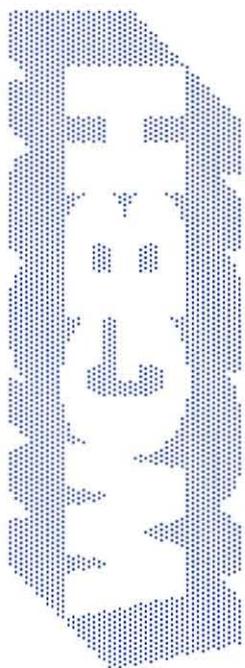
FUTURE OF PUBLIC MEDIA, CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

As the FCC examines the information needs of communities in the digital age, it is critical that the interests of children are taken into account. Digital technology is already engaging the next generation, and now is the time to consider their development as the information users of the future.

A recognized leader in educational production, WGBH Boston has been creating children's media content for nearly a quarter century. Our award-winning broadcast television shows, on PBS and elsewhere, have influenced millions of children, imparting educational curricula from science and reading to prosocial themes via unforgettable characters and stories. And for more than a decade, we've produced engaging online content, giving children a place where they can interact with *Arthur*, *Curious George*, and many others while being directly challenged by the content. We've provided extensive online resources for parents and teachers as well, and our outreach initiatives have brought our characters and stories into classrooms and libraries across the country.

The momentous shift in the media landscape is affecting every aspect of children's lives, from the availability of and access to media, to the ubiquity of mobile devices, to the increasing adoption of touch screens, to the places and platforms where children - and the adults who care for them - consume media content. From the home to the classroom, children's lives are increasingly populated with these transmedia opportunities. More than ever, there is a need for content that supports children's sense of curiosity, wonder and exploration - free from commercial distraction.

Because barriers to entry are low - anyone with some technical know-how can create an application for the Apple app store, for example - the marketplace already is crowded with games that purport to be educational, but whose actual educational value is questionable. To truly serve children, it is essential that public media production companies like WGBH, who have long histories of creating trusted educational, non-commercial media are positioned to extend their expertise to develop content that meets children and adults where they are consuming media.



It is equally important to consider the adult who is mediating a child's experience with handheld media, or an interactive whiteboard in a classroom. Not only must we develop educational content specifically designed for children in these arenas, we must also engage adults on these platforms. Parents and caregivers are a child's best teachers, and the opportunity to engage this audience anew via mobile and touch screen technologies, for example, provides an unparalleled opportunity for deepening families' experiences with educational media.

The current watchwords for potential educational impact are touch, mobile and networking. These three aspects of the new media landscape have tremendous potential for increasing the power and reach of educational media, and WGBH is committed to expanding our knowledge of and investment in these areas. As non-profit enterprises, however, WGBH and other public media producers face significant hurdles in funding this investment and developing the internal capacity to shift production models from broadcast-centric to those which leverage content from its narrative conception onto multiple new platforms. Investments in the areas of touch, mobile and networking will pay enormous dividends in the area of educational media, but only if those investments are made immediately, while the market is still very much emerging.

WGBH is committed to leveraging its deep institutional knowledge as a major public media content provider in service to helping shape this new media ecology. It is our goal to create inspirational educational content, driven by rich narratives and compelling characters, that will reach children where they are consuming it – in schools and at home and everywhere in between, from the supermarket to the library to the car. In order to be in all these places, and to take full advantage of each milieu to enrich our educational offerings, it is imperative that we consider available and emerging platforms and formats and the possibilities of each.

We encourage the FCC to include a special focus on children in their digital media explorations. It is an opportunity to understand the needs, imagine the possibilities, and take advantage of what institutions like WGBH can offer to help make them a reality.



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