

LEGO Media Concept Development Group

Introduction

This document is intended to serve as a charter for LEGO Media's Concept Development Group. It is based largely on the proceedings of the initial Concept Development Group seminar, held in Brighton between the 24th and 26th August 1999. LEGO Media personnel contributing to the proceedings were: Mark Livingstone, Managing Director; Sam Fay, Marketing; Helen Nicholas, Marketing; Lisbeth Frølund, Concept Development; Wes Jenkins, Concept Development; Ian Meredith, Concept Development; Lars Nielsen, Concept Development; and Laurence Scotford, Concept Development.

What is the Concept Development Group?

The Concept Development Group has been set up as an internal resource to LEGO Media International with the purpose of providing LEGO Media with both a source of new software concepts and a administrative function to effectively deal with concepts from other sources, both internal and external.

Why is the Concept Development Group needed?

The four primary reasons for setting up an internal concept development group are as follows:

1. To assist LEGO Media in defining a strong, long term product strategy.
2. To make consumer needs the prime requisite for development of any software product.
3. To diversify the software activities of LEGO Media.
4. To assist in ensuring that all products meet the requirements for quality, synergy with other LEGO Company products and consistency.

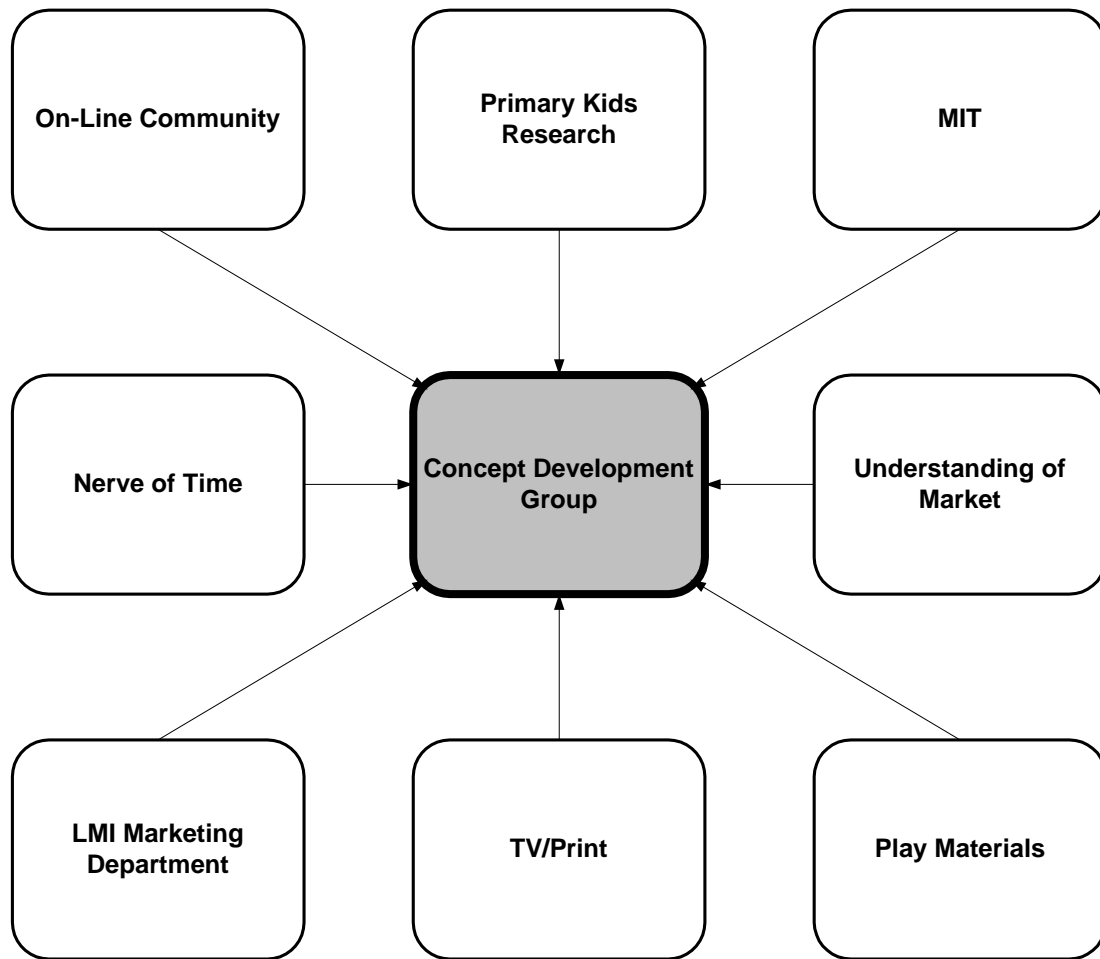
What will be the key characteristics of the Concept Development Group?

It is imperative that the Concept Development Group does not:

- Become elitist;
- Exist in a vacuum;
- Become stale;
- Become the sole source of software concepts;
- Become creatively restrained.

Therefore the Concept Development Group will be a fluid organisation, with a stable and consistent core of people, but incorporating and channelling creative talent from wherever it may be found within the LEGO Media organisation, or the LEGO Company as a whole.

What will be the main source of ideas for the Concept Development Group?
The Concept Development Group will draw mainly from the following sources when determining its program of activities:



On-Line Community

The Concept Development Group will keep track of developments in on-line technologies and trends, particularly where these apply to children's entertainment. On-line communities also provide a useful test-bed for new ideas.

Primary Kids Research

Much of the work of the Concept Development Group will be informed by a concerted effort to directly accumulate indications of the likes, dislikes and requirements of children in LEGO Media's target market and key evidence for those indications. This information will come both from workshops undertaken by the Concept Development Group and information gleaned from Marketing and other sources.

MIT

The Media Lab projects at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology will also provide a source of new ideas and avenues for further exploration. Close links will be maintained with this organisation to facilitate this.

Understanding of Market

It is also important that all work undertaken by the Concept Development Group takes into account current market conditions and that projects are clearly placed in terms of rival products and the activities of rival companies.

Play Materials

It is envisaged that 30% of the Concept Development Group's work will be based directly upon new themes and products introduced by Play Materials. The Concept Development Group will also play an active role in presenting new software concepts to Play Materials.

TV/Film/Print

The Concept Development Group will be closely monitoring LEGO Media's activities in other media areas and creating associated software concepts where appropriate.

Marketing Department

A large proportion of the Concept Development Group's work will be based upon direct briefs from LEGO Media's marketing department. These will direct the work of the group into particular themes, product types and market demographics.

Nerve of Time

The Concept Development Group will also endeavour to keep abreast of cutting edge developments in children's entertainment and both forecast and monitor trends.

What will be the key roles of the Concept Development Group?

1. To interface with all external sources in order to formulate new product ideas.
2. To receive and respond to briefs from LEGO Media's Marketing department.
3. To liaise with other LEGO Company functions and structure core underlying technologies.

What are the primary goals of the Concept Development Group?

We Want To Offer the Very Best Software for Kids.

We will ensure a continual delivery of concepts appropriate to our market.

The Concept Development Group will draw from the best concept work from both within the group and outside of it.

The Concept Development Group will become the custodians of an idea bank drawn from the following sources:

- Internally generated ideas.
- Unsolicited ideas from within and beyond LEGO Media
- Solicited ideas from within and beyond LEGO Media

What are the secondary goals of the Concept Development Group?

The Concept Development Group will provide a useful research function.

We will identify and develop underlying technologies that assist us in delivering the best experiences and products to our customers.

The research activities of the Concept Development Group will work alongside those of LEGO Media's Marketing Department. Both groups will endeavour to keep each other informed of research initiatives and to distribute the results. The Marketing department will tend to do quantitative research, while the Concept Development Group will concentrate on qualitative research. The Marketing department, for example, would define the platforms and system specifications to be targeted by LEGO Media, based on the market research they undertake.

How will the Development System work?

Software development in LEGO Media will adopt a gate system, in line with the product development system utilised in other parts of the LEGO Company. The system, and the Concept Development Group's involvement, is explained below.

Phase 1 - Project Initialisation

Maximum Time: 1 Month

Maximum CDG Budget: None (Spending to be taken from general Concept Development Group budget)

Purpose: This phase will begin either with a brief from the Marketing Department or with a decision by the Concept Development Group to pursue a particular project. During this phase, simple ideas will be formulated, but no detailed work will be undertaken. Two to three times the intended number of final products should be initialised at this stage.

Gate 1 - Approval of Initial Project Summary

Meeting: Gate 1 meetings can be appended to any weekly management meeting.

Purpose: Present basic ideas to the management team. Management team will approve concepts for further work or otherwise, based on their confidence in the core idea and its relevance to the current range plan and

publishing requirements. For all projects approved at this stage a product manager will be assigned.

Deliverables:

Two A4 pages maximum (excluding visuals) containing:

1. Working title and reference number
2. Project type
3. B.O.B.B. (Back Of Box Blurb)
4. Concise project description
5. Artwork and/or mini mood board
6. Target market
7. Product range (where applicable)
8. E.S.P.s
9. Competition analysis/state of market
10. Target platform(s)
11. Space for management team decision, signatures and date

Working title and reference number

All projects will be given a working title although a final title will be determined by LMI Marketing. Projects will also be given a reference number. This is to enable tracking of projects even when titles change. Reference numbers will simply be a letter, denoting project type (see below), and a six-figure serial number.

Project type

This indicates which type of project the concept is:

- A. Marketing brief
- B. Internal ideas
- C. External submissions
- D. Other LEGO Company projects
- E. Play experience/technology projects
- F. Segment funded projects

These project types are explained in detail later in this document.

B.O.B.B. (Back Of Box Blurb)

No more than half a dozen bullet points that sum up the key features of the concept.

Concise Project Description

A short description, detailing what the broad concept is, what the user will see/hear and how the user will interact with it. This will also explain why the concept is an appropriate one for the LEGO Company.

Artwork and/or mini mood board

At least one piece of inspirational artwork and/or a mini mood board will accompany the concept description. A mini mood board is a small collection of images drawn from other sources (e.g. newspapers, magazines, or video captures that give sum up the moods or qualities that the concept is intended to invoke. For example, a mood board for

LEGO Beings may contain images of various robot creatures from science fiction films, pictures of strange landscapes and video captures of the "Robot Wars" television programme in which home built robots compete in an arena. All these images, while not directly descriptive of the concept do at least give the reader a sense of what the concept is all about.

Target Market

This section contains a description of the intended user in terms of age range, gender and other appropriate demographic information.

Product range

The product range (where appropriate) that the concept is intended for (e.g. games, constructive, etc).

E.S.P.s

A textual accompaniment to the mini mood board. This is a short list of feelings that the concept is intended to invoke in the user and purchaser.

Competition analysis/state of the market

Any relevant information on rival products or the general market that the concept is intended for.

Target Platforms

This section contains a list of the platforms (e.g. Pentium PCs, PSX II, Colour GameBoy) that the concept has been considered for.

Space for management team decisions, signatures and dates

The decision will be one of the following:

STOP:	Do not proceed any further with this concept.
HOLD:	The concept should be put on ice for the time being.
RECYCLE:	The concept has merit but needs additional work before being presented again at Gate 1.
GO:	The concept should now be taken to Phase 2.

Comments (particularly for HOLD and RECYCLE decisions) and a date and all relevant signatures will accompany the decision.

Phase 2 - Detailed Concept Development Work

Maximum Time: 3 Months

Maximum CDG Budget: £50,000 (Actual budget determined at Gate 1)

Purpose: During this phase the Concept Development Group will further research an idea and seek to address any questions or doubts that arose from the Gate 1 presentation. The group will work alongside the Product Manager from the marketing department during this phase. Kids workshops will be conducted to ensure the concept is something they want. In conjunction with

the Development Department, relevant developers will also be approached at this stage and an initial assessment of the required development investment made. One and a half to two times the intended number of final products should enter this phase.

Gate 2 - Approval of Detailed Concept Summary and Commitment to Production

Meeting: Gate 2 meetings must be specifically called as required.

Purpose: Present detailed concepts to the management team. Management team will approve concepts for production or otherwise, based on their confidence in the concept, the results of kids workshops, and initial financial projections. For all projects approved at this stage a producer will be assigned.

Deliverables:

Six A4 pages maximum (excluding visuals) containing:

1. Working title and reference number
2. Project type
3. B.O.B.B.
4. Detailed project description (including technical overview)
5. Artwork (Story-boards showing typical play scenarios)
6. Target market
7. Product range (where applicable)
8. U.S.P.s
9. E.S.P.s
10. Competition analysis/State of market
11. Target platforms
12. Background on potential developers
13. Developer's pitches
14. Documentation from kids workshops
15. Sales expectations
16. Marketing platforms
17. Financial analysis
18. Space for management team decision, signatures and date

Working title and reference number

(See earlier description.)

Project type

(See earlier description.)

B.O.B.B. (Back Of Box Blurb)

(See earlier description.)

Detailed Project Description

A description of the project that succinctly describes every area of functionality, detailing what the user will see/hear and how the user will interact with the software. The description will re-examine the appropriateness of the concept to the LEGO Group. The description will also include a technical overview written in layman's terms that will

outline and assess any particular areas of technical challenge or risk or any recommendations for use of a particular technology.

Artwork

The artwork supplied at this stage will consist of story-boards showing typical play scenarios and clearly illustrating all the major features of the product. These may be accompanied by early conceptual sketches/mock-ups of the user interface.

Target Market

(See earlier description.)

Product range

(See earlier description.)

U.S.P.s

A short list of features offered by the product that are not offered by competitive products.

E.S.P.s

(See earlier description.)

Competition analysis/state of the market

(See earlier description.)

Target Platforms

(See earlier description.)

Background on potential developers

A brief history of each developer approached, including relevant titles worked on and an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the developer in relation to the project.

Developers' pitches

The documentation supplied by each developer in support of their contract application will be included at this stage. This will include the developers projected schedule and budget.

Space for management team decisions, signatures and dates

The decision will be one of the following:

- | | |
|----------|---|
| STOP: | Do not proceed any further with this concept. |
| HOLD: | The concept should be put on ice for the time being. |
| RECYCLE: | The concept has merit but needs additional work before being presented again at Gate 2. |
| GO: | The concept should now be taken to Phase 2a. |

Comments (particularly for HOLD and RECYCLE decisions) and a date and all relevant signatures will accompany the decision.

Phase 2a - Prototyping/Proof of Concept Stage

Maximum Time: 3 Months

Maximum CDG Budget: £50,000 (Actual budget to be determined at Gate 2 meeting)

Purpose: During this phase the Concept Development Group will hand over to the development department for production to commence as far as a prototype of proof of concept stage. The Concept Development Group will continue to remain involved in the project by helping to ensure that the spirit of the original concept is followed and by playing an active role in conducting further kids workshops to ensure that the detailed design meets the expectations of the target market. One and one fifth times the intended number of final products should enter this phase.

Gate 2a - Decision to proceed to full production

Meeting: Gate 2a meetings must be specifically called as required.

Purpose: Present early prototypes and final product specification with detailed schedules and budget breakdowns to the management team. Evidence from kids workshops will also be collated and presented at this stage.

Deliverables: Working prototype and/or paper designs. Final product specification, budgets and schedules. Key findings from kids workshops.

Phase 3a - Full production stage

Maximum Time: 12 Months

Purpose: The project now enters a full production stage, during which time the Concept Development Group has no involvement. The producer/product manager are responsible for all kids workshops during this phase.

Gate 3a - Alpha presentation

Meeting: Gate 3a meetings must be specifically called as required.

Purpose: Present and formally test the Alpha build of the project. The Concept Development Group has no involvement in this meeting.

Deliverables: Alpha build.

Phase 3b - Intermediate production stage

Maximum Time: 3 Months

Purpose: The project now enters an intermediate production stage, during which time the Concept Development Group has no involvement. The producer/product manager are responsible for all kids workshops during this phase.

Gate 3b - Beta presentation

Meeting: Gate 3b meetings must be specifically called as required.

Purpose: Present and formally test the Beta build of the project. The Concept Development Group has no involvement in this meeting.

Deliverables: Beta build.

Phase 4 - Final production stage

Maximum Time: 2 Months

Purpose: The project now enters its final production stage, during which time the Concept Development Group has no involvement. The producer/product manager/OA Manager are responsible for all kids workshops and in-home beta tests during this phase.

Gate 4 - Launch

Meeting: Gate 4 meetings must be specifically called as required.

Purpose: Present and formally test the master candidate of the project. Decide whether product can be released. The Concept Development Group has no involvement in this meeting.

Deliverables: Master candidate.

Phase 5 - Post launch phase

Maximum Time: 4 Months

Purpose: Once the product has been launched, sales success, customer services issues, press criticism and consumer reaction are all carefully monitored and recorded by the relevant departments.

Gate 5 - Post launch analysis

Meeting: Gate 5 meetings must be specifically called as required.

Purpose: Analyse the results of the post launch phase and agree what aspects of the planning, production and launch were successful or unsuccessful and what lessons can be learned and applied to future products.

Deliverables: Departmental results from post-launch monitoring.

What other LEGO Media staff will work with the Concept Development Group and how?

Both producers and product managers will be expected to take three month sabbaticals from time to time so that they may participate in the work of the Concept Development Group. During this time these staff will be assigned to one or more project teams, alongside the full-time CDG staff. The Heads of Department for Marketing and Development will be responsible for organising the schedules for secondment to the Concept Development Group.

How will Concept Development Group projects be structured?

- Projects will be assigned to teams consisting of two or more people.
- Each project will have a Project Lead. This person is responsible for seeing that the input of all team members is encouraged and recorded and for chairing group decisions. The Project Lead will also be responsible for organising project presentations and gate meetings and elsewhere and for ensuring that project materials are properly stored and archived.
- The Concept Development Group is to have a weekly meeting - face to face where possible, or via conference call or video conference otherwise. This meeting is to be used for:
 - General reporting and status updates.

- Group brainstorming as required.
- Project assignments.
- Other relevant business.

Project Types

There are six different project types, as detailed below:

- A. Marketing brief
- B. Internal ideas
- C. External submissions
- D. Other LEGO Company projects
- E. Play experience/technology projects
- F. Segment funded projects

Marketing briefs

There will be an open invitation for marketing staff to join the weekly Concept Development Group meeting to present Marketing Briefs. Alternatively, the Marketing Department may call special meetings to present Marketing Briefs. The meetings will consist of a Marketing presentation, followed by an initial group discussion, including Marketing personnel to determine a direction for the work and possibly identify suitable concepts already in the "ideas bank". A project team and Team Leader will also be selected and a target date for a Gate 1 presentation will be set.

Internal ideas

These are project ideas that have been generated by a full-time or seconded member of the Concept Development Group or another member of the LEGO Media staff. This category also includes ideas inspired by kids labs, MIT, etc. Any member of staff can present an idea at the weekly CDG meeting. The group will then decide whether the idea should be given project status. If an idea is given project status, a project team and Team Leader will be selected and a target date for a Gate 1 presentation will be set.

External Submissions

Each concept submission that comes from a developer or other organisation outside of the LEGO Group will be allocated to one person from the Concept Development Group. This person is responsible for reading/viewing and evaluating the concept and reporting back to the group at the weekly meeting. The group will decide whether a concept is to be given project status. In this case a project team and Team Leader will be selected and a target date for a Gate 1 presentation will be set.

Other LEGO Company Projects

Each member of the full-time staff in the Concept Development Group has a responsibility for monitoring different areas of the LEGO Company's activities (See Contact Responsibility below). They are to

keep track of developments in those areas and report new projects to the team. The group will identify potential tie-in projects and give these project status. Please note that projects of this type may already have been presented as a Marketing Brief. An initial group discussion, which may include representation from the relevant segment, will determine the initial direction for the software project. A project team (which may include segment representation) and Project Lead will be selected and a target date for a Gate 1 presentation will be set.

Play Experience/Technology projects

These are projects that do not deliver a final stand-alone product, but rather tools, components, techniques or methodologies that enhance the overall play experience gained from LEGO Media products. Examples of this type of project are the System in Play for the LEGO Creator series, or a common front-end or installation interface for LEGO Media software. These projects will start with either a Marketing or Management Team brief or an internally generated idea from presented at the weekly meeting. In the case of the second type, the group will decide whether it is to be given project status or not. Once again, a project team and Team Leader will be selected and a target date for a Gate 1 presentation set.

Segment funded projects

These are projects requested by a segment for a software component to be bundled with a Play Materials or other LEGO Company project. Projects of this type will always be initiated with a Management Team brief to the Concept Development Group. A project team and Team Leader will be selected. The Team Leader will then be responsible for organising a presentation from the relevant segment, and work will then commence towards the segment's Gate 1 or Gate 2 presentation, whichever is appropriate.

The minimum information required by the Concept Development Group to begin work of this type is:

- Project working title
- Project description
- Description of required software component or service
- Estimated delivery date
- LMI Management authorisation

What processes will full-time Concept Development staff be responsible for?

Although each member of the full-time Concept Development Staff will take part in the general concept development work, each will also have a special area of responsibility. While that individual is not personally responsible for conducting every piece of work involved in that area, they must, at the very

least, establish methods and precedents for work in that area, and regularly review that work.

Lisbeth Frølund - User input/requirements

Lisbeth will be responsible for developing sound methods for working with our end-users through workshops and other means to ensure that our products meet their requirements and to acquire new ideas and directions.

Wes Jenkins - Product visualisation

Wes will take responsibility for helping the group develop good practices in the way that we visualise and present concepts. This will involve consideration of the best approach to take with different groups and individuals that have an interest in the products.

Ian Meredith - Underlying technologies/systems of play

Ian's role centres around the development of fundamental technologies and play experience projects, such as the system in play for the LEGO Creator range.

Lars Nielsen - Client input/requirements

Lars' remit is to focus on obtaining the requirements of the group's clients and ensuring that we meet their needs and expectations. Clients, in this case, are the LEGO Media Management Team and other project stakeholders, such as the Marketing Department and the LEGO Company Segment Managers.

Laurence Scotford -Team management/reporting

Laurence is responsible for overall management of the team and for regular reporting to the Director of Software Development.

Who will be responsible for keeping the Concept Development Group up to date with work in other areas?

Each full-time member of the Concept Development Group will have responsibility for monitoring the work of different segments or areas of work within the LEGO Company and for reporting significant projects back to the group.

Contacts for these areas are as follows:

Play Materials 0-5	Wes Jenkins
Play Materials 4-9 (boys)	Lars Nielsen
Play Materials 4-9 (girls)	Lisbeth Frølund
Play Materials 7+	Lars Nielsen
Hardware Development	Ian Meredith
LEGOLAND Family Parks	Lisbeth Frølund
Print Media	Laurence Scotford
Film/TV	Wes Jenkins
On-line	Ian Meredith
MIT	Laurence Scotford
Human-Computer Interface Community	Lisbeth Frølund

Peter Hobolt/Developer Network

Lars Nielsen

END