

Children's Television: Trends Around the World

KODAIRA Sachiko Imaizumi

As we enter an age in which children interact with an ever-increasing number of electronic media, it is nonetheless television that remains dominant in children's lives. Around the world, there is a remarkable increase in children's broadcasting: channels devoted to children's television are being created, and existing channels are giving increasing priority to their programs for children. With rapid changes in society, programs are being developed in various ways to support the growth of children. There are greater opportunities for children worldwide to see these programs. At the same time, the effect of television and other media on children is a topic of serious debate and concern all over the globe.

The Prix Jeunesse International marked the fortieth anniversary of this high profile children's television festival in 2004. In addition, it was the year of the fourth World Summit on Media for Children, held every three years since 1995, which aims to improve the quality of programming and media for children throughout the world. Japan, meanwhile, celebrated 50 years of television—including television for children—in 2003, and program planners are now embarking on children's television design for a new age.

This essay presents an analysis of current trends in children's television around the world, and explores issues for the future.*¹

* The following abbreviations are used in the footnotes:

HBKN: *NHK Hoso Bunka Kenkyujo nenpo* [NHK Annual Bulletin of Broadcasting Culture Research];

HKC: *Hoso kenkyu to chosa* [NHK Monthly Report on Broadcast Research].

¹ I will not attempt here to report on the international debate about the influence of television on children or on the steps taken around the world to address this issue. For relevant discussion see Kodaira Sachiko, "'Kodomo ni oyobosu terebi no eikyo' o meguru kakkoku no doko" [The Influence of Television on Children around the World: Towards Further Discussion and Studies] (includes English summary), HBKN 45 (2000), pp. 37–97. In addition, the following article gives details of children's programming in Japan, including trends in Japanese children's broadcasting, social background, and a review of 50 years of children's programs: Kodaira Sachiko, "Kodomo to terebi kenkyu: Gojunen no kiseki to kosatsu" [Studies on Children and TV in Japan: Analyzing the Last Fifty Years for Further Studies and Discussion] (includes English summary), HBKN 47 (2003), pp. 53–110.

THE EFFECTS OF INCREASED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

A quarter of a century has passed since the arrival of the first children's television channel, America's Nickelodeon, which was launched in April 1979 as part of the basic cable television service in the United States. With its motto of "Kids first," Nickelodeon aimed to broadcast a variety of age-specific children's programs. Its introduction was motivated by dissatisfaction with the current state of American children's programming: public television was constrained by financial uncertainty, and the three commercial networks offered a diet of little more than conventional cartoons interspersed with advertising. Nickelodeon soon grew to become the American channel child viewers watched most, and its programs are now shown in 162 countries and regions around the world.

The Spread of Children's Channels

Following on the heels of Nickelodeon's success, other children's channels and cartoon channels were launched in North America and Europe in the 1980s. By the end of the 1990s, such channels had spread all over the world to Asia, Oceania, Latin America, the Middle East and Africa.² Among these children's channels, two clear categories have emerged. The first comprises U.S.-produced children's channels, such as Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network, and Disney Channel, which give limited airtime to local programs but tend to be dominated by American programs. The second category includes channels launched by other countries, predominantly during the 1980s, such as the United Kingdom's Children's Channel, France's Canal J, Canada's YTV and the Netherlands' KinderNet.³

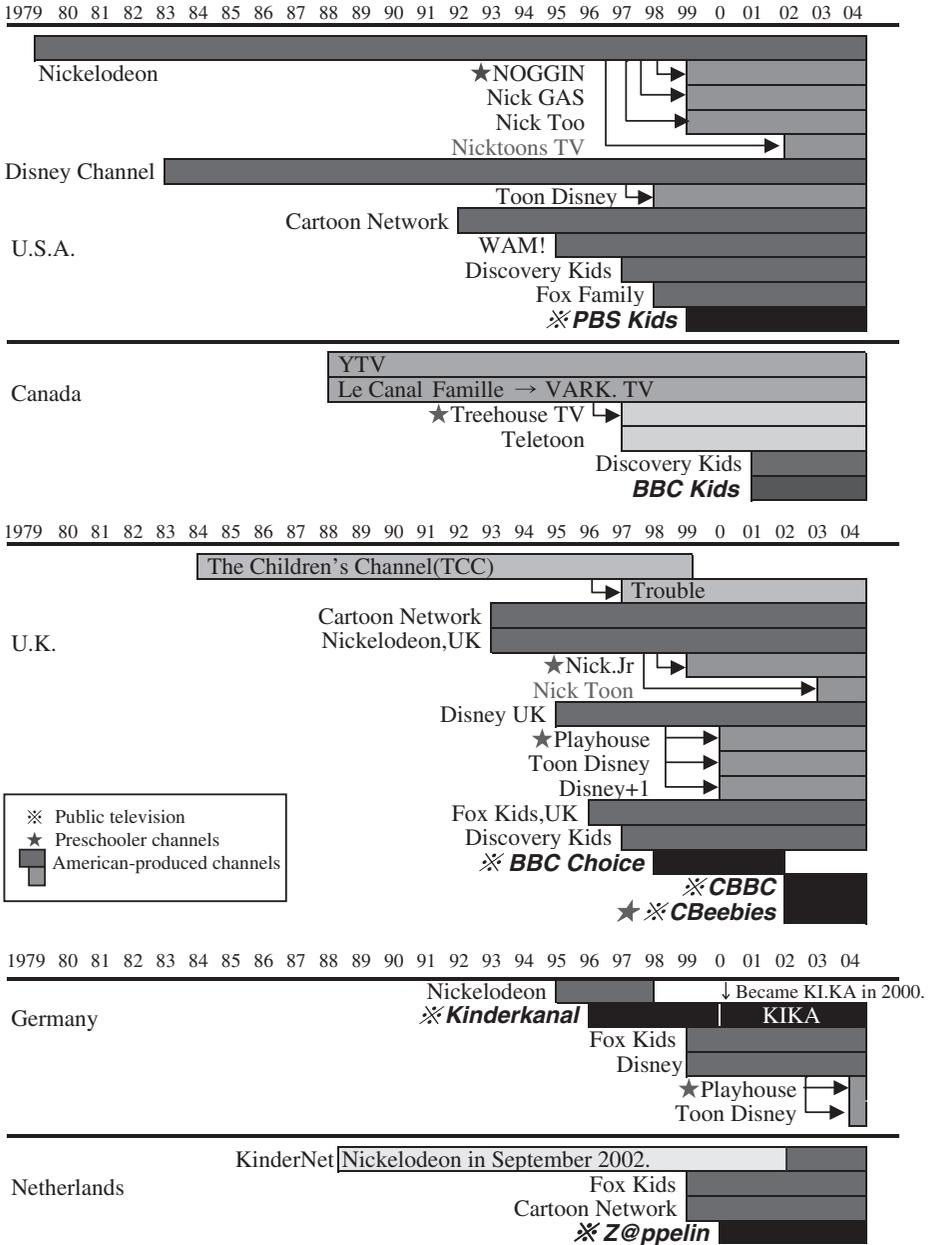
An international survey conducted in 1993 by NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute revealed that points of concern for many television producers and broadcasters included the lack of children's programs and the weak position of children's programming within broadcasting corporations.⁴ In this context, the advent of children-specific channels offered significant new opportunities for the supply of children's programs. What happened in reality, however, was that they acted to increase the number of American-style programs, predominantly cartoons, being shown, leading to misgivings about the lack of variety in programming and the "cultural invasion" resulting from imported programs.

² Kodaira Sachiko, "Amerika ni miru dejitaru jidai no kodomo-muke sabisu" [Digital TV Services for Children in the United States: Debates on the Launch of the PBS Kids Channel], HKC (September 1999), pp. 2–27.

³ Kodaira Sachiko, "Kodomo-muke sabisu no tenbo: Obei media no saishin doko kara" [Future Prospects of Media Services for Children: From Recent Trends in Europe and America], HKC (January 2001), pp. 56–87.

⁴ Kodaira Sachiko, "Kaigai no terebi kodomo bangumi saishin doko" [The Latest Trends of Overseas TV Programs for Children], HKC (October 1994), pp. 44–53.

Figure 1. Key Children’s Channels and Cartoon Channels in Europe and North America



Note: Fox Kids became Jetix in 2004.

(Data compiled from local broadcasting magazines and channel publications.)

The United Kingdom was quick to perceive the potential dangers. British broadcasting for children had always been characterized by carefully-constructed schedules balancing different program genres and screening for different age groups. In the early 1990s, alarm bells began to ring about the disproportionate number of American-style children's channels in this broadcasting culture. Influential in identifying the problem was a detailed survey of children's programming, *The Provision of Children's Television in Britain: 1992–1996*, which was proposed by leading communications researcher, Jay G. Blumler.⁵ Analysis of the changes in children's television of all genres since the 1980s revealed that, although the amount—in both volume and time—of children's programming had increased dramatically, the variety of programs was decreasing, with cartoons becoming dominant. Moreover, the preponderance of cartoons on the new satellite and cable-delivered children's channels was beginning to influence terrestrial channels, and this was undermining the cherished variety in British children's programming. These findings led Blumler to call for a thorough inquiry into, and extensive discussion about, the provision of children's television in the multichannel age.

The Launch of Children's Channels on Public Television

The questions raised by the British survey were found to be relevant in other countries, as well. In the latter half of the 1990s, new trends began emerging in public broadcasting for children throughout the world.

Germany

Until the introduction of commercial channels in 1984, the only children's television available in Germany was produced and broadcast by German public television. Germany is the home of the international children's television festival, the Prix Jeunesse International,⁶ which testifies to the keen interest in the quality of children's programs in that country. Moreover, German children's programs have won numerous prizes in contests around the world. Television producers believe that children's programs should be high quality, but provided in moderation.

⁵ Kodaira Sachiko, "Igirisu no kodomo-muke terebi wa do kawatta ka" [Changes in Britain's Television for Children], HKC (March 1998), pp. 2–15. The March 1998 issue of HKC provides details of the first two surveys. Details of the survey entitled *The Provision of Children's Television in Britain: 1992–1996* were published by the Broadcasting Standards Commission (BSC) in November 1997. An analysis of the results along with suggestions for future directions was published by Professor J. Blumler (*BSC Research Working Paper: The Future of Children's Television in Britain* 1992). The results of the third survey are contained in Kam Atwal, Andrea Millwood Hargrave, Jane Sancho, Leila Agyeman, and Nicki Karet, *What Children Watch: An Analysis of Children's Programming Provision between 1997–2001, and Children's Views*. BSC, ITC. 2003.

Daily, per-person television viewing hours are fewer in Germany for both adults and children than in the United States, the United Kingdom or Japan—and this trend has been constant ever since the introduction of commercial television. However, from the 1990s, the content of German children’s viewing changed, shifting markedly toward commercial television, which is dominated by U.S.-produced cartoons and drama serials. The need to respond to such fierce competition from commercial providers provoked a number of changes throughout Germany’s public television services. One of these was the introduction of a children’s channel, *Kinderkanal*. Aimed at ages 3 to 12, it was launched jointly in January 1997 by Germany’s two national television corporations, ZDF and ARD, in an effort to ensure the survival of children’s broadcasting on public television. When two U.S. children’s channels appeared in 1999 and 2000, the German children’s channel was revamped with new programming, and relaunched as *KI.KA* in May 2000. *KI.KA* currently broadcasts daily from 6 A.M. to 9 P.M.

The Netherlands

The Netherlands boasts a number of small-scale public television channels, and there is keen interest in the production of children’s programs. In the 2004 *Prix Jeunesse International*, Dutch programs won four of the seven prize categories, thereby establishing a new record at the festival. A Dutch children’s channel, *KinderNet*, was launched in the 1980s (*KinderNet* is now part of Nickelodeon, having been bought by MTV in 2002), and two U.S. children’s channels, *Cartoon Network* and *Fox Kids*, began to air in 1999. Against this background, the national television channels jointly established a Dutch children’s channel, *Z@ppelin*, in September 2000. This channel is broadcast on NOS3 (one of the three national channels), and shows children’s programs and educational programs. Currently, *Z@ppelin* broadcasts from 7 A.M. to 7 P.M., longer children’s broadcasting hours than before the channel was created.⁷

The United States

Spurred by the success of Nickelodeon, public broadcasters—eager to defend

⁶ The *Prix Jeunesse International* was established in 1964 by the Free State of Bavaria, City of Munich, and Bayerischer Rundfunk (the Bavarian broadcasting corporation), and is held biannually in Munich. Germany’s national public television broadcaster, *Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen* (ZDF) became a further sponsor of the festival in 1971, and the Bavarian commercial broadcasting regulator, *Bayerische Landeszentrale für neue Medien* (BLM) joined in 1992. The *Japan Prize International Educational Program Contest*, sponsored by NHK, was established in 1965. The *Prix Jeunesse International* (<http://prixjeunesse.de/>) and the *Japan Prize* (<http://www.nhk.or.jp/jp-prize>) are sister events.

⁷ Peter Nikken, “Twelve Years of Dutch Children’s Television: Efforts of Public and

their reputation as the “heart” of U.S. television—began to place greater importance on children’s programs from the mid-1980s. A variety of program genres was developed, including literacy and story programs, programs encouraging scientific and mathematical thinking and new programs for preschoolers, in addition to the well-known *Sesame Street*. Public broadcasting also looked ahead to the digital age, and began developing program-driven websites and interactive television. In September 1999, when PBS went digital, the first channel to be launched was a 24-hour children’s channel, PBS Kids Channel.

The United Kingdom

In the midst of the debate about children’s television ensuing from the aforementioned survey, the world’s first terrestrial digital broadcasting service was introduced in the United Kingdom, and the possibility of launching a BBC children’s television channel was frequently discussed. At first, in addition to children’s programs aired on the channels BBC1 and BBC2, many children’s programs were broadcast on the digital channel, BBC Choice (now, BBC3). In February 2002, a full-fledged children’s service was formally introduced, consisting of two channels: CBBC, catering for age 6 to 12, and CBeebies, catering to preschoolers. Both are dominated by British-made programs in a variety of formats, all attuned to British culture. CBBC was launched with the motto, “learning through fun,” and CBeebies with “learning through play.” CBBC broadcasts from 7 A.M. to 7 P.M.; CBeebies from 6 A.M. to 7 P.M.

As early as its first year (as of October 2002), CBeebies was the most viewed of all 17 children’s channels available in the United Kingdom. CBBC was the tenth most viewed channel in its first year. By the following year, it had climbed to fifth place.⁸

Other Countries

Other children’s channels are emerging all over the world, such as Italy’s RaiSat Ragazzi (launched in 1999), Sweden’s Barnkanalen (launched in 2002), and Australia’s ABC Kids and Fly TV (both launched in 2001, but closed down in 2003).

With digitization, new developments have also occurred outside the realm of public television. For example, established children’s channels such as Nickelodeon and Disney Channel have launched new channels especially for preschoolers and to broadcast exclusively cartoons (see Figure 1). Notable among these are NOGGIN and Nick Jr., launched by Nickelodeon for viewing

Commercial TV Channels for Children up to Twelve Years Old,” *European Journal of Communication* 28 (2003), pp. 33–52.

⁸ See European Broadcasting Union data from households with digital television and children of age 4 to 15, November 2003.

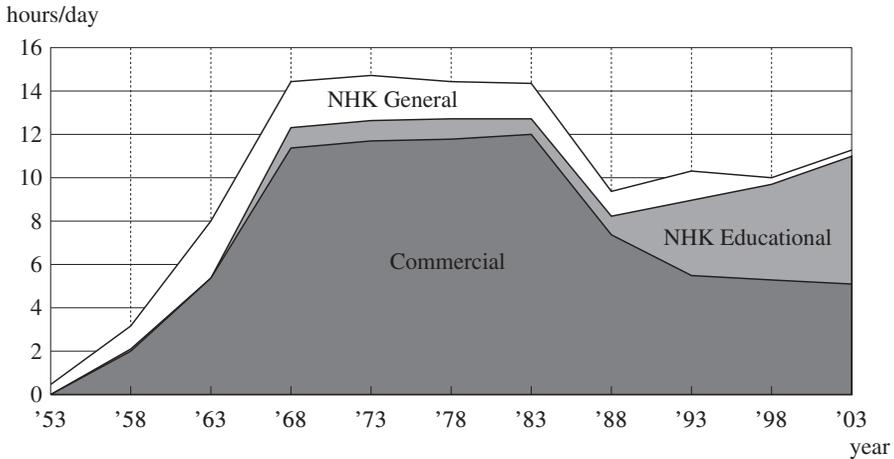
in the United States and the United Kingdom, respectively, and Playhouse Disney, launched by Disney Channel. In addition, though not connected with digitization, a preschoolers' channel, Treehouse TV, developed by YTV, was launched in Canada in 1997; and in February 2001 HOP! Channel was launched for one-to-seven-year-olds in Israel. Thus preschoolers' television—discussed further later—is a vigorous and rapidly-developing television sector.

Children's Television in Japan

In Japan, too, a number of cartoons and children's channels are available, including American channels like Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network as well as Japanese channels like Kids Station and Animax. However, there is no movement toward launching a children's public television channel along the lines of the national children's channels in other countries. This may be because the existing channels (both commercial and NHK) have, from the 1970s onward, always devoted relatively long hours to children's programs, so demand for children's channels has not been particularly high.

There is an interesting contrast between the commercial and NHK channels in the way changes in children's broadcasting have taken place. Japanese children's broadcasting has been greatly influenced by the hugely successful cartoon serial, *Tetsuwan Atomu* (*Astro Boy*). The creation of Japanese cartoonist, Tezuka Osamu, *Astro Boy*, Japan's first television cartoon serial, appeared in 1963, 10 years after television was inaugurated in Japan. The success of this TV animation meant that all the commercial channels began to show cartoons in the 1960s. The most popular were shown not only in the 5 P.M. and 6 P.M. slots, but even in the prime-time 7 P.M. slot. This feature of Japanese program scheduling was not seen in other countries at that time.

During the 1970s and 1980s, a startling volume of children's programs—predominantly cartoons and action dramas with special effects—was shown on the commercial channels. These programs also influenced the way children play. However, the situation began to change in the late 1980s. The number of hours per day of cartoon-oriented children's television on commercial channels peaked in the mid-1980s, and began to decline thereafter. In the early 1990s, NHK began to increase its airtime for children, but with a schedule including specific programs for specific age groups. In addition, from 1990, it began to move its children's programs from NHK General to NHK Educational. NHK Educational was established in 1959 as the second NHK television channel, broadcasting programs for educational purposes. However, children's programs intended for family viewing had been retained on NHK General until the change in the 1990s. In 1998, the long-running preschooler's program, *Okasan to issho* (With Mother), was finally moved to NHK

Figure 2. Hours per Day of Children's Television in Japan (terrestrial channels only)

Source: NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute (ed.), *Terebi shicho no gojunen: Terebi wa nani o tsutae, do mirarete kita no ka* [Fifty Years of Television Viewing in Japan: What Television Has Conveyed, and How It Has Been Viewed]. Nippon Hoso Shuppan Kyokai. 2003. p. 95.

Notes:

1. The term “children’s television” refers here to all programs, on the channels investigated, for children up to junior high school age (around age 14), including cartoons and programs for preschoolers. Schools programming is excluded.
2. The number of hours of children’s television per day was taken as 1/7th of the weekly total, calculated on the basis of each channel’s television schedule for April of each year. As of April 1953, NHK General was the only channel. As of 1963, there were only four commercial channels, Tokyo Channel 12 (now, TV Tokyo) not being launched until

Educational, and today, that is where almost all public television children’s programs are shown.

In 2003, the fiftieth anniversary of television in Japan, NHK broadcast an average of six hours of children’s programs per day (excluding school programs)—an amount that just topped the total children’s broadcasting volume on the five commercial channels in the Tokyo area.⁹

⁹ NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute (ed.), *Terebi shicho no gojunen: Terebi wa nani o tsutae, do mirarete kita no ka* [Fifty Years of Television Viewing in Japan: What Television Has Conveyed, and How It Has Been Viewed]. Nippon Hoso Shuppan Kyokai. 2003. See, in particular, the graph on p. 95, and also pp. 25–27, 41–45, 60–63, 93–99.

Figure 3. Main Trends in Children's Television**Japan**

- 1953.2 Launch of television broadcasting (including children's television, schools programming).
- 1956.4 Launch of NHK serialised puppet show *Chirorin Mura to kurumi no ki* (Chirorin Village and the Walnut Tree).
Launch of two NHK programs for daycare centers and kindergartens.
- 1959.4 Launch of NHK Tokyo Educational TV channel.
.10 Launch of *Okasan to issho* (With Mother), the longest running preschool program in Japan.
- 1963.1 First Japanese-produced animated series *Tetsuwan Atomu* (*Astro Boy*).
⇒ Beginning of cartoon boom.
- mid-1960s Children's cartoons are shown on prime-time television.
- 1965.10 First Japan Prize International Educational Program Contest (sponsored by NHK).
- 1966.7 Launch of superhero series *Ultraman* ("special effects" show).
- 1969.10 Launch of Fuji Television animation masterpiece series. Includes *The Moomins*. (Series ends 1997.3).
- 1971.4 Launch of *Kamen Raida* (Masked Riders).
Beginning of craze for characters who "transform" themselves.
- 1972.4 *Sesame Street* starts to air regularly on NHK.
⇒ Beginning of boom in television for preschoolers.
- 1973.4 Launch of *Hirake! Ponkikki*, long-running commercial television preschooler's series.
- 1979.4 Launch of *Doraemon*.
- 1979.4 Founding of research group for television for two-year-olds (developmental research into television programs modelled on *Sesame Street*).

Around the World

- 1946 Launch of British children's program *For the Children* (BBC).
- 1947.12 Launch of American children's program *Howdy Doody* (NBC).
-
- 1953 BBC preschoolers' program *Watch with Mother* airs daily.
- 1955.10 Launch of American preschoolers' program *Captain Kangaroo* (CBS).
-
-
-
-
- 1964.6 First Prix Jeunesse International held, Munich.
-
-
- 1966 Launch of Australian preschoolers' program *Play School* (ABC).
- 1968.2 Launch of American public television series *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*.
- 1968/69 Cartoons occupy 90 percent of children's programming on the three major networks in the U.S.
- 1969.11 Launch of *Sesame Street* on American public television.
-
-
-
-
-
- 1972.1 Launch of German preschoolers' program *Die Sendung mit der Maus* (The Program with the Mouse).
- 1972.4 Launch of BBC news program for children *John Craven's Newsround*.
-
-
-
-
- 1979.4 World's first children's channel, Nickelodeon, launched in U.S. as part of basic cable service.
- 1979 Australian Broadcasting Tribunal requires commercial channels to show at least three hours per week of good quality children's television. Intensification of baseline requirements for children's television quality and volume in Australia.

Main Trends in Children's Television (continued)**Japan**

- 1986.2 Launch of *Dragon Ball*.
- 1990– British puppet-animation *Thomas the Tank Engine and Friends* shown on *Hirake! Ponkikki*, to great acclaim.
 ⇒ Increase in puppet animation and claymation shorts from around the world, including Europe, Canada, Australia.
- 1990.4 NHK starts to move its children's programming to its education channel, and broadcasting hours of children's programs are increased.
- 1996.10 Launch of NHK program for newborns to two-year-olds *Inai inai ba!* (Peekaboo!).
- 1997.4 Launch of *Pocket Monster* in Japan, then worldwide.
- 1998– Intensification of debate about possible links between television and behavioral problems in young children.
- 1998.11 Launch of Nickelodeon for Japan.
- 2001.11 NHK starts its "Better Broadcasting for Children" project.
- 2003.2 50th anniversary of television in Japan.
- 2003.10 The 30th Japan Prize International Educational Program Contest.
- 2003.11 Launch of Disney Channel for Japan.
-

Around the World

- 1983.4 Launch of British children's channel, The Children's Channel.
⇒ Children's channels appear throughout Europe.
- 1990.9 Launch of claymation *Pingu* on television in Switzerland.
- 1990– Children's channels increase.
Regulations are enforced about content of television programs.
- 1990.11 The U.K. enforces a Broadcasting Law.
⇒ Content of children's programs on commercial channels is required to meet law.
- 1992.10 24-hour children's cartoon channel, Cartoon Network, launched in U.S. as part of basic cable service.
- 1993.1 First EBU co-produced animation series.
⇒ Movement begins to stimulate European animation production.
- 1995.3 First World Summit on Television and Children held, Melbourne.
North American V-chip debate spreads around world.
- 1996.8 U.S. Federal Communications Commission requires commercial channels to show at least three hours per week of quality children's television.
- 1997.1 Six-level, age-specific classification system launched in U.S. for television programming.
- 1997.4 Launch of BBC preschoolers' program *Teletubbies*.
⇒ Shown in the U.S. in April 1998, then around the world.
- 1998.3 Second World Summit on Television for Children held, London.
- 1999.2 Launch of first 24-hour education channel for children, NOGGIN, on U.S. digital channel.
- 1999.2 *Pokemon* shown on U.S. commercial network.
- 1999.9 Launch of PBS Kids Channel as first PBS digital channel.
- 2001.3 Third World Summit on Media for Children held, Thessaloniki, Greece.
- 2002.2 Launch of two BBC digital channels for children, CBBC and CBeebies.
- 2004.4 Fourth World Summit on Media for Children and Adolescents held, Rio de Janeiro.
- 2004.6 40th anniversary of Prix Jeunesse International.
-

FEATURES OF CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS AROUND THE WORLD

This section explores the types of programs broadcast for children in the current era of children's channels and expanded, age-specific children's viewing.

Programs Dealing with Real Issues

Since the 1990s, there has been an increasing number of children's programs tackling real-world issues. Topics include bullying and violence; the disintegration of traditional family structures; friends and communication issues; alcohol and drugs; AIDS; poverty; and international conflict and war. At the same time, the target age for these programs has been going down.¹⁰

The modern world is one in which children are confronted with society's harsh realities on the one hand, and an increasing diversity of values on the other. There is a growing need to encourage children to think and act for themselves. In this context, an important role is filled by news and current affairs programs that present an open-minded exploration of the background to the issues in the spotlight.

Children's News Programs

The BBC launched a children's news program, *John Craven's Newsround*, in 1972. The program, in which news stories were reported by an adult reporter, won wide acclaim. The program continues to air, but with the new name, *Newsround* (changed in 1989), and a different format. Currently, the program is more child-centered, with news items presented by children, and it is supported by a website. In addition, the number of broadcasts per day has increased. There is a main, 10-minute program on BBC1 in the 5:00–6:00 P.M. slot every weekday, then on BBC2 and the digital channel CBBC, a shortened *Newsround* is shown along with *Newsround Showbiz*—a 10-minute roundup of celebrity and sports news. Special 30-minute broadcasts are produced when necessary, to deal with more serious news stories. The website contains infor-

¹⁰ Kodaira Sachiko, "Tayoka suru sekai no kyoiku bangumi: 'Nihon sho' kyoiku bangumi kokusai konkuru o chushin ni" [Diversifying Educational Programs Around the World: Highlighting the Japan Prize International Educational Program Contest], HKC (March 1997), pp. 42–57. Kodaira Sachiko, "Sekai ni miru kodomo-muke kyoiku bangumi no doko: 'Nihon sho' kyoiku bangumi kokusai konkuru o chushin ni" [Global Trends in Educational Broadcasts for Children: Highlighting the Japan Prize International Educational Program Contest]. HKC (January 2003), pp. 44–55.

mation and pictures about the full range of news stories, as well as links to past stories. Information is also presented on how to learn more about the medium of television.¹¹

In Germany, a children's news broadcast, *logo!*, has been showing since 1989, with a daily 10-minute roundup of national and international news stories along with background details, presented in an easy-to-understand format. The program includes news reports by children, and a supporting website has been online for some time. One example of innovative use of the website was online mock elections held to help children understand how elections work. Through web-based participation, it was hoped that children would be able to learn in a real way about the country's political system.

Many other European countries, including Austria, France, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Finland, offer children's news—in a variety of formats—on their national television channels. In the Netherlands and Sweden, two types of news broadcast are offered: a children's news program intended for family viewing, and a news magazine program for schools. Children's news programs in Europe benefit from the existence of the European Broadcasting Union, where members can share news resources and producers can exchange information.

In the United States, *Nick News*, written, produced, and hosted by journalist Linda Ellerbee, is the main children's news program. It was launched by Nickelodeon in 1991 at the time of the Gulf War to address the concern that there was no American children's program dealing with current events. Lasting 30 minutes, the program deals with issues such as environmental problems, AIDS, ethnic conflict, prejudice, war, and the influence of the media. It features in-depth discussion of these serious topics by panels of children invited to the studio. When the September 11, 2001 attacks took place, New York-based Ellerbee herself went out to investigate on the day, and, five days later, a hard-hitting special program was broadcast, complete with a children's panel discussion.

Japan's main news coverage for children consists of a weekly program, *Shukan Kodomo Nyusu* (Weekly Children's News), launched in April 1994 and aimed at 10-to-15-year-olds and their families. The format of the 30-minute program is made up of a "family" of three children discussing the week's national and international events, and focusing on the items of particular interest to the children. It is co-produced by NHK's children's television and news departments. The "father" in the program is played by an NHK

¹¹ Kodaira Sachiko, "Igirisu no media: Riterashi kyoiku" [The Latest Trends in Media Literacy Education in Britain], HKC (June 2004), pp. 58–71.

reporter. Difficult topics are explained with the aid of models and cartoons, a format that has won the approval of adult viewers as well as the children. An accompanying website is also available, with information about events discussed on the series since 1996.

Children and the Media at Times of War/Conflict

To discover what role television can play for children in times of emergency, there is much to be learned by examining the responses of *Nick News* and other children's programs to the events of September 11, 2001.¹² A special workshop entitled *Children Watching War* was held at the 2004 Prix Jeunesse International, to consider what television should offer for children in the context of the mass media focus on terrorism and war that has ensued since September 11. A key question centered on the kinds of reactions displayed by children around the world to media portrayal of the Iraq war. Producers' reports, along with analyses of various surveys by researchers formed the starting point for engrossing debate.¹³ The general conclusion of the discussion was that, rather than "protecting" children from the war news, it was better to try to select the basic facts and present them in an easy-to-understand way, thereby creating a safe environment within which children might be able to deal constructively with the emotions brought on by difficult topics. Such an approach could even have the added benefit of helping children to deal with conflict in every day life.

The producers of the BBC's *Newsround* and ZDF's *logo!* have developed guidelines for reporting "bad news" to children, and these were shared at the workshop. This resulted in a proposal that an international set of production guidelines for bad news should be developed for producers around the world.¹⁴

A further role of television with respect to serious news was highlighted by the use of a program on Israel's children's channel, HOP!, to demonstrate the use of gas masks. The program, aimed at preschoolers, uses puppets interact-

¹² Kodaira Sachiko, "Amerika doji tahatsu tero: Sono toki, media wa kodomo ni do taio shita ka" [The Terror Attacks in the USA: The U.S. Media Coverage for the Child Audience], HKC (December 2001), pp. 2–25.

¹³ The relevant research data were made available prior to the commencement of the workshop, in the following publication: *Television* (Special English Issue): *War on Children's Television*, IZI (International Central Institute for Youth and Educational Television in Munich), 2004.

¹⁴ BPB & IZI, *Children Watching War: A Few Reminders About Potential Contributions of the Media to Children in Times of Conflict & War*, a pamphlet reporting the results of the workshop, published June 8, 2004.

ing with the presenter to show how a gas mask is used. The format is intended to be gently informative, without leading to panic.

Diversification of Programming for Preschool Children

In Japan, programs aimed at the formative preschool years have been broadcast since the early days of television. The long-running *Okasan to issho* (With Mother), which continues to broadcast today, began in 1959. Three years prior to that, two programs intended for viewing at daycare centers and kindergartens were launched. There were a total of six such programs in 1960; each day, from Monday to Saturday, a different program was broadcast for this age group. The existence of two types of program for preschoolers—programs for viewing at home with family, and programs for viewing with friends at daycare or kindergarten—is a feature of Japanese children's television. Commercial television stations, Nippon Television and Fuji Television, also began to show programs for preschoolers from the mid-1960s.¹⁵

The enormous potential of television for preschool education has been demonstrated all over the world by the program *Sesame Street*. In 1969, the year of its launch on American public television, only a limited number of countries—including Japan, the United Kingdom, and Australia—offered regular, scheduled programs, with nationwide coverage, for preschoolers. In all of these countries preschool television was started by public broadcasters, and educational programs for viewing at school were also launched early. It was during the 1970s that programs for preschoolers became widespread throughout the world. Then, in the 1990s, preschool television entered a new era of expansion in both the number and the diversity of the programs. During this period, which continues to the present day, the content and styles of preschool children's programs have advanced considerably.

Sesame Street: A Case Study of Topical Issues

Sesame Street offers a case-study in successful, and highly topical, program design for this age group. Since its launch in 1969, the program's development has been guided by annual assessments of the educational requirements of its viewers, and also by analyses of the viewers' responses to the program. Localized versions of the program, adapted to suit the cultural and education-

¹⁵ An article providing a chronology of key Japanese programs for preschoolers since 1953, along with an overview of the context in which the programs have been used is Kodaira Sachiko, "Henka suru yochien hoikusho ni okeru media no riyo ishiki: 2002-nendo Yoji Muke Hosho Riyo Jokyo Chosa kara" [Changes in Media Use and User Awareness at Kindergartens and Nursery Schools: From the 2002 Survey on the Utilization of NHK Broadcasts for Young Children]. HKC (June 2003), pp. 50–69.

al needs of each region, have aired around the world. A notable fact about each version is that it is always co-produced by the American non-profit educational organization Sesame Workshop (formerly CTW) in partnership with a local producer. Since 1970, more than 20 international co-productions of *Sesame Street* have been made, including versions for Mexico, Germany, the Netherlands, Kuwait, Turkey, Russia, China, and Israel.¹⁶

Two particularly notable internationally co-produced versions of *Sesame Street* were launched in Africa in 2000, one in Egypt and the other in South Africa. The Egyptian version, *Alam Simsim*, deals with the currently much-discussed issues of girls' education and literacy for adult women. (A Dari-language version of *Alam Simsim* began to air in Afghanistan in 2003.) The South African version, *Takalani Sesame*, tackles the serious social issue of HIV and AIDS. A puppet called Kami—a five-year-old girl who is HIV-positive—is the vehicle for introducing the topic. The goal is to teach children the facts about this illness at an early age, thereby fostering friendship and understanding toward those infected and reducing prejudice. A radio-version of *Takalani Sesame* has also been produced as an educational resource for those without access to television.

One further innovation under the umbrella of *Sesame Street* is the joint production of *Sesame Stories* by Sesame Workshop and a group of Jordanian, Israeli, and Palestinian production partners. *Sesame Stories* aims to encourage the region's preschool children to feel pride in their own cultures while at the same time valuing and respecting the different cultures around them. The three programs in the series comprise segments created separately by each producer, and segments created jointly.

Fostering multicultural understanding and mutual respect has always been an important goal of *Sesame Street*. This aim was further emphasized in the thirty-fourth season of the American version, which ran in 2002/2003, after the September 11 attacks in 2001. Using material from the international versions of *Sesame Street*, each episode in that season included a segment featuring the daily life of a child in another part of the world.

Other preschool programs, too, have begun to address contemporary social issues and to emphasize multicultural understanding and respect. As televi-

¹⁶ Kodaira Sachiko, "Kokusaika jidai no kodomo-muke bangumi no tenbo: *Sesami Sutorito* kokusai kaigi o chushin ni" [Prospects for Children's TV in the Age of Internationalization: Based on the International Conference on Adaptation of *Sesame Street*], HKC (December 1990), pp. 26–39. There are a number of books and research papers about *Sesame Street*. The following is a recent example: Fisch, S. M. & Truglio, R. T. (eds.). *G is for Growing: 30 Years of Research on Children and Sesame Street*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., 2001.

sion for preschoolers becomes more widespread, this focus may serve to shape the way youngsters view the world from an early age.

Programs that Encourage Children's Critical Faculties

Pythagora Switch, a program for four-to-six-year-olds that has been running on NHK Educational since April 2002, has attracted the attention of television producers around the world due to its innovation of focusing on "ways of seeing and thinking." The aim of the program is to translate the concept of "the way we think" into images. It achieves this aim by means of a creative combination of animation, puppets, live action, and songs. The program has won much praise for its success, and it has scooped the prizes in its category at the Japan Prize International Educational Program Contest, the Prix Danube (an international children's television contest in Slovakia, launched in 1971) and the Prix Jeunesse International.

The question of how to increase children's engagement with science is a much-discussed topic among educators around the world. Consequently, there is great interest in children's programs that aim to develop a scientific way of looking at the world around us. *PEEP and the Big Wide World*, produced by American public television broadcaster WGBH with other producers, is one such program. Each episode explores a scientific topic, such as gravity or the ecology of an animal, by means of animated stories depicting the adventures of a chick, PEEP, interspersed with live-action segments showing children playing and experimenting with the concepts introduced by PEEP.

Programs that Encourage Children's Physical Activity

In addition to the programs encouraging creative thought in children, programs encouraging creative physical activity are also appearing. *Boohbah*, by the producers of *Teletubbies* (see below), is a 20-minute program for three-to-six-year-olds that aims to stimulate both creative thought and physical activity. The program centers around five sparkling characters—"Boohbahs"—who radiate a bright and powerful energy that sends them whirling and dancing around. They invoke an irresistible desire in children to join in and dance about. The story portion of the program always includes problem-solving of some kind. The viewers' creative thought is encouraged through the fun of guessing how the story is going to evolve. *Boohbah* was launched by a commercial broadcaster in the United Kingdom in April 2003, and now shows around the world, including North America, Australia, South Africa and Israel. In fall 2004, the BBC launched a new program encouraging physical activity in children: *Boogie Bebies*, which uses specially commissioned pop

music to get children dancing. In Japan, too, a physical activity program went on air in April 2004: *Karada de asobo* (Let's Move Our Bodies).

Such programs aim to promote children's physical and spiritual growth, by encouraging them to not simply sit in front of the television, but to get up and move around while they watch. They are attracting increasing attention all over the world.

Programs for Infants and Toddlers

A number of surveys have documented how even babies register interest in television, and react to its sounds and images. In hopes of providing meaningful first encounters with television, Japan's NHK Educational began to broadcast a program for newborns to two-year-olds, *Inai inai ba!* (Peek-a-boo), in October 1996. The following year, the BBC launched *Teletubbies* in the United Kingdom. *Teletubbies* is aimed at children aged one-and-a-half to three, and, at the time of its launch, its style and content were radically different from other British programs. The program design was guided by research indicating that the most engaging form of television for this age group would include gentle-paced action and lots of repetition. The program won the Grand Prix at the 1997 Japan Prize. It was the first preschool children's program to receive it since *Sesame Street* got this honor 26 years earlier. *Teletubbies* has been broadcast on public television in the United States since 1998, and subsequently in other countries, including Japan.

A brand new program for very young children is *Farzzle's World*, showing since September 2004 on Canada's preschoolers' channel, Treehouse TV. *Farzzle's World* is an animated series that shows the world from the point of view of the program's sole character, Farzzle, a baby still at the crawling stage. Farzzle's explorations of the world have a magical character: a toy dinosaur growls back when he shouts at it; pots and pans march along to his lead; and he learns how to swim from the fish on his crib mobile. The voice of a real two-year-old is used to deliver Farzzle's reactions to these adventures.

Programs Where Children Take Part

Programs where children appear on the show have been around from the early days of television. However, recently, there has been an increase in the number of programs offering opportunities for children to participate also in the planning and production processes.

Quiz Shows

Quiz shows are the most obvious example of programs with opportunities for children's participation. The most innovative quiz shows are not concerned

simply with children winning points. Instead, they are intended to foster intellectual curiosity by devising questions that reflect children's genuine concerns and devoting ample time to explaining the answers. An example of this is *Just Super!*, broadcast by Germany's ZDF. *Just Super!* is a current affairs and science quiz show where opponents compete to answer the most questions. However, the key feature of the show is not the winning or losing, but the verification of the answers. To check whether an answer is correct, the studio is suddenly transformed, mid-game, into, for example, a chemistry laboratory. Adapting science for children's television in this way is a strong point of ZDF.

Magazine Programs

The U.S. children's magazine program, *ZOOM*, is produced by WGBH Boston, one of the leading players in American public broadcasting. True to its motto, "by kids, for kids," the series is run by children. Its website has drawn much attention in recent years, winning numerous festival prizes including the very first Grand Prix for websites in the 2000 Prix Jeunesse International. The program draws on the experiences of a similar program of the same title aired in the 1970s, when the child viewers' parents themselves were elementary school children. In those days, children communicated their views of the program by means of letter, telephone, or fax. Now, in the age of the Internet, the program itself is not the only vehicle for reflecting children's input; the website offers an arena for children to communicate with each other, and to discover the fun of learning by accessing the vast online store of information.

Another long-running children's magazine program is the BBC's *Blue Peter*, which began in 1958. In this show, too, children's participation has always been integral. This feature now naturally extends to interaction with the *Blue Peter* website.

Real-life Activities in Television

A number of programs for preschoolers have been very successful in integrating scenes of real-life children's activities. The idea is that children will be motivated by television images of children exploring their environment. An example is *Deksels*, a cooking program for children, filmed by the Dutch public broadcaster KRO and broadcast on the children's channel, Z@ppelin. Each episode is six-and-a-half minutes long, and shows two five-year-olds at work in the kitchen, preparing some food of their own choice (peanut butter, in one episode). The activity ensues without narration; only simple background music accompanies the children's trial-and-error-based progress. There is no

adult instruction; the pair must help each other out, and the program concludes with them managing—somehow or other—to achieve their aim.

Another real-life activity program is Danish public broadcaster's *Yell!*, also aimed at preschoolers. Each twenty-minute *Yell!* episode shows preschool children composing a song based on something they have experienced. This show includes sympathetic adult presenters whose role is to discuss the songs with the children, encourage the expression of feelings, provide accompaniment, and transform the content of the song into images. The format differs from that of the Dutch program, but the aim of depicting the fun of the challenge is the same.

Cartoons

Cartoons have been a major feature of the growing number of children's channels and children's television programs. This is evident from screenings at MIPCOM Junior, the annual international marketplace for children's programs, where, since its establishment in 1993, cartoons have dominated. The reason behind this is clear: cartoons are perennially popular with children all over the world.

Japanese cartoons have been broadcast in Asia and parts of Europe, including France, Italy and Spain, since the mid-1970s. However, once exclusive children's channels began to increase from the mid-1990s, Japanese cartoons started to appear on children's television in countries where they had been previously difficult to sell, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany. The children watching the cartoons do not care whether their cartoons are made in Japan or elsewhere: they just want to watch them. In the television-viewing world, it is hard to find a child who does not know *Pokemon*. *Pokemon* originated on Japanese television in 1997. It was broadcast by a major television network in the United States in 1999 and soon thereafter all around the world.

The majority of the children's programs broadcast in Japan today, whether animated or not, are made domestically. The most popular programs are almost all home-grown. In other countries, the most popular programs are often imports: Japanese or American cartoons. The children's television environment in Japan is thus rather unusual. Nonetheless, one imported animation that has managed to win the hearts of Japanese children is the British *Thomas the Tank Engine and Friends*, shown in the first half of the 1990s as *Kikansha Tomasu* on the Fuji Television Saturday morning show, *Hirake! Ponkikki*. The success of *Thomas the Tank Engine and Friends* has opened the doors for other short puppet-based animation and also claymation (animation made with clay figures) programs from Europe, Canada, and Australia, to appear on

Japanese children's television. This reflects a worldwide trend brought on by the increase in children's channels: cartoons from Europe are increasingly being shown on American and Japanese television, as well as American and Japanese cartoons being exported to other countries.

Despite the huge volume of cartoons, there are very few that create a big splash at events like the Prix Jeunesse International. An exception is *Pingu*, the Swiss animation that is now shown worldwide. In Europe, there are strong calls for the expansion and development of European animation, so as to avoid being swamped with cartoons from Japan and the United States. The EBU Children and Youth Program Group is pursuing a joint production project for cartoons. However, global success is yet to be attained.

Another development is to combine the technique of animation—which could be considered the technique perfectly suited to the medium of television—with other techniques. An example of this is seen in *Jakers! The Adventures of Piggley Winks*, a series that mixes animation and live action, produced in the United Kingdom. Specifically, real scenes of a rural village in Ireland are combined with cutting-edge CGI technology. The series centers around Piggley Winks, a grandfather pig, who reminisces about his childhood adventures in the Irish village of Tara in the 1950s. His audience is his three grandchildren, born and bred in a bustling American city, and often in need of some pearls of Grandpa's wisdom about how the world works. The animation is beautifully produced, and the voices are provided by a dazzling cast of well-known actors. The program won a prize in the web category at the 2004 Prix Jeunesse International. How it will be received by the children of the North America and Europe is still to be seen.

Dreams and Fantasy

In Europe, there is a long tradition of live-action drama as another important children's television genre. Drama series are usually broadcast on public television, and, for Britain's BBC, drama is as important in the children's television schedule as education and the news. On the children's channel for 6-to-12 year-olds, CBBC, 650 hours per year are devoted to drama programs. The variety is broad, including literary dramatizations, suspense-packed mysteries, comedies, and drama series that feature the day-to-day concerns of children, such as the long-running school-life drama *Grange Hill*.

A Polish drama, *The Wooden Dog*, won the Grand Prix at the 2004 Prix Jeunesse International. The story is set in a snow-covered land, and begins with the disappointment of a young boy who had been looking forward to getting a sled dog, but, due to an allergy to dogs, has to abandon the idea. He is given an old wooden sled, instead, and when he tries calling out to it, the sled

bursts into action, moving as if being pulled by a dog. Thus, a fantasy adventure begins, as the boy and his friend, a little girl, set off riding on the sled.

Andrzej Maleszka, producer of *The Wooden Dog*, voiced his wish that, after working hard all day at school, children should be able to go off on adventures and live their dreams. He suggested that television should play a bigger role in making this come true. This sentiment was much admired not only by other children's television producers, but also by the Prix Jeunesse Children's Jury, who awarded *The Wooden Dog* their "Best Fiction" prize.

SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN'S TELEVISION

The development of children's television programs has been spurred further by the support made possible by websites as well as due to a number of contests and conferences held worldwide.

Website-based Services

As mentioned in the previous section, there is now a remarkable number of websites accompanying programs of all genres. Enjoyment of a program and learning from it need to be no longer limited to the time of viewing. Producers are becoming aware that program design must now incorporate plans for web-based activity as well.

In addition to providing content for children, a number of websites for preschoolers and first- and second-grade elementary school children have begun to offer information for the parents or teachers about how to enhance the children's viewing experience. One example is the American public television show, *Between the Lions* (produced by WBGH Boston). This is a program for four-to-seven year-olds, which aims to develop children's interest in words and to bring out the fun of reading and writing. The website provides information about follow-up reading activities for parents to do with their children, and includes advice on issues such as how to encourage correct pronunciation. Parent-child participation is an important aspect of the series. The relevant web content was thus developed from the planning stage, along with the content of the programs themselves.

A further development in television-related web services for children is the establishment of web portals by certain children's television providers. The portals provide links to information that extends beyond the content of a particular television series, such as information about child rearing, home education, and helping children with their schoolwork. An example is the American *PBS Kids* website, which provides links to content for teachers (*PBS*

TeacherSource) and parents (*PBS Parents*). The *PBS Parents* site contains information about the children's programs and about related activities. In addition, an *Issues and Advice* section offers discussion of a range of topics including "Behavior and Development," "Disabilities," and "School and Education." Each category includes comments by experts, lists of reference materials, and information about relevant television programs.

The BBC's website for preschoolers, *CBeebies*, also acts as a portal. A link for "grown-ups" provides access to services for parents and caregivers, similar to those described for *PBS Kids*.

Web portals are not provided only by broadcasters: the producers of series such as *Sesame Street* and *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* also offer websites. Their content draws on their many years of experience and accumulated resources, and offers a variety of image-packed information relating to education for young children. These sites played a valuable role in helping to relieve children's tension at the time of the September 11 attacks, by swiftly uploading age-specific information and advice, put together in consultation with the programs' production and research experts. This web information complemented the programs' emergency television broadcasts produced with the same stress-relieving goal.¹⁷

Toward an Optimal Media Environment for Children

The international children's television contests, the Prix Jeunesse International and the Japan Prize (the latter with its motto of "for our children's future"), have contributed greatly to the development of children's television around the world since they were launched in the mid-1960s. The contests are not only about selecting winners. They provide an opportunity for producers, researchers, and educators from all over the world to engage in open-minded discussion about the programs in the contest, to exchange views and information about any aspect of children's television, and to develop ideas for future programs. In addition, the contests have built up video libraries that can be accessed for workshops and seminars. This means that the fruits of each contest can be exploited worldwide, with the aim that any country setting out to develop its children's television repertoire has valuable resources on hand.

It is interesting to note that these two contests began just at the time when the world, and particularly Japan and the United States, was rushing to pigeonhole children's television as "cartoons." In this context, the role of the contests in broadening the scope of children's television seems all the more significant.

Of course, there is no point of simply producing quality children's televi-

¹⁷ See Kodaira, "Amerika doji tahatsu tero."

sion programs. It means little if the children do not actually watch them. Research shows that children's viewing is not limited to children's programs: any television program may be watched by children, and exert influence on them. With the increasing number of channels and types of media, and the increasingly easy access to the whole world's television programs, web content and other information, irrespective of where one lives, the potential influence—both good and bad—of the media on children is enormous.

In this context, it is difficult to consider the development of television for children without also looking at the environment in which children's television is situated: namely, the whole gamut of electronic media. In the 1990s, a growing need was recognized around the world for program producers, broadcasters, and also analysts and others connected with "children and the media," to sit down together and discuss the issues. *The World Summit on Television (later Media) for Children* was conceived in response to this need.¹⁸ The first summit was held in March 1995 in Melbourne: the result of several years of planning under the leadership of Dr. Patricia Edgar, director of ACTF (Australian Children's Television Foundation). The summit generated great interest around the world, with over 500 delegates attending from 63 countries, many traveling great distances from North America and Europe. The delegates included an impressive line-up of producers, journalists, government agency policy makers, regulatory agency representatives, sponsors, educators, citizens' groups, viewers' representatives, and researchers in the fields of media studies, sociology, education, and psychology. In short, it was the most varied group of participants ever to gather in the name of "children and television." A variety of topics were passionately debated at the summit, including issues such as concern about domination of American-made programs due to the spread of exclusive children's channels, the future of children's programming on financially-strapped public television, and the effects of violence on television, along with the question of restricting depiction of violence.¹⁹

The second summit was held in London in 1998. A focus of this summit was to hold discussions and workshops with the aim of finding solutions to some of the problems identified during the first summit. For example, instead of further discussion on the topic of "public broadcasting vs. commercial broadcasting," the debate addressed the question of how to create a viable business model for quality children's television production. Similarly, instead

¹⁸ Details may be found at: <http://www.childrensmediasummit.com>.

¹⁹ Kodaira Sachiko, "Terebi to kodomo sekai samitto ni sanko shite" [Attending the World Summit on Television and Children], *Hoso kyoiku* [Broadcasting Education] (June 1995), pp. 52–55.

of discussing objections to American television, a workshop was held with the aim of establishing an international co-production team with partners in over 20 countries, to create animated programs that reflect each country's individual culture. Another feature of this summit was the inclusion of a variety of sessions on topics such as television for preschoolers, programs on the environment, and news for children. Again, these sessions facilitated the exchange of practical ideas. In addition, there was debate about the regulation of the content of television programs, such as by means of a "V-chip" in the television set. The discussion was constructive, with a focus on how to solve problems relating to television content regulation, and it led to the identification of a need for media education.²⁰

At the third summit in 2001, the name was changed to include "Media" instead of "Television," and the summit focused on children's relationship with computer games (video games) and the Internet. The summit was held in Greece, and included research sessions, where, each day, researchers from around the world presented papers on children and the media. Attendance by local researchers and university students was particularly high, and lively question-and-answer sessions were a feature of the summit.

Finally, the fourth summit was held in Rio de Janeiro in April 2004. This time, there was a focus on how to improve children's television and media environment in Latin America, with much evidence of Latin American providers wanting to learn from the experiences of the countries at the forefront of children's media. The summit was bigger than ever, with 2,600 attendees. Participants from the host country, Brazil, were in the majority. Many others attended from other Latin American countries, while attendance from North America and Europe was less dominant than at previous summits.

The summit website was also more impressive than ever before. It was a trilingual site (Portuguese, Spanish and English), and it featured pre-summit access to reference materials relating to the summit discussions, and in-summit video of some of the sessions. Nor did the site close down right after the conference. Efforts were made toward network building so that the results of the summit can continue to be exploited in Brazil and elsewhere in Latin America.

The location of the next summit is South Africa, which has hosted three regional summits in the past. Work is already in progress in South Africa to develop television and radio resources for African children, and the special issues of the region will certainly be an important feature of the summit. There is no doubt that the international world of children's media can look

²⁰ Kodaira, Sachiko, "Kodomo no terebi sekai samitto: Rondon kaigi o chushin ni" [On the Second World Summit on Television for Children], *Seishonen mondai* [Youth Problems] (November 1998), pp. 16–21.

forward to yet more stimulating debate about the role of children's television and a child-friendly media environment geared to a new era.

Each world summit on media for children has included some form of participation by children. However, a new feature of the fourth world summit was an Adolescents Forum, an additional summit held over four days, with 150 teenage representatives from around the world. The forum included professionally-led workshops on television, radio, and animation production, and also discussions on media-related issues. Interpreting services between Portuguese, Spanish, and English were provided.

On the final day, the teenage delegates reported on the outcome of the forum to the assembled children-and-media professionals. As well as presenting their own perception of current media issues and of the topics they felt were important, the teenage delegates expressed their wish that adults should not simply act on behalf of children: children should be involved in tackling media-related issues.

There was no Japanese delegate at this first Adolescents Forum. However, the forum clearly offered an invaluable opportunity for teenagers to discuss the problems and social issues surrounding electronic media with their cohorts from different cultures and backgrounds around the world.

Since 2000, the Prix Jeunesse International, too, has included a participation forum specifically for children: namely, the Children's Jury. The Children's Jury comprises children from a Munich media club who get involved in the dubbing of the festival's entries into German. The entries are then shown to schoolchildren in Munich, who vote for the best one. On the basis of these votes, the Children's Jury nominates its own prizes in the festival. Participating in such a process goes beyond the already rewarding experience of viewing the world's best children's television: it develops the children's media literacy by giving them an active role in enabling the messages of the different programs to be transmitted to a wider audience. Being on the Children's Jury thus involves much more than simply voting for the most enjoyable program.

The way in which children have fulfilled their roles on the Adolescents Forum at the world summit, or the Children's Jury at the Prix Jeunesse International, testifies to their sensitivity and insight toward electronic media, and their interest in the topic. "Children and the media" has been the subject of numerous surveys and debates over recent years. For all the adults connected in some way or other with this topic—producers and broadcasters, researchers, parents, and teachers—it is time for a comprehensive review of the data, with a stronger focus on the views of the children themselves.

(Translated by Heather Marsden)