

Cracking Ideas for Playground Entrepreneurs

The Government has launched 'Cracking Ideas', an innovation aimed at encouraging entrepreneurship in children at primary school level. The initiative will be run in partnership with the UK Intellectual Property Office (UK-IPO) and popular cartoon characters Wallace and Gromit. It's being hailed as the biggest primary school innovation project ever.

The popularity of TV shows such as Dragon's Den which highlights inventors with big ideas has helped turn the UK into a nation of innovators according to recent figures. The UK Intellectual Property Office reports that in the first quarter of 2007 almost 30% of patent applications came from individual innovators (rather than development teams in corporate organizations), many of whom are budding entrepreneurs looking to build a business via their invention. This innovative trend has prompted the government to launch Cracking Ideas.

The biggest innovation project ever introduced to the UK's Primary Schools, Cracking Ideas includes special lesson plans, activities, a competition and

dedicated website – all aimed at encouraging today's schoolchildren to become tomorrow's innovators. The initiative will fit into the National Curriculum for 9 to 11 year olds. The project will be led by the UK-IPO and will work around a dedicated website - <http://www.crackingideas.com>. Schools can also enter their invention into a nationwide competition.

Minister for Science and Innovation Malcolm Wicks said at the launch: "Some of the big inventions we will see later this century may be in the minds and imaginations of young children today. Cracking Ideas is an effective way of engaging children in innovation, tied into the National Curriculum."

Britain is renowned for its independent inventors. Many well-known brands (Meccano, Maclaren pushchairs for example) were conceived in garden sheds and home workshops by keen inventors. "Britain remains a nation of inventors, taking their ingenuity from the garden shed to commercial success. Entrepreneurs and the passion of those who appear on shows like Dragon's Den can really inspire innovation," added Mr Wicks.



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