

Fun with Claude

ORIGIN: The series is based on the books by award-winning illustrator David Wojtowycz. The *Claude* titles were first published in 2000 and have since sold in the U.K., Australia, New Zealand, the U.S., Korea and Japan.

DISTRIBUTOR: ZDF Enterprises

PRODUCERS: *Fun with Claude* is a co-production of Red and Blue Productions, Dot To Dot Productions, ZDF, ZDF Enterprises, S4C and Playhouse Disney U.K.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: Marion Edwards and Jo Killingley

COMMISSIONING BROADCASTER: ZDF in Germany

TV SHOW: *Fun with Claude* consists of 52 10-minute episodes, produced in 2-D animation.

DESCRIPTION: The series sweeps young viewers into the enchanting and colorful world of a cute, cuddly and lively little polar bear who, like many children today, has moved to a new home. *Fun with Claude* takes a quirky and comical look at an exciting new world. It celebrates differences and encourages audiences to take a closer look at the things around them, introducing the knowledge and skills, understanding and emotions that children need to make the most of everyday life.

Each 10-minute episode has a gentle and humorous story line driven by our intrepid young polar bear, Claude. At the start of the episode we see a bird's-eye view of Bearhampton, zooming in on some comical antics of its bear inhabi-

tants. We settle on Claude's house and finally Claude, as the narrator begins to tell the audience, "One of the things Claude noticed about his new home was ..."

Each episode sees Claude exploring something with "new eyes," triggered by an animal, a job, an object, an event or nature. Part narrated, part character-spoken, Claude will often talk directly to the camera and the audience at home, making the relationship between him and the children more intimate

TV SALES: ZDF Enterprises has sold the series to ABC in Australia, YLE in Finland, RAI in Italy, NRK in Norway, Canal+ Poland, TV3 in Spain and Sweden's SVT.

MAJOR TOY LICENSEES: ZDF Enterprises will introduce the new style guide for *Fun with Claude* at MIPCOM in order to acquire toy licensees for pan-European territories. Key categories include plush, electronics, jigsaws and memory games.

OTHER PRODUCTS: Apparel for toddlers, books and DVDs. Bedding and video games at a later stage.

STRATEGY FOR ROLLOUT: The show premiered on Playhouse Disney in the U.K. in the first quarter and quickly became a top performer. It already ranks among the top three shows on Playhouse U.K. S4C began airing the series in the second quarter of this year, and further international rollout is slated for 2010. In Germany it will air on ZDF and KI.KA, and other national premieres will follow on Australia's ABC, Spain's TV3, Norway's NRK, Sweden's SVT, Finland's YLE and Poland's Canal+.

"The next step of our distribution strategy will target the U.S., Italy and France," says Christian Massmann, the head of sales at ZDF Enterprises. "Negotiations with a major Italian terrestrial broadcaster are under way. Also of strategic importance are Latin America and Eastern Europe. In the

European and Latin American markets, our focus is naturally on the large terrestrial broadcasters, as well as on the pay-TV channels. In the U.S., the most promising candidates are the two major children's networks Disney and Nickelodeon, as well as PBS. In the wake of the huge success of *Fun with Claude* on Playhouse U.K., ZDF Enterprises is hoping for a follow-up multinational deal with Disney."

Next up, Massmann continues, will be Asia, in particular Japan. Also a priority is firming up home-entertainment deals. "In all countries, ZDF Enterprises is closely coordinating its activities with TV broadcasters, home-video and licensing partners, as well as with the publishers of the *Claude* books."

ZDF Enterprises is also launching a consumer site for the property, offering games and other elements. "The microsite will be licensed to broadcasters worldwide as part of the TV deal with the aim of increasing the success of the series," Massmann says. "Such an all-encompassing all-media strategy is absolutely [necessary] today, especially in the children's program market." ■

