

Brazilian CGI studio MoP sambas onto the global animation scene

BY LIANNE STEWART

North American and European animation producers often look to the Far East to scope out partners for their CGI projects, but the venture capitalists behind MoP Brazil Digital are hoping to shift that gaze south and build bridges to the international market for original Brazilian work.

With Brazil's 3-D animation work recognized at international advertising festivals in Cannes, Berlin and New York, a growing number of offshoot animation studios are now meeting the international market's quality expectations. Add to this a favorable exchange rate of US\$1 to R\$2.90 and an economy that's been improving over the past 10 years, and Brazil may soon be an attractive new locale for animation development and service work.

Founded in October 2002 by investment and Internet technology firm WebForce Networks, 3-D animation studio MoP Brazil Digital mined animation talent from local ad agencies and schools to create its first project *Pixcodedics*, a TV series for ages seven to 14 about a group of kids who fight to keep the worldwide web out of the clutches of an evil scientist who plans to use his psychic-tech superpowers to dominate the medium.

Following its debut at Mipcom Jr. last year, MoP expects to close *Pixcodedics'* first broadcast deal imminently. Although MoP president Caio Mario Paes de Andrade could not name the buyer at press time, the *Pixcodedics* episode output has increased from 13 x seven minutes to 52 x seven minutes and the company is working towards a July 2005 debut. MoP is in negotiations with three additional nets, and de Andrade expects to close these deals soon after announcing the lead-off broadcaster.

In an industry where international co-productions are now the norm, *Pixcodedics* is an exception to the rule. MoP's parentco



Although MoP self-financed its first project, *Pixcodedics*, the company is eager to embrace co-pros

WebForce completely financed the series, allowing the producer to create and source everything, from pre to post, in Brazil. Despite this, de Andrade says future projects will most likely be co-produced. "MoP is not only looking for partners with money. Our goal is to make alliances with companies that can contribute to our learning curve in aspects such as production, distribution and networking," explains de Andrade, who's hoping to start taking advantage of Brazil's co-pro treaties with France and Spain.

MoP will be shopping for a co-pro partner at MIPTV to help develop a new preschool property about cultural tolerance and diversity that de Andrade picked up from a Brazilian animator. "I will probably have another two or three properties by the end of 2004," he says, adding that MoP may also be open to 3-D service work with U.S. or European animation producers.

According to de Andrade, MoP is a particularly appealing service partner because of WebForce's strong financial backing,

which can meet investment requirements and cover the cash flow for a production's fixed costs. He adds that Brazil's service capacity as a whole has a time zone advantage when compared to Far East-based outlets, and many Brazilians continue to improve their English-language skills for international business ventures.

De Andrade says the biggest challenge facing the Brazilian animation industry is its perceived isolation from major production regions. And although modern communication methods such as e-mail have opened doors to many remote countries, he says Brazil still suffers from being viewed as a self-contained market that only produces programming for its internal needs.

In order to pump up the territory's international profile, "we are working to persuade the Brazilian government to improve its lines of credit to animation companies, as well as its support to these companies as they participate in international trade shows," de Andrade says. ☐