

Imran's iTeDDy wins high street approval

■ Dragon's Den idea is to go on sale in shops

■ TV businessmen back idea with £140k

■ KEVIN FEDDY

AN INTERACTIVE teddy bear toy devised by Greater Manchester entrepreneur Imran Hakim is to become available on the high street.

Imran's brainchild, the iTeDDy, won backing from Dragons' Den businessmen Theo Paphitis and Peter Jones after he appeared on the TV show earlier this year.

The duo invested £140,000 for a 20 per cent stake in his venture and they have now secured a deal with retail chain Argos.

The educational toy will be available in all 684 Argos stores across Britain and Ireland as well as online, when its new catalogue is launched.

Stationery chain boss Mr Paphitis and telecoms entrepreneur Mr Jones said: "The product has great potential and we

are sure it is going to be the must-have Christmas gift."

The iTeDDy incorporates an MP4 personal media player and features educational activities, games and music. It is designed for children aged three to 11.

Imran, a Umist graduate who lives in Bolton, launched his first business at 15 and runs 18 optician's practices across the north west as well as devoting time to IT activities.

He dreamed up the idea for the iTeDDy last October while playing with his young niece. It was unveiled at the national Toy Fair in London in January and has attracted inquiries from as far away as Australia.

Imran said: "I'm delighted that the iTeDDy product has come to fruition."

Argos managing director Sara Weller said: "We are delighted to be able to offer such a brilliant and innovative toy to our customers. We expect that the TeDDy will be included in many letters to Santa this year."

Retailing at £59.99, the iTeDDy is part of a growing 'ed-entertainment' market for toys and games which enhance learning. The worldwide market was worth around £1bn in 2005 and analysts believe it could treble by 2010.



➤ **RETAIL DEAL** Imran Hakim with his educational toy, i-TeDDy, which will be available in Argos stores