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methods are employed, the paper concludes, but it must be recognised that they should be handled with quite different procedures from those routinely employed with adults.

Marketing: the Hard Sell

Clive Addison, group marketing manager for Sega-Ozisoft, gave some insights into the marketing strategies of a company which claims to have 65 per cent of market share in computer games, ahead of Nintendo.

The immense popularity of these games is shown in the statistics Addison produced: 70 per cent of 10-14 year olds and 57 per cent of 5-9 year olds play at least weekly. And older

people are not left out - a quarter of 20-29 year olds also play them weekly. An average 26 per cent of the population play weekly, 11 per cent daily.

Sega's target market is 13-17 year olds. Formerly they targeted boys but they have now found that 19 per cent of users are girls and that there is high awareness among females 10-30. Addison showed a TV commercial which showed an eight year old girl playing in a field of daisies with a voice over saying 'now here's a really nice thing to do' as the screen fills with typical game sequences of kick boxers zapping attackers, mutants and the rest. Commercials like these are designed to be a tongue-in-cheek response to the critics of computer games.

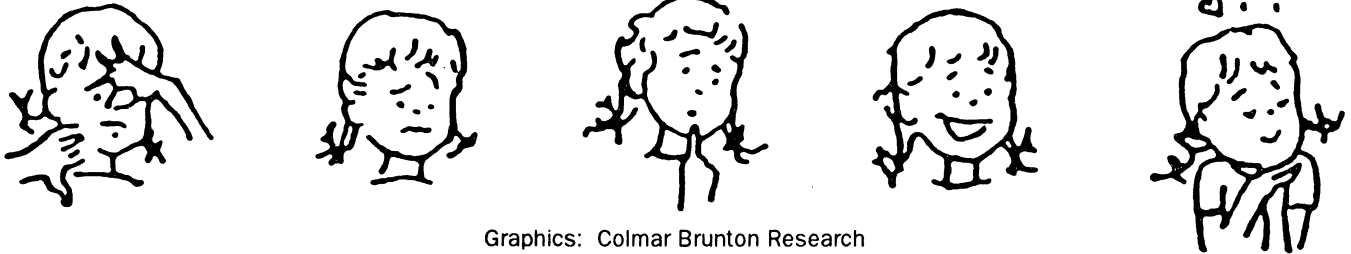
Sega's emphasis is heavily on direct marketing, with a database of nearly 200,000 players which every six months receive information on new products, and tips such as how to cheat

and get to the higher levels.

Every game now released has a secret code allowing players to 'cheat'. This is a clever marketing ploy which plays on the desirability of being 'in the know' and make children hungry for information.

Sega frequently markets in conjunction with other child-oriented brands: McDonalds, Cottees, McCains Pizza.

Asked about regulation, Addison said that there is a 'strict industry code' among the two major manufacturers, and they are working with the OFLC to develop industry standards for everyone. All material is vetted and violence is rejected, he said. (The controversial *Night Stalker*, which the company did not release after criticism of its portrayal of violence against women, has now been classified by the OFLC as suitable for 12-17 year olds.) □



Graphics: Colmar Brunton Research

Children's Radio Revival?

One Australian in five is a child under 12, but no mainstream radio serves this 19.4 per cent of the population. The ABC axed the international award winning 'Ticklepot' in 1990. Only Radio for the Print Handicapped and 5MMM, public radio in Adelaide, now provide regular programs for children.

As part of its work in the broad areas of information poverty, the CLC is researching the reasons why radio, the cheapest and most accessible medium of information and entertainment, largely neglects children. When children are developing linguistic, listening and imaginative skills, radio is a far more suitable medium than TV, which encourages passivity.

The search so far has turned up quite different approaches overseas. BBC Radio 5 in the UK is exclusively devoted to sport and children's programs. BBC Radio Scotland produces children's magazine and educational programs. The BBC World Service produces young people's programs for overseas broadcast in Bengali, Hindi, Vietnamese, English, Bulgarian, Burmese and Arabic. Finland, Sweden and Norway all have a strong tradition of public broadcasting for children, as have many former eastern bloc countries.

A great deal of money is presently being spent in the US on establishing children's radio networks in the belief that while many adults will resist advertising encouraging spending on

themselves, they are more open to further spending on their children. As advertisers focus on this factor and the increasing spending power of children themselves, the commercial potential of children's radio becomes more obvious. That will raise significant ethical issues, which the research project will attempt to forecast.

Readers are encouraged to contact Bruce Shearer on (03) 642 0282 at the Melbourne office of the CLC with information or ideas about children's radio.

Bruce Shearer