

Panel Summary: Don't Just Press Play: Quality Content for Kids

Moderator: Sara Kloek, Know What's Inside

Panelists: Katya Andresen, Cricket Media; Nate Glissmeyer, Amazon; Rhett King, Mind Candy; Bill Shribman, WGBH, Boston

Overview: A discussion about the importance of ensuring children have access to high quality, engaging and education content.

Moderator Sara Kloek lead a really engaging discussion on the quality of content being produced for kids. All of the panelist discussed the constant need to look at the content they are creating and make it engaging. Nate Glissmeyer from Amazon talked about the process they go through to make content not only fun but educational at the same time. Katya Andresen took it a step further and said it wasn't enough to just create a product that in theory was fun and educational but that there had to be a way for information to be reported back to the content creators (in this case Cricket Media Inc.) so that the educational value of the content could be measured.

Interactivity and animation play a big role in the quality of the content. Users need to feel as if they are playing a role in the story. Rhett King from Mind Candy discussed their objective to make the characters in their games not only interesting and interactive but also complex. It was the opinion overall that animation for the sake of animation was a waste, it needs to serve a purpose to building the quality of the content.

Bill Shribman from WGBH, mentioned that they considered content quality if it encourages kids to get outside. This sparked a discussion of how content creators try to develop content that encourages learning in multiple environments. Andresen echoed that quality online content should inspire kids to do something active offline.

They also talked about the aspect of creating content that families could use together. The digital space is a great space to bring parents and kids together. Of course kids and parents do not use tech the same way, but all of the panelists saw value in creating content that could be enjoyed by both age groups. The goal is turn tech use and content consumption into a family activity.

At the end of the panel, a group of high school students from The School Without Walls asked the panelist questions. One of the students present was an exchange student from Pakistan and she was curious about content creation that was multi cultural. Each of the panelists talked about their organization's successes and struggles with this task. Other questions from the students were about the need for quality content geared for an older audience.

Overall, the panelist agreed that they feel they are successful if they can create something that kids don't compare to chocolate covered broccoli.