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### 'Awethum' Mipcom slate for Nerd Corps

MIPCOM NEWS: While Ace Fipke and Ken Faier, CEO and president respectively at Vancouver animation house Nerd Corps Entertainment, are at Mipcom looking for financing for boys action adventure series Storm Hawks, they are also talking up a comedy for six- to 11-year-olds that taps into the company's nerd philosophy.

Team Awethum (52x11') is a 2D comedy action series featuring four little nerds from Glickersville whose mission is to save the town from the 'forces of cool.' Essentially a big shout out to all those kids who were subjected to wedgies and 'locker incarcerations' in their youth, the series follows the gang as they battle against boredom.

Thera Kerplopolis speaks with a lisp, hence the show's name, and is team 'commander supremo,' Lars Arst is 'lead master of illusion/actor,' while Noam Plinsky is 'international cyborg of mystery and intrigue,' and Colon Clump is 'special-ops-quadruple-extra-black-belt-Ninjitsu-stunt-commando.' The foursome don't fit in – and don't want to.

Fipke has just finished writing the bible and will take a step back from it for a few weeks to get some perspective on what works and what doesn't. A similar evolution process has also been playing out with Storm Hawks, which has seen some changes in recent weeks.

"It will have more comedy and humour," said Faier. "We are also increasing the female character quotient. Broadcasters don't want hardcore action. It works in the short term, but for long-term ratings, comedy is critical."

Faier also makes the point that it is important for the company, which produced Dragon Booster for Alliance Atlantis, to be seen as more than just action-adventure, as well as not being limited to CGI.

Nerd Corps has a two-month development deal with YTV in Canada and Faier said several broadcasters have already expressed interest. The aim is to have 52 episodes greenlit from the start.

Looking ahead, the plan for the next three to five years is to focus on four to six quality programmes, said Fipke. And regardless of the age demo or animation technique, you will see a signature Nerd Corps style: "humour, spectacular animation and strong storylines and characters."

Jo Anne Kenny

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