

# **Bob the Builder™ to help boost pre-schoolers' computer skills**

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ClickandPlay.com helps prepare children for IT-rich schooling environment; Combines fun, learning and computer literacy in a safe environment

17 September 2007 – Bob the Builder™ and many other popular children's characters will be featured on a new website for pre-schoolers to encourage computer literacy in children before they start school. The new educational resource has launched as children settle into another academic year in what is an increasingly IT-centric schooling environment.

The site, [www.clickandplay.com](http://www.clickandplay.com), provides a safe way to introduce children to computers, enabling basic computer skills - like how to use a mouse and send an email - in a fun, educational way.

The subscription-based site features the popular pre-school characters from leading children's entertainment producer and rights owner HIT Entertainment, including Fireman Sam™, Angelina Ballerina™ and Barney & Friends™, with Thomas & Friends™ and Bob the Builder™ due to launch in early December 2007. Unlike other children's websites, ClickandPlay uses a 'walled garden' approach making it entirely safe as children can't get onto less suitable sites or be exposed to other dangers of the internet. The games, stories and tools let children learn numbers, letters, shapes and colours, while basic history and geography elements encourage awareness of the world around them.

According to British Education Communication and Technology Agency (BECTA), the UK is ranked fourth in Europe for the highest number of internet connected computers in schools.

"This IT-rich educational environment and the vital role computers play in the learning process and curriculum, means that getting basic computer skills at a young age is more important than ever," says Alastair Gregory, managing director of ClickandPlay. "We don't think children should spend hours in front of a computer screen to the detriment of physical exercise and social skills. But for pre-schoolers today, learning how to use a mouse is as important as learning how to hold a pencil. Parents can help prepare their child for school by adding computer time into their day-to-day play."

ClickandPlay features a range of interactive games that teach a child how to move a mouse around a screen, how to move forward and back to new pages, how to use a keyboard and how to send emails. Children love the email application as they can send a letter – with their parents help – to their favourite character, and then receive a personalised e-mail in return, written in the character's tone of voice.

Other features include an art package that allows children to draw and paint in ClickandPlay. They receive backgrounds, stamps and animated stickers at the beginning of their subscription and can earn more as they do the activities and win stars. These can be used to make art that can be printed out or sent to the characters.

Katie Price, Director Publishing HIT Entertainment added: "Click and Play is a safe, fresh and new environment in which children can interact with their favourite characters whilst also learning some

basic computer skills. Our partnership with ClickandPlay offers HIT an exciting opportunity in further developing our digital strategy.”

Subscriptions to ClickandPlay cost £4.95 per month or are available at a reduced rate for six monthly or annual subscriptions. A free trial version can also be played with no obligation. A subscription allows up to four users, ideal for families with multiple children. The content is suitable for children aged 3 to 7 and is updated weekly. For more information, go to [www.clickandplay.com](http://www.clickandplay.com)

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Notes for editors:

#### About ClickandPlay

ClickandPlay is published by ClickandPlay.com Ltd, a company set up in 2006 by Alastair Gregory. The ClickandPlay team of writers, editors and graphic artists have many years of experience in educational multimedia. They have designed the site to be a fun environment which stimulates children's interest and encourages them to learn. ClickandPlay works with a number of children's Entertainment companies. In particular it works closely with Hit Entertainment through its licensing agreements for characters such as Bob the Builder™ and Thomas & Friends™.

#### About HIT Entertainment

HIT Entertainment, owned by private equity investment group Apax Partners, is one of the world's leading independent children's entertainment producers and rights-owners. HIT's portfolio includes properties, such as Bob the Builder™, Thomas & Friends™, Pingu™, Fireman Sam™, and Angelina Ballerina™. HIT acts as a worldwide representative for The Jim Henson Company's library of classic family brands and representative for The Wiggles® in the UK. HIT also owns the Guinness World Records™ publishing and television property. Launched in 1989, HIT's lines of business span television and video production (including studios in the US and the UK), publishing, consumer products licensing and live events. With a catalogue of more than 1,000 hours of young children's programming, HIT sells its shows to more than 240 countries worldwide, in more than 40 different languages and has operations in the UK, US, Canada, Hong Kong and Japan. In 2005, the Company joined Comcast Corporation, PBS and Sesame Workshop to launch PBS KIDS SproutSM, a 24-hour digital cable channel and VOD service for preschoolers.

For more information, visit [www.hitentertainment.com](http://www.hitentertainment.com).

For more information on ClickandPlay or for high resolution images or screenshots, please contact:

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