

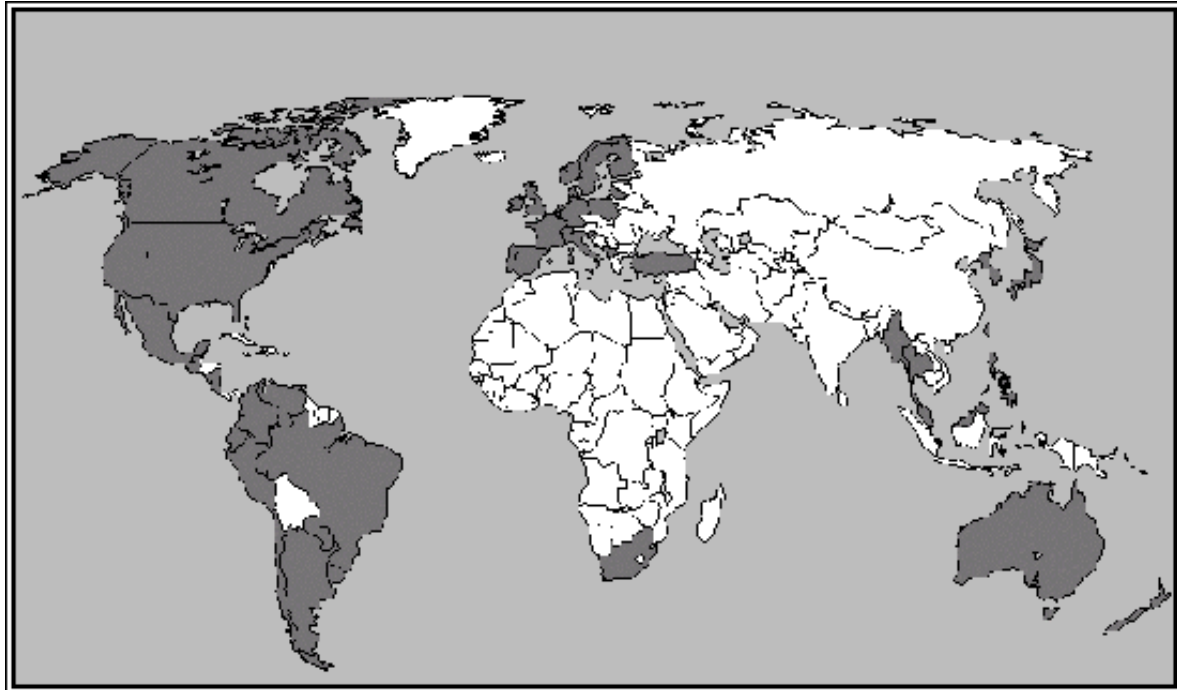
TELEVISION

International Central Institute for Youth and Educational Television (IZI)

Special English Issue No. 12/1999/2: "The Teletubbies"

The World of the "Teletubbies"

The *Teletubbies* are a global programme success. Commissioned by the BBC and made by Ragdoll Productions under the direction of Anne Wood and Andrew Davenport, they set out from Britain to conquer the world. Television companies in over 60 countries have acquired the broadcasting rights (see map of the world).



Since 10th March 1997 this pre-school series has been shown in Britain, since 28th March 1999 in the ARD/ZDF Children's Channel and since April 1999 on the ARD as well.

A successful programme innovation

The *Teletubbies* is an unusual children's programme for the very youngest viewers (main target group 2-5 years). The rhythm of the cutting and the narration is extremely calm, the story is constantly repeated and is therefore predictable. Despite public criticism, the series is popular with the young viewers and their parents. One million people watch the *Teletubbies* every day in the ARD/ZDF Children's Channel.

Business with the *Teletubbies*

The *Teletubbies* are not only the BBC Worldwide's largest investment to date in the area of children's television, they also make considerable profits for all companies involved. BBC Worldwide gives the income from the *Teletubbies* as £ 330m in the years 1997 and 98 (see diagram).

There are approximately 300 merchandising products on the series on the international market. So far 56 licences have been granted for the Federal Republic of Germany.

- 1 million *Teletubbies* books sold (Ravensburger),
- Over 500,000 videos sold (Ravensburger),
- 45,000 *Teletubbies* computer games sold (The Learning Company)
- 125,000 copies of the *Teletubbies* Magazine sold monthly (Panini Verlag)

The *Teletubbies*: criticism, cult objects and projection

Search engines in the World Wide Web are now showing over 70,000 entries, ranging from fan pages to *Teletubbies* hate sites. The *Teletubbies* are not only a worldwide success with children, adults have also made them a subject of discussion throughout the world. The *Teletubbies* are stirring up the debate on children and television anew, they have acquired cult status and become areas for projecting cultural criticism and homophobia.

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