



## **Moshi Monsters – Online children’s game enthrals millions**

**Video transcript: clip from *Peter Jones Meets...*, Episode 3, first broadcast on BBC Two on 16 Jun 2013**

*PETER JONES:*

39-year-old Michael Acton Smith is an energetic and creative entrepreneur.

*MIND CANDY PRESENTER:*

We've got your letters! We've got ink! We've got live music from the tree house!

*PETER JONES:*

Mind Candy, Michael's web-based entertainment business and parent company of the online phenomenon Moshi Monsters, has been an incredible multi-million-pound success. Its home is here in Shoreditch, the London location for media and creative business with a digital twist.

Michael! Great to meet you.

*MICHAEL ACTON SMITH:*

Great to meet you, too. Welcome to our HQ.

*PETER JONES:*

Wow, what a place!

*MICHAEL ACTON SMITH:*

We have a treehouse, we have vines, we have toys aplenty.

*PETER JONES:*

With all these temptations to play, I wondered how Michael persuaded his staff to do any work.

But I was also trying to decide what this playful office said about his approach to business.

*MICHAEL ACTON SMITH:*

Business is often seen as grey and boring, but I think business is almost like this eh canvas that you can paint on. You can take ideas in your head and put them out on the marketplace. And I personally just think that's incredibly exciting.

*PETER JONES:*

Michael's online game and social network for children has 72 million users in 196 territories worldwide. But what is a Moshi Monster? Shall we have a little game?

*MICHAEL ACTON SMITH:*

Yeah, shall we have a look? I've got a monster called Snowcrash.

I can get him to walk around the room by clicking on the floor. I can tickle him here and he'll giggle away. It's difficult to imagine me being a six-year-old kid, but...

*PETER JONES:*

If I was a six-year-old Peter Jones, what would I find exciting about a fluffy monster?

*MICHAEL ACTON SMITH:*

Well, we've created a world where children can adopt their own monster, and they are in charge.

They can feed it, they can play games with it, they do educational puzzles. And then there's a whole social side, where they can safely chat to their friends, they can send each other messages, they can share their artwork.

*PETER JONES:*

And then so how does it work, income-wise, for you? Is it free at the moment?

*MICHAEL ACTON SMITH:*

Yes, most of the children that sign up play for free. And then they can get a Moshi Monsters passport. Parents can pay about 5 pounds a month to access new parts of the world, to play

new puzzles and games and buy new items and so forth. And that's one part of it. The second part is the physical merchandise that we've created.

There's a magazine, there are puzzle books, toys...

*PETER JONES:*

You're sort of targeting children to get them engaged, but at the same time I'm assuming your target market is also parents, because kids go up to their mum and dad, as mine do to me, and say, "Dad, can I have 10 pounds for this?" Or, "Can I go online with that?"

*MICHAEL ACTON SMITH:*

It's a really interesting challenge, so we have to make the experience of Moshi fun for kids, so they fall in love with it and they're engaged and they share it with their friends, but we need to make sure parents feel comfortable with it, too, that there's some kind of educational value to it, which there is. So we decided to make something that was fun, first and foremost, with education woven in underneath. We call it stealth education.

*PETER JONES:*

Clearly, Michael's canny. He's not simply selling his game to kids, he's persuaded their parents to part with their money and turned his game into a playground phenomenon.