

Business Owner

Zoom in on the zoo



FROM stable to staple ... Scott Strachan with his FARMkids success story.

Picture: Annette Dew

Josh Robertson

SCOTT Strachan was burnt out teaching music to schoolchildren.

After he quit his job in 2000, he decided to get "back into the creative space" by drawing and composing.

This led him to dreaming up an assortment of characters he called the FARMkids, pampered farm animals living like celebrities in a city zoo. Seven years on, FARMkids is a 26-part animated children's television series on the verge of screening in 117 countries.

With global distribution by PorchLight Entertainment in Los Angeles and revenue coming in from Disney Channel Latin America, FARMkids has been dubbed into Russian, Spanish, Turkish and Portuguese and is set to hit Australian TV screens early next year. Merchandise plans are already rolling.

FARMkids is also the name of Strachan's production house, which recently won the creativity prize at the 2007 Lord Mayor's Business Investment Awards.

The Wacol studio, in Brisbane southwest, is where a core creative team of 10 — calling on a 40-strong team of contracted actors, musicians and designers — develops proprietary content for 3D animation:

Former music teacher makes it big with children's TV series

storylines, story boards, character's voices, sound tracks and the rest. This is all delivered via an IT pipeline to computer-generated imagery workshops in China and India, where the technical aspects of animation are completed at a price Western equivalents can't beat.

Strachan says this division of labour has given FARMkids a sustainable business model that has enabled its Asian partners to grow.

"The thing that I realised very early on was, pound-for-pound, the value of what we're doing was in the creative — we can't compete with the work around animation, which is the daily grind of animating characters," Strachan says. "What we can do, our actual value, is creating the characters."

"What we've set up has really developed in line with globalisation and development in technology, where the speed we're dealing with in cyberspace ... the 300 Asian animators could be in the next building."

The studio's decision to produce in high definition pushes up costs but

extends product "shelf life" and allows for the in-house creation of associated content for mobile phones, IPTV (where digital television is delivered using internet protocol), broadband and music channels.

Its decision to write and produce all original music scores, while expensive, creates an opportunity to generate significant revenue from music sales.

The FARMkids team is poised to produce more of its own content.

"We'd like to move into doing a feature film, if we could, but that'll come down the track as we get some success with FARMkids and the wave of income streams that these sort of properties roll in, in terms of merchandising and toys and stuff," Strachan says.

But the production house is equally keen to use its model to bring the projects of others to fruition.

"We're in discussion with US companies who would like to use us to do their production because the biggest problem is a lot of people have been burnt in some capacity going full steam ahead into Asia."

owner

ATIC Earn Guaranteed in town.

EN CARE ask about guarantee. 241 325.

ARE. Earn Guaranteed. 241 325.

ome? Regular Job. 568 640

WING income

erator is contracts for contractors + GST

4 736

property investments

ATTENTION BUILDERS/ INVESTORS. 5 x 800sqm lots. \$110,000 each. 10% deposit. Repay \$150 weekly T.A.P. 5222 7322 till 9pm

shops, offices lease / sale

ASHGROVE - Prime position retail and professional suites near post office/ banks/ busy gym. Ample parking Ph 3878 5411 B/H only.

PAY FOR YOUR ADVERTISEMENT THE CONVENIENT WAY THE COURIER-MAIL CLASSIFIEDS ACCEPT THESE CREDIT CARDS



nd
t with you
r \$29

