

Cartoon Network corners kids' TV on any device

 By Leigh Andrews

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It's no secret that TV viewers have changed their consumption habits. Luckily, some broadcasters have changed with their audience and are now embracing all new digital channels.

Pierre Branco, vice president and general manager of Southern Europe and Africa for Turner, oversees all aspects of the business – both commercial and editorial – across those territories to making sure that Turner adapts to each market and delivers the best offer possible to both its consumers and partners. He recently revealed the brand's holistic slate of content for the 2017-18, which proves their success.



Pierre Branco, vice president and general manager of Southern Europe and Africa for Turner.

As proof, stats in Dstv-I, TechEdge and Dstv-i Homes, show Turner Kids has remained the first pay TV multiplex for 31 consecutive months, with Cartoon Network holding the top spot as the first pay TV kids channel in South Africa among those aged 4 to 14. In March 2017, the channel was also up 17 percent in ratings and up ten percent in shares year-on-year. Eight out of ten top competitive kids shows were Cartoon Network shows, with the other two remaining places occupied by their second kid's channel, Boomerang.

The Sunday Times Generation Next study for 2016, which comprised face-to-face written questionnaires from 5,500 children between the ages of 8 and 23 in six urban and peri-urban provinces show that it's not just the young set that tunes in to their toons. It's a favourite with many 'older' kids and the young at heart, too – ranked as the second coolest pay TV channel, just behind Trace Urban, for kids and adults alike. This ties in with findings from Turner Africa's recent data and consumer insights survey that showed parents, especially mothers, are a strong source of influence on South African children when it comes to picking something to watch, much more so than in other EMEA markets.

That trend compares across the rest of the continent, as Cartoon Network is widely distributed in both French and English-speaking Africa.

Branco says, “It benefits from high visibility and awareness as a leader in kids’ pay TV in all our key markets. Through our social media pages, we can exchange with our enthusiastic fans from across the continent; on Facebook, Cartoon Network Africa has about 620,000 fans who interact with our brand every day, through views, likes, comments or shares.”

That’s important as TV viewing is no longer limited to a set broadcast in front of a standard TV set.

I chatted to Branco about children’s evolving TV-viewing habits, how Cartoon Network’s offering has extended into the digital realm as a result of this ‘total consumption’ trend and what’s the impact on advertisers...

📌 **Explain Cartoon Network’s positioning as a ‘boy-focused, girl-inclusive’ channel.**

Cartoon Network is universally appealing to kids who look for creative and qualitative content, by providing a space for them to laugh out loud and stretch their imagination. It is the home of highly creative programmes, of unexpected and imaginative experiences, with high-quality, multi-layered comedy and adventure shows. Our most successful programmes include *Regular Show*, *Teen Titans Go!* and *Ben 10*, which benefits from a very high awareness (98% for kids aged seven to nine) in South Africa according to the Kidz Global Brand Trends study.

While 60% of our young viewers are boys, our programming does take girls into account with certain shows being more girl-skewed like the *Powerpuff Girls*, with the new series holding the second highest brand awareness among all Cartoon Network shows for kids aged 6 to 11 and is in the top three of the most likable Cartoon Network shows among younger girls between the ages of 6 and 8, according to South Africa BrandTracker’s Awareness and Likeability Wave 3 2017.



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📌 **Interesting. Elaborate on how and why kids’ viewing habits have evolved.**

One of our strengths as an international media group resides in the fact that we can benchmark many markets and thus, anticipate trends. Worldwide, it’s been said that pay TV is slowing down, because of the arrival of new players that naturally leads to evolving consumer behaviour. While the strength of our linear channels is undeniable, as seen through our very positive ratings, it is true that today’s viewer can consume content on multiple platforms. This is exciting for Turner: it means we can extend our innovation beyond the creation of programs and come up with an engaging consumer experience.

In South Africa, children tend to 'stay younger for longer' and they will move away from animated content later than in other markets. We've also noticed strong co-viewing habits in South African households, giving Pay TV an advantage to other means of consumption as it is a platform you can watch in a group, unlike phones or tablets. This is based on the Turner data and consumer insights team's 'kids industries qualitative survey', which interviewed 90 South African families for a month on their lifestyle, TV-viewing habits and digital habits. Finally, South African viewers are very faithful to a particular brand. This is a great opportunity for us as we're looking to expand our brands outside the realm of television and if our viewers are passionate about certain programmes, this means there will be an appetite for more.

❏ **How has your offering extended into the digital realm because of this 'total consumption', and what's the impact on advertisers?**

Turner is becoming a more consumer-centric, data-driven media company, at a time where consumer and industry insights have an increasingly central role in how companies can innovate, from content development through to marketing and monetisation.

This increased focus on insights and analytics will allow Turner to provide richer metrics to the various partners it works with across its portfolio of branded destinations. Turner is committed to deploying its brands across the full digital ecosystem. We've been launching innovative products, focusing on gaming and apps; in 2016, EMEA markets witnessed 33 million apps downloads, as well as 406m annual gameplays across kid's websites. YouTube vertical channels have been launched in November 2016 for Cartoon Network's key franchises, such as *Adventure Time*, *The Amazing World of Gumball*, *The Powerpuff Girls* and *Ben 10*.

❏ **Elaborate on the digital products we can expect to launch in South Africa this year.**

At the end of January 2017, Cartoon Network launched an exciting new micro-network specifically designed for small screens. Cartoon Network Anything offers a stream of brand-new content, created exclusively for fans of the channel to enjoy on their mobiles and tablets – allowing kids to engage with their favourite shows and characters like never before.



Cartoon Network launches app

27 Jan 2017



In February, we launched a new Boomerang YouTube channel for Africa, so all our *Tom & Jerry* fans will be able to enjoy exclusive clips and compilations online through the continent. We premiered an all-new series *Mighty Magiswords* on Cartoon Network, which benefits from exclusive shorts and video vlogs for Youtube and CN Anything. And there's more to come! Later this year, an exclusive new app, MagiMobile, will allow all *Mighty Magiswords* fans to connect their mobile devices to their TV to collect items from the show. We will also be offering new levels of our *Ben 10: Up to Speed* app and launching a new *Steven Universe* console game.

❏ **What are you personally most looking forward to from the 2017/18 season?**

Digital platforms allow us to be more innovative than ever with our content production: we can deploy content across multi-platforms, like we've done with *Mighty Magiswords*. A project I'm very excited about, and that will be launching in the upcoming month, is our new Cartoon Network original series *OK K.O.!*, which lives across the TV and gaming landscape. The animated series, called *OK K.O.! Let's Be Heroes*, has been greenlit and will be followed by an integrated console game jointly developed with indie video game studio Capybara Games. The console and PC game is an action brawler with role-playing game elements, while the show integrates this gaming universe in its storyline. This is a great example of a multi-media development process and the result for fans will not disappoint: they'll be able to access the property through diverse platforms.

Seems diversification is the way of the future. For more on Turner Africa, visit their [website](#) or [here](#) to view Boomerang's YouTube channel.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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