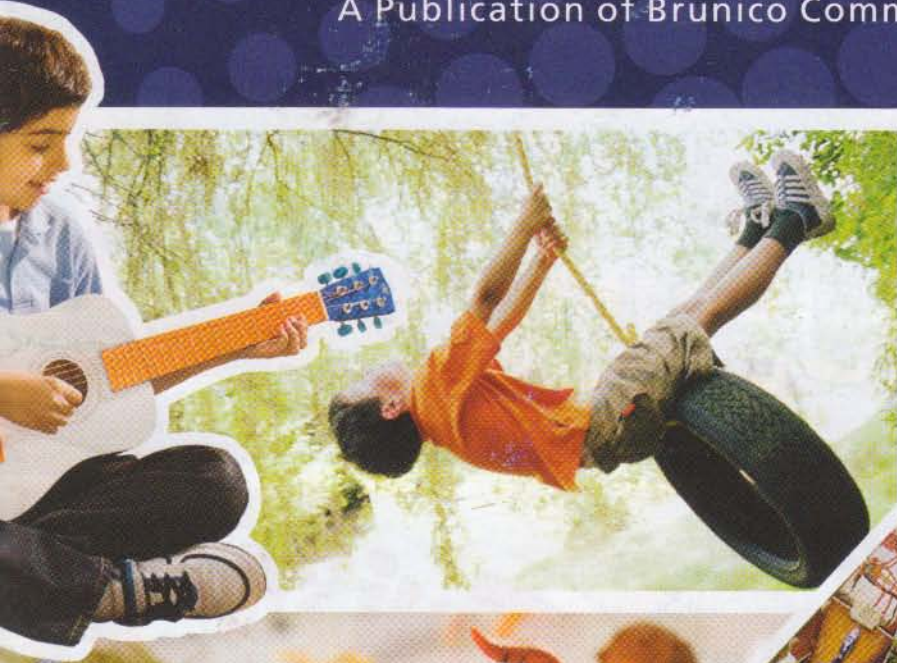


# kidscreen®

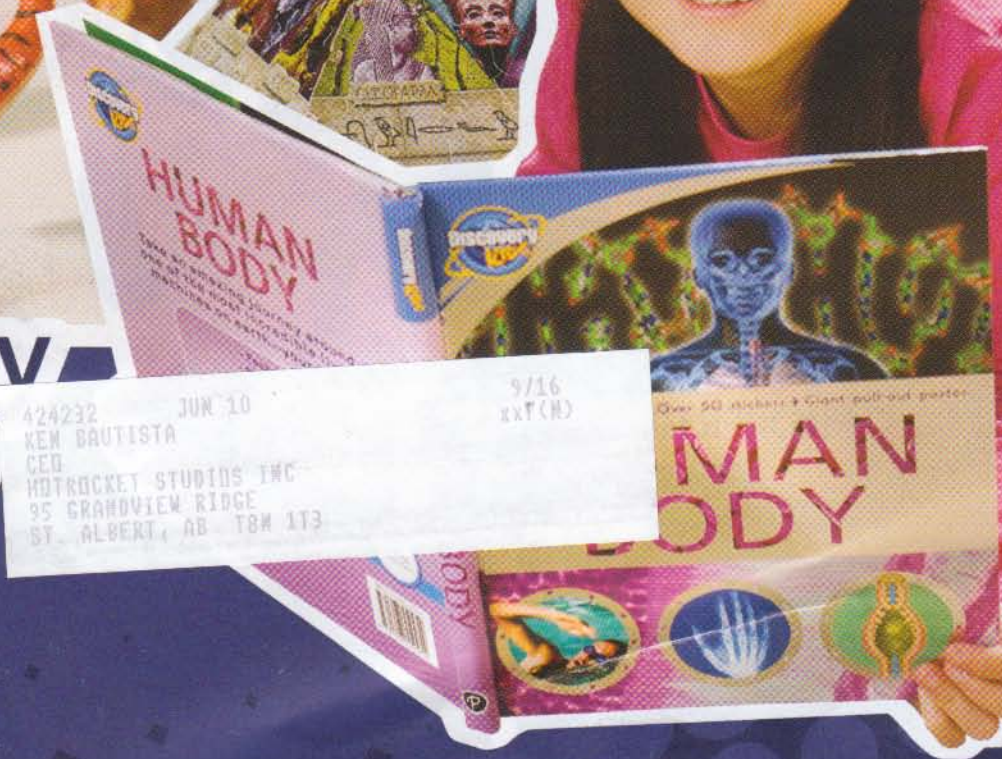
About reaching children through entertainment  
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# No network, no problem

## Discovery Kids brand revamps, sets course for CP growth

**W**ith just six licensees on its roster, the consumer products program for Discovery Kids, led by its New York-based licensing agent Big Tent Entertainment, generated approximately US\$83 million at retail last year and is on track to break the US\$100-million mark in 2010.

In the midst of a major revamp of the brand, Big Tent CMO Rich Maryyanek is bullish on the future of the Discovery Kids licensing prospects, despite the fact that Discovery Kids will cease operating as a TV network in the US this fall. "From our perspective it's not a negative," says Maryyanek, referring to the impending absence of a dedicated TV channel. "We never really discussed the network with retailers and potential partners—we didn't tie the products to the network's theme or the shows themselves."

It's a point of view that is echoed by one of the brand's most prolific licensees, New York's Parragon Publishing. With more than 70 Discovery Kids titles distributed at all tiers of retail across the US, VP of new business development at Parragon Venetia Davie says she is not at all concerned that the network is going off the air. "What has been important is the strength of the Discovery brand itself," she says. "Our line is reflective of that, not the kids network."

Discovery Kids has undergone an evolution in the past year. By stressing outdoor activity, nature and science, the style guide has been updated to emphasize an active brand with global scope represented by the Earth in the logo. One of the key entertainment platforms moving forward is the Discovery Kids website, which is being bolstered by a closer link with parent brand, Discovery. DiscoveryKids.com currently roughly 719,000 unique monthly visitors, while Discovery.com gets 5.6 million. Creating a stronger connection between the adult and kids sites by giving a higher profile to the Discovery Kids weblink and adding more content to the kids portal is part of Big Tent's and Discovery's goal of making the website the centerpiece of a reinvigorated program.

"Online is a key hub for us," says Maryyanek. "Online content will be changing. We are going to add games and videos, and its gaming portal is a key initiative." Accordingly, DiscoveryKids.com is relaunching this fall, and will include proprietary title *Seek Your Own Proof*, created by Canadian prodco Hotrocket Studios, which won KidScreen Summit's 2007 Pitch It! competition with the concept. For his part, Maryyanek believes it might just "revolutionize interactive kids entertainment."

The game lets players solve online mysteries by participating in real-world activities like visiting the local museum and library. Players assume the role of a secret agent and solve puzzles, riddles and mysteries from the clues provided. One of the missions requires players to use The Pigpen Cipher, an 18th-century code, to track the movements of mega-bad guy Keymaker.

"We know kids are online, but it has always been our goal to get them out into the real world," Maryyanek says. A segment of



With just six licensees, Discovery Kids product brought in US\$83 million at US retail in '09

*Seek Your Own Proof* will be free to users, but the game will employ a pay model for full access—US\$19.95 for an all-season subscription/pass (10 missions) or US\$3.95 per mission.

On the licensing side of the equation, Big Tent is looking to expand its Discovery Kids licensee roster that currently includes master toy partner Jakks Pacific, 505 Games for Nintendo DS games, Parragon and electronics from Merch. "We are looking for partners for platform-based video games, electronics and computer peripherals," says Maryyanek, adding that partners in RC toys, room décor and furniture categories are also on his wish list.

As with any program, getting the merch onto retail shelves is often the trickiest part, but Maryyanek is convinced that the strength of the Discovery brand, and Discovery Kids by association, will open many doors as the licensing lineup grows. "It's always a challenge at retail," he says. "But, at the same time, the brand gets the conversation started right away. We're relatively blessed with a pretty wide marketplace and strong commitments." **GR**

**LINKS**

- Big Tent Entertainment > [www.bigtent.tv](http://www.bigtent.tv)
- Discovery Kids > [www.discoverykids.com](http://www.discoverykids.com)