



KID TRENDS REPORT – NOVEMBER 2003

DISCLAIMER: The trends that the YTV Trend Huntaz comment on come from the buzz on the street, the mall, the Internet, and numerous publications. YTV does not guarantee that all of the above information will come to fruition, but you can pretty much believe us as we are obsessed with this stuff.

Music

Together Again

Madonna and Britney "come together" once again for Britney's first single off her upcoming album **Get in the Zone** (Nov. 19). The first single is called **Me Against the Music** and contrary to popular belief, the video is directed by hip-hop director **Paul Henry** (not Guy Richie).

Keep Your Eyes Peeled For These Talented Artists:

- o **Kiley Dean**, who was signed to Interscope by Timbaland (mega producer) and sang back up on a Britney Spears tour. She describes her music as New Pop, with R&B beats.
- o Pop Rock band **Something Corporate** is currently touring with *Good Charlotte* and signed to *New Found Glory's* label. Their single "Space" appeared during an episode of *The O.C.*
- o **Katy Rose**, at the ripe age of 16, has been dubbed the next Fiona Apple who takes her "angsty" and mature sound one step further than "skater girl" Avril.
- o **Nellie McKay**. The 19-year-old songwriter plays a range of music from country to rap. An edgier version of Norah Jones, Nellie's piano and strong vocals are sure to hit big.
- o **Christy Carlson Romano** plays the lead voice on the cartoon *Kim Possible* and also sings the song "Say The Word" on the soundtrack. She does not yet have a record label but is certainly on her way with an established fan base.
- o **The Like** is an Indie, pop-rock, L.A. band comprised of teenagers; Charlotte, Tennessee, and Z. They don't have a label as of yet, but word of mouth has earned them a good local fan base. Their song "(So I'll Sit Here) Waiting" was used in the movie *Thirteen*.

Video Games

Barbie Debuts on Xbox. (Yes, Xbox)

With the launch of its next-gen console system the Xbox, Microsoft was clearly targeting 18-30 year old males with a slew of titles featuring racing, sports, babes, guns, racing sports babes with guns, and the like. Xbox aggressively strove to avoid being branded a kids' console. But times are a changin', and the Xbox is gearing up to offer a wider range of titles with "broad appeal". Look for Microsoft to release such titles as *Grabbed by the*

Ghoulies, Barbie Horse Adventures: Wild Horse Rescue, Wallace and Gromit in Project Zoo, and SpongeBob SquarePants: The Battle for Bikini Bottom.

Off Da Hook

Between homework, soccer practice, music lessons and hangin' with friends there isn't always enough time for kids to get their game on. Enter **cellphone gaming**, the perfect way to get a 15 minute fix between activities. The games are simple but addictive and they're only going to get better. The latest phones can play popular versions of games like Tony Hawk Pro Skater, Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell and the much hyped XIII in full color.

You can bring games to cellphones, but what happens when you bring the cellphone to the game? You get the **N-Gage**, Nokia's new portable console that also doubles as a cellphone. It may not be on every diehard's wish list but its definitely an indication of where the portable market is heading. With Nintendo Japan releasing a video phone plug-in for the GBA and cellphones marketing their game capabilities to the masses, it's hard to deny that multi-purposing is the future of mobile gaming.

Movies

Video Game Fame

Despite the lackluster box office track record for video game to film adaptations, Hollywood just keeps trying. With built in audiences who've spent hours trying to finish that last level and often smart, elaborate action packed sequences to draw from, these adaptations are ripe for the big screen blockbuster success.

The balance between 'popcorn flick' and 'serious film' is the code that has not yet been cracked by screenwriters. Harder still, is appealing to the gamers in the audience whose attention can dwindle easily. It will be interesting to see what happens when the next Pokemon movie; **Pokemon Heroes**, comes out in May. Nonetheless hopes are high for **House of the Dead**, **Resident Evil II**, **Yu-Gi-Oh!**, and **Dragon's Lair** all coming soon to a theatre near you.

Fact*: The average video game adaptation takes home less than 40 million at the box office, so unless something breaks the trend soon, watch for more medium budgeted films, such as the aforementioned Resident Evil II and House of the Dead, that are light on big stars and story, but heavy on action and CGI. (Sorry Tom Cruise...it doesn't look like you'll be playing Super Mario anytime soon.) Alternatively, perhaps Hollywood should look into adapting some less traditional games...Tetris: The Movie, anyone?

*source: <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/genres/videogame.htm>

Books Go Big Time

Children's books have always been a popular source for movies; Harry Potter is our favourite and will continue to draw an audience for many years. Look for another popular kids lit. franchise to make the big bucks when "**Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events**" comes to theatres next year starring Jim Carrey, Jude Law, and Meryl Streep. Plus, **The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe**, **Curious George** and **Charlotte's Web** are in the works and don't forget **The Cat in the Hat**, out this November.

In Other Adaptation News

Kids TV shows have also proven to be successful on the big screen so watch for boffo results next November with the **SpongeBob SquarePants** movie! A big trend in movie adaptations is definitely toys! Production has started on movies featuring Hot Wheels, G.I.

Joe and Transformers. What's next?! Movies based on theme park rides?!...oh wait...never mind.

Lifestyle

Ahoy Mateys!

A major force walking the kid culture plank these days is **Pirates**. No huge surprise since *Pirates of the Caribbean* rocked the box office this summer. Some examples of where this trend is making waves include:

- **On TV** where the latest installment of *Survivor* (the steadfast reality fave with kiddies) is pirate-themed (complete with pillaging and buried booty).
- **In tween fashion** - skull & crossbones emblems are appearing on clothing and accessories - thick black and white stripes are everywhere.
- **Pirate-themed toys** such as the Imaginext and Playmobil playsets and the Old Century Dread Pirate game.

Decorating Bug

Tweens/teens are all about 'do-it-yourself' for self-expression and are now showing off their creativity and individuality by tackling their bedrooms. Some TV networks forecasted this trend; hence the launch of several kid-targeted decorating shows this season - for instance, **Trading Spaces: Boys vs. Girls** on the Discovery Kids channel and **Knock First** - a show where teens redo each other rooms. Home Decor Stores (everyone from Pottery Barn to Zellers) have hopped aboard and are offering furnishing and decorating products to the younger set.

Book News

In the last issue of the Trend Report we discussed celebs launching clothing lines. Well another way they are 'branching out' (i.e. cashing in!) is by writing children's books. **Madonna** recently released the first of five books titled *The English Roses*, which is a story about emotions and how to find true friendships. She's already got another one on the presses called *Mr Peabody's Apples*. **Billy Crystal** just signed a two-book deal to write *I Already Know I love you*, inspired by his granddaughter's birth. It's due out in April. **Jay Leno** just wrote *If Roast Beef Could Fly* about a backyard barbecue gone wrong. Other celeb authors include **Jerry Seinfeld**, **John Lithgow**, **LL Cool J** and **Julie Andrews**. As stars continue to look for ways to expand their empire, we're sure you'll be seeing more and more of them taking a crack at penning kid's books.

Television

Just For Kids?

We all know how Retro 70/80's fashions, music and movies seem to be coming back in style. But what about Retro 80's Cartoons? The recent re-launch of **He-Man** and **Ninja Turtles** are proving there is an audience for these updated shows again...but it seems the 18-49 audience is even more excited about their childhood nostalgia than kids. One retro property that is really resonating with kids is **Transformers**. However, there has been at least one incarnation of Transformers programs in each decade, therefore it's probably not even considered "retro" by today's kids.

Toys

The Power Of The Zodiac

Horoscopes aren't just for magazines anymore; the zodiac has been making its way into many different realms of kid culture recently. It started with **fashion**, where girls began sporting their zodiac sign on items like shirts, bags and jewellery. Then there's the new anime television show, **Knights of the Zodiac**. And most recently, in the toy category, there's **Zodiac Girlz**; a popular Internet cartoon with a content heavy website where kids can explore their inner astrologer. The creators recently released a toy line. These dolls are a diverse group of pre-teens with cosmic powers working together to fight crime. Each one has a distinct personality based on her astrological sign. Expect zodiac based properties to continue to infiltrate the kid market due to the obvious personalization they offer.

The Key To Card Collecting

Upper Deck has released a new game that adds a twist to classic card collecting. **BreaKey** is reminiscent of the card game War, but instead of playing with paper cards, you battle with plastic keys. Players challenge each other to a "Break Off" and the player with the strongest key wins their opponents key, and the code hidden inside. Kids can then take this code and redeem it on the Internet for cool prizes.

BUST THIS

Get ready for the latest installment of music-inspired reality television. **Interscope Presents The Next Episode** is basically American Idol meets 8 Mile in the search for the best freestylin' rapper since Eminem. Cee-lo and D12's Proof will host the show, as judges determine which wannabe rap mogul can "spit it" on the mic with da freshest rhymes. Finalists from each city will compete to determine the overall, dopest MC. As well, Anthony Zuiker, the creator of CSI, is working on a rap show called *Ruckus*, which will also feature break-dancing. (We're expecting this one to be sick!)

Keep your eyes open for...

These toys aren't in Canada yet, considering their popularity in other countries, it's only a matter of time before they cross the border.

Stink Blasters – a line of 24 squeeze-and-smell figures with names like Dog-Breath Danny and Barfin' Ben, plus vehicles, playsets and trading cards.

Hakoton - a set of little electronic animals (a blue bear, yellow monkey and pink dog) that mimic tapping rhythms. Before it repeats, the animal will make a noise that shows it learned the rhythm, or make an unhappy noise if it has not.

Pucca - A cute girl character from Korea who's got spunk, attitude, and cross-age female appeal. Shove over Hello Kitty!

Hand Sacking - It used to be against the rules to touch a hacky sack with your hands, but never ones to stick with convention – the latest fad for some youngsters is hand hacky sacking! A new long, flat "sack" has been designed for the hands – as opposed to the original, which was round, for the feet.

YM (as in Your Magazine) Digital Diary – available now. It's a digital scrapbook that girls can totally personalize with the ability to categorize their lives into different sections such as school/friends/family, etc. There are over 100 ways to customize the diary including scanning pictures, love letters, report cards – using different fonts, colours and shapes, etc. I'm getting excited just writing this!

YTV DECODER (every issue we give you the skinny on some kid vernacular)

Random: When people say or do something unexpected. eg. *“What Shelley said, that was so random.”* Also describes anyone new, uninvited, unwanted, uncool, out of place, etc. *“The party sucked. All these randoms showed up.”*

Chillax: To chill and relax at the same time. This may sound redundant, but the point is it sounds cool.

Advice: don't bother pointing out any grammatical points of weakness on this one, as you run the risk of being shut out of further explanations of what foreign “kid friendly” words actually mean. There's also **chizzil** which means pretty much the same thing, only it's cooler cuz it comes from Snoopy D-O-double Gizzle (aka Snoop Dogg), gnome sane?