Case Study: Amigos Conectados Project by The Walt Disney Company Latin America and Chicos.net

The Walt Disney Company Latin America is a leader in family entertainment in the region and assumes this role with great responsibility. Disney strives to create products in an ethical manner and promote the happiness and well being of kids and families everywhere.

Since the launch of its first Internet site in 1995, Disney has been committed to promoting both safe Internet practices for children and parental involvement in kids’ online experiences. Disney conducts online safety media and educational outreach campaigns aimed at building awareness and educating kids, parents, and caregivers on how to be safe and have fun online.

Children’s rights Issue or Risk

With increased ICT usage among children, parents are frequently concerned about their children’s ability to navigate the Internet safely. Additionally, the digital divide, once primarily associated with one’s access to the Internet, is now also impacted heavily by digital literacy – how well users understand ICT risks and how to responsibly leverage all that technology has to offer.

ICT use among children continues to expand rapidly bringing with it a diverse set of opportunities and challenges and risks. On the one hand the Internet has placed the world’s information at our fingertips, shaping culture, communication and learning. On the other hand, as technologies become increasingly accessible and portable, children and teenagers are presented with new scenarios that parents, teachers and technology product/service providers must work to understand to better guide them and protect them.

The company response

Acknowledging that online safety is an increasingly important area, The Walt Disney Company has made significant investments into online safety features in its services. It has developed internal procedures to ensure that new products are assessed from the perspective of online safety and privacy protection before being introduced into the market. In addition, Disney invests in education and capacity building initiatives and works with trusted organizations to support their online safety mission.

One such example is the company’s Amigos Conectados initiative, a digital literacy program developed by The Walt Disney Company Latin America and NGO Chicos.net. Delivered across Latin America, the

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1 Delivered in partnership with regional partner Asociación Civil Chicos.net (NGO), as well as the following country specific partners: Así México (Mexico), Instituto da Criança (Brazil), Red Papaz (Colombia). Most organizations belong to Red Natic, a Latin-American network of NGOs, committed to the promotion of children’s rights with regards to the safe and responsible use of ICT.
program gives teachers, parents and children the **digital literacy and digital citizenship skills**\(^2\) necessary to fully engage in the digital future. The program's key goals include:

- **Maximizing the benefits of technology** through diverse activities
- **Promoting digital platforms** as a means to create, express oneself, produce and share information
- **Building digital competences** among new groups, reducing the digital knowledge gap and supporting equal access to technology products and services
- **Promoting the safe, responsible and respectful use of ICTs**, promoting healthy interaction among peers and preventing cyber bullying
- **Raising awareness of the importance of privacy** online
- **Empowering parents and teachers** with information on issues related to technology, uses, devices, good digital habits

The program is a first of its kind for Disney as it leverages its characters to bring together a wide variety of stakeholders vital to improving Internet safety - children, parents, educators, the community, NGOs, businesses and corporate volunteers, media, and opinion leaders.

The program offers materials online in Spanish, Portuguese and English, and is delivered through both traditional and digital channels including:

- **Trainings for teachers** where experts present trends on children’s digital citizenship and discuss challenges, tips and tools:
  - **Training sessions**: in-person training sessions and workshops for teachers in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Colombia
  - **School trainings**: trainings in schools in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Colombia with close follow-up from local NGOs
  - **Virtual trainings**: in partnership with FLACSO, a prestigious Latin American University, the program offers online trainings for teachers from 18 Spanish speaking countries in Latin America
  - **Train the trainers workshops**: Amigos Conectados’ content has been included in official teachers’ trainings

- **Training kit** including a workbook for children, pre-developed exercises and worksheets and a facilitator guide, which can be downloaded on the Amigos Conectados’ website

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\(^2\) Digital literacy: the knowledge and skills to operate and manage technology responsibly. Digital citizenship: leveraging technology as a powerful tool for education, information, socialization and expression.
- **Website** [Amigosconectados.disneylatino.com](http://Amigosconectados.disneylatino.com) featuring fun, educational content for children, parents and teachers (available in Spanish and Portuguese). Other information and resources are also made available at compromisodisney.com

- **Video game:** Development of *Code Baymax*, an educational video game to introduce children to coding and logical thinking ([http://games.disney.com/big-hero-6-code-baymax](http://games.disney.com/big-hero-6-code-baymax))

- **Coding tutorials:** Frozen and Star Wars coding tutorials developed by Disney and Code.org were disseminated in Latin America through Amigos Conectados

- **Funded research** [http://www.tecnologiasi.org/chicosytecnologia.pdf](http://www.tecnologiasi.org/chicosytecnologia.pdf) about children’s use of technology

- **Technology Fair:** For The Hour of Code, 200 children from the local community in which Disney operates were invited to participate in activities related to STEAM, such as 3D design and printing, robotics, stop motion animation, Scratch, etc.

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**Outcomes and learning**

Amigos Conectados has been successful across the region providing top quality resources and training to the organizations best positioned to reach children, parents and educators in each country. Every year, Disney reviews and updates program contents to ensure Amigos Conectados reflects the latest insights and trends in Internet Safety and Digital Literacy.

To date accomplishments of the program include:

- **Trainings:** In 2015, trainings reached 7,300 school teachers and over 500,000 kids.

- **Video Game:** In its first month, 400,000 children played *Code Baymax* and it was the most played game in Latin America’s Disney gaming platforms.

- **Research:** In 2015, Disney funded and supported a regional research study [www.tecnologiasi.org.ar/chicosytecnologia.pdf](http://www.tecnologiasi.org.ar/chicosytecnologia.pdf) on the interaction between children and digital media. Promoted through a large campaign on Safer Internet Day 2015, the study had broad coverage in the main regional media (newspaper, TV, radio, and web). The findings promote a better understanding of current and emerging trends on these topics and provide Disney and its partners with solid background information to plan, design and develop...
future businesses, programs and digital initiatives. Additionally, the results’ dissemination had an awareness raising effect on teachers, families, parents, children and society in general.

- **Promotions:** With the launch of *Code Baymax* in February 2016, the promotional campaign reached over 20 million TV unique viewers via Disney media channels, and more than 22 million impressions through an online ad campaign.