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Design Approaches to Developing and Communicating Designer Toy IP through AIGC Short Videos A Case Study of Cluebie

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Abstract:
When designer toy intellectual property (IP) moves from static products into moving images, connections need to be maintained between character recognition, emotional storytelling, and physical form. Taking Cluebie as a case study, this article combines a review of case materials with visual-form analysis. It examines publicly available character descriptions, creative briefs involving AI-generated content (AIGC), release information, and collected images to explore how short videos can extend an existing IP's visual expression. The analysis suggests that character guidelines establish boundaries for generated content, specific events make an intended emotional character tangible on screen, and serial content and product presentation need to preserve continuity in core symbols. AIGC can support the exploration of animated alternatives and initial content drafting, but judgments about characters, shot review, and product adaptation remain dependent on designers. The article offers design interpretations and recommendations based on limited case materials, without empirically testing production efficiency, audience emotions, or sales conversion.

Keywords:
AI-generated content; designer toy IP; short videos; emotional storytelling; visual extension

1 Introduction

Designer toy characters initially establish visual recognition through silhouette, proportions, color, and material. Short videos bring these features into actions, settings, and events. A character thus becomes more than a form to view or collect: it can act within a story, expressing curiosity, hesitation, or care. AIGC offers new conditions for developing such animated expression, but the viability of generated imagery still depends on whether it preserves the character's form and personality. For IP centered on emotional companionship, warmth does not arise automatically from soft colors; it needs to be organized through specific behavior and relationships.

Existing research discusses the relationship between AIGC and approaches to innovative design [1], providing a context for examining the stages at which technology participates in design. Research on virtual influencers considers connections between character types, social presence, and consumers' emotional attachment [2]. These studies encourage attention to the conditions of generation and emotional expression. Vir-

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tual influencers and physical designer toys, however, are used in different contexts. Their findings cannot be transferred directly to Cluebie or establish that its short videos have already produced emotional attachment or purchasing effects. This study therefore narrows its focus to visual design: how an existing character enters animated content and how different representations preserve recognition of the same IP.

"Development" here primarily refers to extending an existing designer toy character through animation, scene-based storytelling, and product presentation. Released videos are not used to reconstruct how the original character was designed. The article first clarifies the case materials and the scope of their evidence, then examines character recognition, emotionally meaningful events, and correspondence with products, before proposing recommendations for assisted creation and review. National short-video usage rates describe only the media context and cannot establish the effectiveness of this design approach; they are therefore excluded from the substantive argument.

2 Case Materials and Scope of Analysis

In December 2025, TOYCITY announced that Cluebie had been jointly developed with Mango TV and Xiaomang. The character was described as a little snow creature who enters the human world from snow-covered mountains, moves slowly, and remains gently curious [3]. These descriptions are brand-defined characteristics that can guide storytelling and motion design, rather than evidence of how consumers have received the character. Against this background, the plush appearance, headwear, colors, and facial expressions provide visual information for analysis, while the character's emotional meaning needs to be interpreted within specific situations.

Public creative requirements offer more direct evidence of AIGC involvement. A Cluebie fantasy-adventure film brief jointly established by the Future Designer competition and associated organizations requires a three-to-five-minute AIGC film based on the established character, with documentation of tools, workflow, and human post-production [4]. Mango TV has also released works including Cluebie's Fantastical Adventure through its AIGC Innovative Content Training Camp section [5]. These materials establish that the IP has entered AIGC creative assignments and publicly released content. They do not establish that every Cluebie video uses the same model or that AIGC generated the original designer toy character.

Images associated with Cluebie's Playful Everyday Life and The Cluebie Agency also serve as material for formal analysis. Mango TV presents The Cluebie Agency as an animated series and describes a story in which the characters work together to confront an "emotional black fog" [6]. The ongoing animation provides a context for narrative extension, while short films and trailers are the objects of this article's discussion of short-video expression. The collected screenshots lack complete episode numbers and timestamps, so they are used only to analyze visible forms, character relationships, and settings. No conclusions about motion pacing, editing effects, or production parameters are drawn from still frames. Table 1 distinguishes the judgments supported by these materials from questions requiring further evidence.

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Table 1. Case materials and scope of the argument

Type of material	Judgments it can support	Outcomes it cannot establish
Brand character descriptions [3]	Character origins and intended personality	Consumers' actual emotional responses
Creative requirements and release pages [4–6]	The existence of AIGC assignments and released content	Specific model parameters or comparative production efficiency
Animation and product images	Visible forms, settings, and symbolic relationships	Audience resonance or a causal effect on purchases

Note: Compiled from public materials and this study's visual analysis. The table defines the scope of the argument and does not report measured effects.

3 Character Design and Emotional Expression in Short Videos

3.1 Recognizable Form as a Basis for Animated Extension

Cluebie's plush covering, head proportions, facial placement, and headwear jointly provide cues for recognition. The homework scene in Figure 1 places two characters among a desk and books. Plush texture and facial features remain visually prominent, while gestures such as holding a pen, looking toward another character, and holding a cup suggest relationships. The books are not incidental decoration: they connect the characters' actions with an intelligible everyday task. The image suggests that animated content should preserve the basic design while placing the character within meaningful events, rather than substituting changes of background for storytelling.



Figure 1. A homework scene from Cluebie's Playful Everyday Life

Source: Screenshot supplied by the author from a corporate account operated by Mango TV.

In design practice, silhouette, proportions, and core decorative features should provide continuing points of reference, while expressions, poses, and accessories can respond to the situation. AIGC-generated animation drafts can help compare recognition across viewpoints and identify risks of local distortion or occlusion. This is a possible design method; the finished film does not establish that its creators used generated results to revise the original character design. Content with multiple characters also requires checks on their differences,

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so that changes in color and headwear do not leave them with the same undifferentiated faces and actions.

3.2 Translating Emotional Positioning into Specific Events

Words such as “gentle” and “easygoing” express a character’s positioning but do not themselves provide a story. The homework setting in Figure 1 offers a more concrete form of expression: faced with an unfinished task, the characters establish a relationship through differing poses, while objects on the desk place it within an everyday context. Understanding what a character is experiencing is a condition for viewers to develop emotional associations. This article examines narrative cues in the image without equating that interpretation with demonstrated emotional resonance. If a short video merely repeats cute forms, relaxing music, and cozy environments, its emotional theme may remain an atmosphere rather than become part of the character’s experience.

The public synopsis of The Cluebie Agency organizes emotional difficulties into conflict and cooperation within a fantasy world [6], while Figure 2 presents the ensemble through differences in color, headwear, and faces. Together, these materials illustrate how personality descriptions can be supported by both imagery and story. They do not justify treating all the characters as uniformly “slow” or “soothing.” Gentleness, courage, and curiosity require distinct patterns of action across situations. Allowing a character to hesitate, encounter setbacks, or ask for help also gives care a specific object, rather than maintaining the same positive expression at all times.



Figure 2. The character ensemble in the trailer for The Cluebie Agency

Source: Screenshot supplied by the author from Golden Eagle Cartoon’s official Douyin account.

3.3 Preserving Symbolic Connections between Images and Physical Products

The products and packaging in Figure 3 retain the plush appearance, headwear, and character colors, allowing comparison with the recognition cues in the animation. Moving images can present the situations a character inhabits; physical products offer materials, volume, and ways of holding or handling the object. The two media serve different purposes but should correspond in their core symbols. Excessive differences in fur, proportions, or decoration between digital images and actual objects may reduce the accuracy of product presentation. Promotional imagery should therefore satisfy the animation’s aesthetic requirements while also being checked against the actual product, avoiding the presentation of unrealizable generated details as product

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features.



Figure 3. Presentation of Cluebie products and packaging

Source: Product-page images supplied by the author from Cluebie's official Taobao store.

This correspondence helps explain the connection between digital storytelling and physical touchpoints, but does not establish that the videos caused purchases. Emotional preferences, product quality, price, and distribution channels can all affect consumption decisions. The article therefore limits discussion of commercial conversion to communication of meaning at the design level: the film presents the character's story, while the product provides a tangible form and user experience. Whether these produce identification or purchasing requires independent audience and behavioral evidence, rather than inference from product listings or releases across platforms.

4 Implementing Creative Work with AIGC Assistance

4.1 Establishing Character Rules before Comparing Animated Alternatives

Before using AIGC, creators should assemble character reference images, proportions, core colors, headwear, and personality descriptions, distinguishing fixed recognition features from variable expressive features. Specific settings and actions can then be proposed, and generated alternatives compared against the established character. The film brief's requirements concerning original character specifications, stylistic consistency, and workflow documentation [4] provide a reference for organizing these checks. Its objectives still need to be implemented in the finished work; completing generation does not establish that they have been met.

Previsualization can begin with a few key actions, such as observing an unfamiliar object, responding to a companion, or reacting to a small mistake. Checks should address facial placement during turns, proportional changes during movement, the relationship between headwear and body, and whether the same character remains recognizable across shots. Failed clips should be revised, regenerated, or supplemented manually, with records of problems and corrections retained. AIGC thus broadens the range of expressive alternatives available for comparison, while designers make the final choice according to character rules and narrative purpos-

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es.

4.2 Organizing Emotional Storytelling around Small Events

Extending a character into new settings should begin with its specific circumstances, translating abstract emotions into responses within an event. An everyday task, for example, can structure a short film around discovering a difficulty, attempting to address it, and responding to a companion. Environment, props, and expressions then serve the same event. This is a proposed creative method, rather than a retelling of an existing work's complete plot. The warmth of care can emerge through details such as waiting, completing a task together, or accepting mistakes, without narration repeatedly asserting the work's "soothing appeal."

AIGC can draft alternative settings and storyboards, but creators need to assess whether behavior suits the character's personality, conflict is clear, and sound and images express the same emotion. A series can vary its situations while preserving core personalities and relationships, avoiding changes to the characters' motivations with each new generation. Evaluation of audience understanding should distinguish emotion recognition, character preference, and actual emotional attachment. Scattered comments should not substitute for an assessment of the audience as a whole.

4.3 Reviewing Versions to Maintain Consistency across a Series and Its Products

Regular release does not mean using batches of generated content without review. Serial creation should maintain version records for characters and assets, rechecking form, relationships, and narrative themes at each update. Product-focused content also needs comparison with actual product images and information; short films need to preserve character recognition and stand-alone stories. Duration, subtitles, and frame format can be adjusted for different platforms, but cropping should be checked for obscured key features. Consistent expression should not be understood as duplication of the same finished video.

Evaluation of human–AI collaboration should cover the entire workflow. Production efficiency requires records of time spent generating, selecting, revising, and reviewing content. Visual consistency can be evaluated through records of character distortion, shot-continuity problems, and revision counts. The available materials contain no comparable cost or audience data, so this article makes no judgment about the case's efficiency advantages. Designers remain responsible for ensuring that generated alternatives suit the character, story, and product conditions and for checking asset sources and permitted uses. Content volume cannot replace quality assessment.

5 Conclusion

Cluebie provides specific material for examining how designer toy characters enter AIGC animation. Public character descriptions and creative information establish a basis for extension, while animation and product images reveal relationships among form, setting, and media touchpoints that can be analyzed. On this basis, the article proposes an assisted design approach that constrains generation through character rules, organizes emotional expression around specific events, and uses version review to maintain connections across serial content and products. Its central aim is to make technological outputs serve character recognition and narrative continuity, grounding emotion in intelligible actions.

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This study uses a single case and limited visual material, without complete production logs or audience and sales research. The proposed approach therefore constitutes design interpretation and practical recommendations. It does not establish that AIGC has increased production efficiency, strengthened emotional attachment, or generated commercial conversion. Future research could compare production processes using the same character and creative task, alongside tests of character recognition and emotional understanding, to evaluate the conditions under which the approach is applicable.

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