

Canadian Kids TV Producer to Make Splash With Toronto Water Park

by Etan Vlessing

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Marblemedia is partnering with American backers on a \$60 million indoor/outdoor complex with digital storytelling and content at its core.

TORONTO - Canadian kids producer marblemedia is looking to make a big splash with a proposed \$60 million water park and live event development for Toronto.

A newly launched marbleLIVE division has pacted with New Jersey-based **Jerry Merola** of Amusement Entertainment LLC and media financiers EFA Partners of New York on a planned 100,000-square-foot recreational facility with more than body sliding in the works.

The gamble is that young people who play video games and surf online at home will join their families at the indoor/outdoor water park to splash and slide down slides and rides that promise the latest in digital storytelling and content.

"We're really going to be engaged with consumers before, during and after the experience they have with us," **Mark Bishop**, co-CEO and executive producer of marblemedia, and a marbleLIVE partner, explained.

"We're creating an experience in advance of their visit to the park, bringing them into the venue to leverage what they did in digital media for unique opportunities in wet and dry environments," he added.

The Toronto-based cross-platform content maker earlier brought Endemol's *Wipeout* model to kids TV by partnering with Canadian broadcaster YTV, the BBC in the U.K. and ABC Australia on *Splatalot*, a medieval-themed thrills and spills TV game show.

The proposed water park, building on that success, will feature among other attractions elaborate laser tag games, physical sets and next-generation technology used to combine virtual and reality worlds.

The development group sees Toronto as underserved when it comes to out-of-home destination entertainment. The city saw Ripley's Aquarium open last fall but turned down a proposal for a new casino on Toronto's waterfront.

"We're going to give them a dynamic year-round attraction that's part water park, part theme park and all fun, all the time," said **John Barrack**, managing partner of marbleLIVE.

Once open in 2016, the proposed attraction will employ 230 people and expects to serve 500,000 visitors in its first year in business.