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**Tween time**

**The Hannah Montana film isn't just an entertainment; it's also a powerful marketing device.**

[Official site, with trailer](#)

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In two weeks time a major event in the lives of young girls who are not quite teenagers – tweens – takes place with the release of the first Hannah Montana movie.

For the uninitiated, Hannah Montana is a hit American TV series. Young Hannah, played by pop sensation Miley Cyrus, is an average teenage schoolgirl by day who has a secret identity as a bewigged blonde pop idol by night. For tweens it's an irresistible TV entertainment, and the arrival of the first Hannah Montana film in two weeks time is the biggest news of the year.



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Movies with tween appeal make a lot of money and induce hysteria. The recent gothic romance blockbuster 'Twilight' made \$190 million in the US alone, and 'High School Musical 3' is another big money machine. Hollywood is eager to get its hands on all that tween money.

"The tween market has a huge amount of money - \$50 billion. The girls and boys themselves have their own money that they saved in allowances, and also what they get for gifts all of that, \$50 billion.

"Then you add another \$120 billion that they influence between parents and relatives. So you are looking at \$170 billion that they have."

"They have fuelled the success of some of the biggest teen stars to the top of the billboard charts, they have broken box office records. So when these girls flex their powers it is huge."



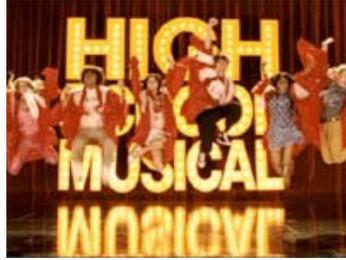
Nobody doubts that the Hannah Montana movie will fuel spending. Some even see this Disney film as part of a well established marketing strategy targeting young girls; training consumers as much as it is providing entertainment.

Toby Miller: "Women in this country are responsible for the most of the automobiles, they are responsible for buying most of the computers and 90 percent of the food.

"The young women who have been trained to be those sovereign female consumers of tomorrow are absolutely crucial to that project. So companies like Disney, for example, going back decades, have made a special feature of integrated marketing plans around young girls."

And Disney definitely knows how to milk the teen market – 'Hannah Montana', 'High School Musical 3' and the recent Jonas Brothers concert film are all part of what can be called the Disney Tween Machine. It's a very powerful marketing force, but tween experts don't think tweens are being exploited.

"Here is my feeling about marketing: these girls have a great meter on what they want and what they don't. We can tell them over and over and over again they should go buy something, but if it doesn't resonate with them they don't buy it."



One challenge for films catering to the tween market is that as tween stars grow older they lose their fresh tween currency. Once they're perceived as flaunting their sexuality they can be deemed inappropriate for the market. There are concerns that sixteen year-old Miley Cyrus is getting too old, which could affect the Hannah Montana box office returns.

Even if her advancing years take Miley Cyrus out of the tween market, tween spending power, still potent in the midst of recession, will continue to bring forth new movies. Several are in the pipeline, and this young moneyed audience is waiting.