Say 'Aye' to Apps

In Asia, where a huge portion of the world's children's products are made, major manufacturers have been quick to expand their services to digital publishing solutions. Trademarked brands **FamLoop** (from Leo Paper Group) and **BelugaBloo** (Hung Hing Printing Group), for instance, are established to boost clients' print book business with apps and interactive e-books. For publishers, it makes perfect sense to create their print and digital products under one roof.

For FamLoop, it has been a busy 10 months since its launch at the O'Reilly Tools of Change (TOC) New York conference. More than 12 children's bookstore apps and 30 interactive children's titles have been released on Apple's App Store, many for Leo Paper's longtime customers. These apps include Fisher-Price's Little People Zoo Flap Book (Reader's Digest), LearnEnglish Kids' Phonics Stories (British Council), and The World of Fairytales (IMP Interactive). There is also FamLoop's lift-the-flap app, Punky Dunk and Friends.

"We see opportunities for creating shared experiences between children and their families in every title. While the concept of storytelling in the family has evolved, we believe the desire for shared reading and learning experiences, and family bonding, remains the same," says group managing director Johnny Fung of Leo Paper, pointing out that FamLoop's Connect iPhone app allows parents and invited family members to follow and cheer on a child's reading journey from any location. "Over time, this family network will expand, thereby increasing the app's visibility and creating the viral awareness. It will get the app noticed and discovered by more people."

With publishers undecided about which title or what content to develop into apps, the FamLoop team often go through the publisher's content database, make proposals and then prioritize content that has the potential to provide the best shared experience. The process, from content search and brainstorming to app launch, takes about six weeks. "The FamLoop platform enables quick and cost-effective apps creation that include features such as animation, read aloud and finger painting. The set-up cost is kept reasonable, and we share the profits at a percentage agreed with the publishing client." The app could lead to a new print volume with the original characters and plot, an offshoot series featuring secondary characters, or a whole range of interactive e-books. "The possibilities are infinite, as are the opportunities to create new revenues on top of the existing print book business," adds Fung.