Project Leader’s Recommended Readings for Competing Values Jumpstart

Project 1: Content Aggregation (Project Lead: Michael Jack)

“Is Local News *the* Answer? Introduction” by Melissa Ludtke, *Nieman Reports*, Winter 2007.

“Everyblock Is Here And What Are You Going To Do About It?” by Richard Sullivan, The TV Guru, January 26, 2008, http://www.thetvguru.com/home/14458117.html.

“Reverse Syndication” by Jeff Jarvis, BuzzMachine blog, February 15, 2008. http://www.buzzmachine.com/2008/02/15/reverse-syndication/

“Online Video Audience Surges” by Lee Rainie, Pew Internet Project, January 9, 2008.

“2007 State of the News Media Report—Digital Journalism” by the Project for Excellence in Journalism, http://www.journalism.org/node/7226. (Full report available at http://stateofthemedia.org/2007/index.asp)

“For Paid Content, the Times They Are a Changin'” by Michael Pastore, IntranetJournal.com, 7/22/2005, http://www.intranetjournal.com/articles/200507/ij_07_22_05a.html.

“The Future Of Media Is In Content Aggregation, Not In Distribution” by Robin Good, Robin Good’s blog, May 27, 2006, http://www.masternewmedia.org/news/2006/05/27/the_future_of_media_is.htm, followed by “Everybody’s a Network” by Jeff Jarvis, BuzzMachine blog, May 21, 2006.

“More Firms Create Own Social Networks” by Lee Gomes, *Wall Street Journal* “Talking Tech,” February 19, 2008, p. B3. http://online.wsj.com/article/SB120338177216475675.html?mod=technology_columns_featured_lsc

Assorted recent news on partnerships and platforms:

Brightcove Builds War Chest
http://www.adweek.com/aw/esearch/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1003534583

Yahoo to Host Belo Video Content
http://www.mediaweek.com/mw/search/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1003694410

Nokia Launches Media Net
http://www.mediaweek.com/mw/search/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1003709436

CBS News, Digg Sign Partnership
http://www.mediaweek.com/mw/search/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1003694021

CNET Launches Publisher-Friendly Platform
http://www.mediaweek.com/mw/search/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1003682393

PBS Launches Joost Channel
http://www.mediaweek.com/mw/search/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1003686856

NBCU, SanDisk to Sell Prime Series
http://www.mediaweek.com/mw/search/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1003683841

Other assorted clips:

- Half Of All Bit-Torrent Downloads Are TV Shows
- How To Get Detailed Info On Online Video Viewing Patterns
- It's About Letting Consumers Grab Your Content Everywhere

Nieman Reports
Winter 2007 Issue

Is Local News *the* Answer?

Introduction
http://www.nieman.harvard.edu/reports/07-4NRwinter/p04-introduction.html
(For related stories: http://www.nieman.harvard.edu/reports/07-4NRwinter/index.html)
By Melissa Ludtke

"Unique local content" is by now a familiar phrase as print competes with digital media for readers' attention. With constantly updated international and national news reporting and commentary just a click away, hometown readers need different reasons to go to their local newspaper, in print or online. In this issue of Nieman Reports, we will explore what local news reporting can look like and what a hometown focus can mean for journalists, newspapers, Web sites, and those who consume this news and information.

Brett J. Blackledge, a reporter at The Birmingham News, won the 2007 Pulitzer Prize for Investigative Reporting for a story he began telling about a small, local college that trained firefighters. For two years, he followed the trail of corruption and cronyism he found within the state's two-year college system. "Newspapers have one place among the increasingly crowding media as the ever-vigilant watchdog, and it's what we do best for local audiences" he writes. In Seattle, Ken Armstrong, a reporter at The Seattle Times, won ASNE's 2007 Local Accountability Reporting award for a series of stories about improperly sealed lawsuits in the county's superior court. "We could have gone broad—writing about sealed records on a national level …. Or we could have gone local …" he writes. "National offered scale. Local offered depth. We decided to go local."

Two bureau reporters at The Times Herald-Record in Middletown, New York, John Doherty and Tim Logan, set out to portray in-depth the demise of a nearby "small, poor, violent, old factory town." The result was a controversial collection of stories that, as they write, "dispensed with the usual back-and-forth balancing between sides."

At The Post and Courier in Charleston, South Carolina, going local meant sending a reporter, Tony Bartelme, and a photographer, Alan Hawes, to China to send back word about a Charleston resident's stem cell transplant. While there, they found other "local" stories about business connections. In words and images, they describe their trip. As environmental reporter at The Des Moines Register, Perry Beeman creates searchable databases using local information so readers can see for themselves how climate change, pollution and industry are affecting them. "… for every national and global story, a local angle is waiting to be told," he says. At WISH-TV in Indianapolis, Indiana, a Peabody Award-winning investigation into inadequate helmet protection for the military in Iraq had many local dimensions. As news director Kevin Finch writes, "Local means local, even when the story originates half a world away."

At The Dallas Morning News, assistant editorial page editor Michael Landauer recruits volunteer columnists to be "Community Voices," and their words are published on zoned local pages in the paper's Metro section. "The person needs to think locally, write well, tell us something we don't know, and be persuasive," he says. In Albany, New York, Times Union Editor Rex Smith pushes breaking local news to the newspaper's Web site and expects his newsroom to do more analysis of news and aggressive in-depth local reporting, which in his city includes state government and politics. "Throughout our newspaper," he writes, "content is relentlessly local."

Will Bunch, who blogs and writes for the Philadelphia Daily News, knows why this push for local coverage is happening but realizes that "not one of us wanted to be covering local news at our age (or, for that matter, at any age)." As editor of The Roanoke Times, Carole Tarrant echoes Bunch's concern: "How do we resolve the tensions we all know exist between what the news organization needs and the ambitions of those who will be sent out on the frontlines?" Thomas E. Patterson, acting director of the Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, reports on the findings from three studies about local newspapers "and how the Internet is changing the distribution of local news." Rick Edmonds, media business analyst at the Poynter Institute, examines various news organizations' "local-local" strategies, including local zoning efforts taking place at metro papers. Bill Ostendorf, president of Creative Circle Media Consulting, says the Web should have taught newspapers that "readers want the news to be about them; to speak to them; to address their questions and concerns directly."

Dean Miller, executive editor of The Post Register in Idaho Falls, Idaho, speaks with Mary Nesbitt, managing director of Northwestern University's Readership Institute, about studies she's done about newspaper readers and the future of local news coverage. Lane DeGregory, a feature writer with the St. Petersburg Times, shared tips—ignore important people, read the walls, make freaky friends—for finding intriguing local stories with community journalists at a Nieman Foundation conference, and we provide excerpts from her talk.

Shawn McIntosh, director of culture and change at the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, and Rene Sanchez, deputy managing editor for news content at the Star Tribune, each write about organizational changes in the newsroom to accommodate a shift to local emphasis. At The Washington Post and the Chicago Tribune, hyperlocal coverage is now part of the newspaper's online offerings to readers. At the Post's LoudounExtra.com, according to one of its creators, Rob Curley, "relevance and relationship are at its core." As managing editor of TribLocal.com, Kyle Leonard relies on "people who live in these communities to report a significant amount of the news."

Jan Schaffer, executive director of J-Lab at the University of Maryland, provides key findings from a recent study about "the rise of local news sites based on user-generated content" and tips about launching a hyperlocal Web site. Geoff Dougherty, who had been an investigative reporter with the Chicago Tribune, is now editor of the online Chi-Town Daily News, which uses beat-reporting interns and neighborhood correspondents to be "relentlessly local." Liz George, a New York Daily News editor and managing editor and co-owner of Baristanet.com, a hyperlocal online news site in New Jersey, writes that "zeroing in on readership by creating unique local content in a variety of forms is what we do at Baristanet." Mark Potts, a cofounder of Backfence.com, a hyperlocal site that closed earlier this year for business reasons, describes how citizen journalism "augments and extends" professional journalism by covering news "that journalists can't get to and by giving 'audience' members a voice." At VillageSoup.com, a hyperlocal site serving two counties in MidCoast Maine, cofounder Richard M. Anderson finds his community host model combining exclusively local "professional, amateur and business content is proving to be successful." Lisa Williams, founder of Placeblogger, the largest site of local Weblogs, and of h2otown, a hyperlocal site in Watertown, Massachusetts, compares what happened to high-tech workers during that industry's downturn with what journalists are facing today as newsrooms shrink and jobs change. "What we discovered, of course, was that innovation survived the death of its institutions," she writes.

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EVERYBLOCK IS HERE AND WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?

Richard Sullivan

Story Created: Jan 26, 2008 at 10:20 PM CST

Story Updated: Jan 28, 2008 at 10:35 PM CST

When it comes to distributing local content, the conventional wisdom says local broadcasters have the inside track to grab a huge online share of the action.

After all, broadcasters have worked hard to become trusted community resources while also maintaining powerful on-air promotional platforms and sales organizations to monetize their online initiatives.

Plus with the explosion of broadband, the broadcaster also has sizeable video resources as well.

Yet with all of these built-in advantages, pure-play internet companies are digging in locally and to usurp the territory that seemingly would belong to the local broadcaster.

A case in point is EveryBlock, a new local web initiative making its debut this past week in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco.

EveryBlock is a news aggregator that organizes local information right down to the city block level.

Users can type in their Zip Code, Street Address or Neighborhood and get an instant listing of crimes in the area, restaurant inspections, photo submissions, street closures, recent news articles, and even movies that are to be filmed in the neighborhood.

Much of the information is "mapped out" on the site so users can pinpoint the exact location of the crime, street closure, etc.

EveryBlock pulls its data from a variety of sources such as Craigslist, Flickr and Yelp to name a few.

EveryBlock is funded by a million dollar plus grant from the Knight Foundation's News Challenge, whose aim is to make local news more accessible to everyone.

THE ONLINE SPIN

EveryBlock joins the growing list of web-based companies invading the territory formerly commandeered by broadcasters and newspaper publishers.

What makes EveryBlock (and sites like it) particularly distinctive is its neighborhood focus and the extremely dynamic nature of its content.

Broadcasters pay heed. Just as Craiglist cut the economic underpinnings of the newspaper business, EveryBlock has the same opportunity to muscle its way into the online dissemination of local news.

And where eyeballs go, revenue follows.

At a minimum this should strike a note of urgency for local stations to pursue a hyper-local online agenda - pronto!

Additional Resources:

Tech Crunch: EveryBlock Launches as Local News Aggregator for San Francisco, NYC, and Chicago

The Lost Remote: EveryBlock has launched and it's very cool

eNeighbors.com blog: EveryBlock Launches

download squad: EveryBlock tells you what's happening everywhere (in 3 cities)

Links referenced within this article

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eNeighbors.com blog: EveryBlock Launches
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http://www.downloadsquad.com/2008/01/23/everyblock-tells-you-whats-happening-everywhere-in-3-cities/

Find this article at:
http://www.thetvguru.com/home/14458117.html

« New business models for news
Cutting up the newsroom »

Reverse syndication

In the story about their layoffs today, the New York Times mentioned, as it often does, that the Baghdad bureau costs them $3 million a year.

I've been wondering about a new way to help support that bureau: reverse syndication.

Now, the Times supports that work not with advertising associated with it directly — who wants to associated a brand with war? — but by doing the other things — food, entertainment, autos, homes — that bring in the money. And it runs a syndicate in which it sells its stories to other news organizations. But I know from my time in newspaper online sites that syndication is a dying business as newspapers cut back all the costs they can and as the web link pretty much obsoletes the model: Why buy the content when people can get it to already online?

So how about turning that model around: Let's say the Times says to Tribune company that it will provide all the reporting on Iraq for Tribune's readers. But instead of charging Tribune for syndication, the Times pays Tribune a share of the ad revenue it gets from traffic Tribune sends to the Times. Tribune, which is also engaging in layoffs, can't afford to do everything anymore and so it has to do what it does best and link to the rest. Granted that the ad revenue on a Baghdad story won't be great but added traffic would add revenue and would help.

And if this model works, wouldn't Tribune also want to link to Wall Street coverage from the Times. Or the Wall Street Journal and Reuters could compete for that traffic. There's a church-state question here: Would Tribune be motivated to link to any of these three because they have the best coverage or because they pay the best commission? Given equal quality, the best commission will win. But Tribune has to give its readers the best links to the best coverage or its readers will seek those links elsewhere. So I think quality will succeed.

(This is the first of two posts exploring new models for the business of news — I'd love to see you explore more. I also want to give credit for inspiring this to Jim Kennedy, the head of strategy at the Associated Press, who drew a similar model when I first brought Daylife to meet him as he tried to figure out how we as an industry could help support quality coverage from local papers that right now aren't motivated to take national traffic since they can't monetize it well. This may be a model that addresses that.)

Tags: Book, journalism, newbiznews, newsinnovation, newspapers, norgs, wwgd

This entry was posted on Friday, February 15th, 2008 at 9:26 am. You can follow any responses to this entry through the RSS 2.0 feed. You can leave a response, or trackback from your own site.

4 Responses to "Reverse syndication"

1. *bz* Says:
   February 15th, 2008 at 10:29 am

   Another great analogy would be farming. It's no use for one farmer to grow each and every fruit and vegetable, it's better when they specialize and share their wealth.

   Yes, selection may decrease, but the increase in quality should make up for that.

   bz.

2. *Links: 2008-02-15 « ideas Revolutionary* Says:
   February 15th, 2008 at 3:24 pm

   […] Reverse syndication - with newspapers losing money and laying off people, may be it is unavoidable that we will read the same story by the same reporter even if we thought we are reading multiple newspapers for wider perspectives on things […]

3. *Could 'reverse syndication' be a new model for reporting? - Lost Remote TV Blog* Says:
   February 19th, 2008 at 10:12 pm

   […] Jarvis calls it reverse syndication: big publishers pay smaller publishers to link to their material. Jarvis has a fascinating, albeit […]

4. *John Proffitt* Says:
   February 20th, 2008 at 5:48 pm

   I've begun to promote a similar idea, specifically in the public media world. Local public TV and public radio stations today pay hundreds of thousands and sometimes millions to NPR, PBS, APTS, PRI, APM and other content providers (with NPR and PBS being the most obvious). This has stifled the local public media companies' ability to produce local content. They blow all their cash paying the networks.

   Reverse syndication in this world, to my thinking, is to have the networks sell their content to the public (ads, membership revenue) and give all the content to the local media outlets for free — with the caveat that embedded ads pass through with the content. Local outlets could then produce local media and still pick from the best national media and arrange it into locally-relevant streams/blocks on the web, on transmitters, etc.

This would also clean up the nasty co-dependent relationships between the local stations and the networks, as it would clarify the roles of each.

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PewResearchCenter Publications

Online Video Audience Surges

by Lee Rainie, Director, Pew Internet Project
January 9, 2008

The audience for YouTube and other internet video sites has risen sharply the past year. Nearly half of online adults now say they have ever visited such sites. And, on a typical day at the end of 2007, the share of internet users visiting video sites was nearly twice as large as it had been at the end of 2006. The basic findings in a national phone survey that ended in December show:

- 48% of internet users said they had ever visited a video-sharing site such as YouTube. A year ago, in December 2006, 33% of internet users said they had ever visited such sites. That represents growth of more than 45% year-to-year.
- 15% of respondents said they had used a video-sharing site "yesterday" -- the day before they were contacted for our survey. A year ago, 8% had visited such a site "yesterday." Thus, on an average day, the number of users of video sites nearly doubled from the end of 2006 to the end of 2007.

Table 1: Demographics of internet users who have ever visited video-sharing websites

	Dec. 2006	*Dec. 2007*	*% change from the previous year*
Total internet users	33%	48%	Increased 45%
Men	40	53	Increased 33%
Women	27	43	Increased 59%
Age 18-29	55	70	Increased 27%
Age 30-49	35	51	Increased 46%
Age 50-64	19	30	Increased 58%
Age 65+	11	16	Increased 45%
Did not graduate from high school	29	39	Increased 34%
High school graduate	28	38	Increased 36%
Some college	36	54	Increased 50%
College graduate or more	37	54	Increased 46%
Live in households earning less than $30,000	32	43	Increased 34%
$30,000-$49,999	33	41	Increased 24%
$50,000-$74,999	28	53	Increased 89%
$75,000 or more	42	60	Increased 43%
Whites	31	45	Increased 45%
African-Americans	41	46	Increased 12%
English-speaking Latinos+	42	55	Increased 31%

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project October 24-Dec. 2, 2007 survey of 1,572 internet users. Margin of error is ±3% for internet users. + This survey was only conducted in English.

The dramatic growth in the population using video-sharing sites is tied at least in part to the popularity of such sites among men, younger adults (those under age 30), and college graduates. Nearly a third of wired young adults (30%) watch a video on a site like YouTube on a typical day and fully a fifth of online men (20%) do the same.

At the same time, growth in daily traffic surged among some other demographic groups including:

- women, whose use on an average day jumped from 5% to 11% (or an increase of 120%)
- those ages 30 to 49, whose use on a typical day increased from 7% to 14% (or an increase of 100%)
- and high school graduates, whose use on a typical day grew from 5% to 13% (or an increase of 160%).

Growth in traffic is also linked to the spread of broadband connections. In our December 2006 survey, 45% of all American adults said they had broadband at home and in this most recent survey, 54% of all adults have high-speed connections at home.

Table 2: Demographics of internet users who use video-sharing sites on a typical day

	Dec. 2006 *% who used video site "yesterday"*	*Dec. 2007* *% who used video site "yesterday"*	*% change from the previous year*
Total internet users	8%	15%	Increased 86%
Men	11	20	Increased 82%
Women	5	11	Increased 120%
Age 18-29	15	30	Increased 100%
Age 30-49	7	14	Increased 100%
Age 50-64	6	7	Increased 17%
Age 65+	4	4	Increased 0%
Did not graduate from high school	7	15	Increased 114%
High school graduate	5	13	Increased 160%
Some college	10	17	Increased 70%
College graduate or more	9	16	Increased 78%
Live in households earning less than $30,000	8	16	Increased 100%
$30,000-$49,999	7	13	Increased 86%
$50,000-$74,999	9	17	Increased 89%
$75,000 or more	13	18	Increased 38%
Whites	7	14	Increased 100%
African-Americans	10	15	Increased 50%
English-speaking Latinos+	14	18	Increased 29%

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project October 24-Dec. 2, 2007 survey of 1,572 internet users. Margin of error is ±3% for internet users.

+ This survey was only conducted in English.

Other factors are almost certainly at play in the growth of video site usage. One element is that there are more videos on sites like YouTube now than there were a year ago. Some of that growth comes from people posting their own amateur videos on such sites. In our most recent survey, we found that 22% of Americans shoot their own videos and that 14% of them post some of that video online. That is more than triple the percentage of video takers who said they had posted videos when we asked a similar question in a survey taken in February-April 2006.

The growth in sharing site usage also links to a larger story on the internet about widespread use of video offered by all kinds of websites. This phenomenon was documented in our report "Online Video".

Find additional information on the survey along with the questionnaire and topline findings at pewinternet.org

Notes

[1]Results are from a survey of 2,054 American adults (age 18 and older) conducted between October 24 and December 2, 2007. The number of internet users asked the video-sharing question was 1,359. The margin of error on the sample of internet users is plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Journalism.org
Project for Excellence in Journalism: Understanding News in the Information Age

2007 State of the News Media Report - Digital Journalism

The newspaper's Web site, the internal report began, was now 10 years old. "Its stated strategy was to be an indispensable information retailer," complete with "news, listings, reviews, databases," and more.

"This vision is unfulfilled" the Los Angeles Times's highly anticipated "Spring Street Project" declared in December 2006.

"Latimes.com is virtually invisible inside greater Los Angeles. By some measures, the site is losing traction even faster than the newspaper."

Why? "Inadequate staffing, creaky technology," dead links, infrequent updating, lack of interactivity with readers and much, much more, the report concluded. When the paper eliminated most daily stock listings in print, for instance, the Web sites declined to purchase the software that would allow users to track their stock portfolios online.

The list of reasons for the problems amounted to an indictment of bureaucracy at its worst: culture clash, lack of investment, political balkanism, corporate division, out-of-date technology.

The Spring Street Report was the fruit of an extraordinary effort by the Times's former editor, Dean Baquet. As he clashed with the paper's owner, the Tribune Company in Chicago, over cutbacks he thought ill considered, Baquet unleashed a team of his best reporters to investigate the future of the Times — in effect turning his newsroom into an R&D unit. If journalism needs to change, the effort implied, journalists should be involved in reinventing it.

To outsiders, the report amounted to an unusually candid internal assessment of a major news operation as it struggles to make the transition to the digital age. Many other news Web sites, the report found in assessing the field generally, were much further along than the Times.

What is the state of digital journalism? What progress are Web sites making to exploit the potential of the Web to go beyond what any one traditional medium might offer? What capacities of the Web are sites developing, and which are they not?

In past years, our report on the State of the News Media offered glimpses by examining a handful of Web sites each year from different media sectors, usually noting the design of the pages and the treatment of top stories.

To go deeper, this year the Project undertook a detailed examination of the structure and features of more than three dozen Web sites from a range of news sources — network, local and cable TV, newspapers, radio, online-only and citizen media.

The goal was first to identify which characteristics news sites were developing online and which they weren't.

The second was to determine whether Web sites could be classified into groups, into a kind of typology, or whether the field was still too fluid and embryonic.

Among the findings:

- Web sites have developed beyond their root media. In character, many news sites now cut across medium, history, audience size and editorial structure. The New York Times Web site, for instance, has different strengths and a noticeably different character from that of the Washington Post. The Web site of CBS News is notably different in its strengths from ABC's. Some citizen media sites have distinct editorial processes and standards.

- News sites seem to be exploiting two areas of the Web most of all: editorial branding, or establishing a distinctive identity through original content and a distinct editorial process; and the potential for users to customize information, particularly through mobile delivery of it. More sites earned high marks for promoting original content and unique brand than any other feature we studied. Indeed, the notion that the Web is dominated by yesterday's newspapers, wire copy, opinion and rumor is increasingly an oversimplification.

- Sites have done the least to tap the Web's potential for depth — to enrich coverage by offering links to original documents, background material, additional coverage and more. That suggests that putting things into context, or making sense of the information available, is an area Web journalists still need to work on. This deficiency may expose the tension between old-style journalism, which sent reporters out to write stories, and technology-based aggregation, which gathers those stories and links via computer algorithm. Building real depth into coverage probably requires people to weave relevant sources of information together and to help consumers navigate and go deeper by themselves.

- Digital journalism has also not fully exploited the potential for users to participate by commenting and adding their own voice to the information. The notion that the Web is a place for people to be "prosumers," simultaneously consuming and producing information in a kind of conversation, is at this point probably something of an exaggeration.

- Only a few sites excel at multiple areas of the Web's potential. Only four of those we analyzed earned top marks in even three of the five content categories studied. Most excelled at only one or two.

To make this more useful, we have created an interactive area where users can probe our findings, look closely at where sites ranked in certain categories and compare sites across the categories. We also discuss the broad findings and offer profiles of each site.

The web is constantly evolving and Web sites frequently changing. Even as we write this report several sites studied have gone through changes, and many more certainly will do so during the course of the next year. As such, this study is not meant so much as a long-standing portrait of what each site has to offer, but more a key tool to the landscape of options. The topography is diverse. Our hope is this tool will help users understand the Web better and news outlets better define what they have developed so far and where they might want to invest further.

About the Study

The study closely examined 38 different news Web sites in September 2006 and again in February 2007. The sites were chosen from a mix of their root-based media (e.g., newspapers, radio, cable) including a variety of online-only outlets.

We examined each site according to more than 60 different measurable features or capabilities from six different areas:

- The level of customizability of content
- The degree to which users could participate in producing content

- The degree to which sites offered content in different media formats
- The degree to which sites exploited the potential for depth on a subject
- The extent to which a site's own editorial standards, content and control were the brand being promoted
- The nature and level of revenue streams for the site

After completing the site studies, we then tallied the scores for each site and ranked them within each category. For a full description of the methodology and the sites studied please see the methodology section of this report.

Intranet Journal
The online resource for intranet professionals

http://www.intranetjournal.com/articles/200507/ij_07_22_05a.html

For Paid Content, the Times They Are a Changin'

Michael Pastore

7/22/2005

For decades, the way to keep the knowledge workers in your organization on top of industry news was to subscribe to the services of a content aggregator like Factiva, Dialog, or LexisNexis. The evolution of intranets and electronic delivery fit well with this approach, but now the amount of free content available to people with an Internet connection is changing the rules of the game.

The "deep Web" — online content that sits behind subscriptions and members-only barriers — and the not-so-deep Web (free Web content) collided with the launch of the Yahoo Subscriptions beta last month. The Yahoo service, which added LexisNexis and Factiva to its list of content aggregators and publishers this week, lets users search both the open Web and the deep Web in one search. And if you already have a subscription to Yahoo Subscription's publishing partners, you get to use the Yahoo search technology to search multiple publishers and aggregators as well as the open Web.

The approach isn't entirely new; Northern Light gave it a try until 2002. But it's an approach that Internet users should probably get used to. When International Data Group (IDG) CEO Pat Kenealy told *Wired* this week he thought the Internet of 2005 reminded him of television in 1955, when the content was all free, it was a comment that got your attention. Kenealy's company, after all, publishes some 300 Web sites and magazines in the technology space.

On Wall Street, newspaper stocks are performing poorly. The latest numbers from Dow Jones and The New York Times Co. were less than stellar, with the exception of their online ventures. *The Wall Street Journal* Web site had an 8.8 percent increase in the number of subscribers in the second quarter of this year; and remember, you pay for the *Journal* online.

Neither paid content or free content is going away anytime soon. The deep Web and the open Web will have to find a way to co-exist. That is, essentially, what the Yahoo Subscriptions beta is all about — finding a way to bring the paid and free content together for people searching the Internet. Is this what we should come to expect in the future?

John Blossom, president of Westport, Conn.-based Shore Communications, blogged about his experience taking the Yahoo Subscriptions beta for a test drive. Blossom found the service frustrating and confusing because it didn't provide a compelling reason for consumers to buy the content. It was hard to understand the relevancy of the search results because it was difficult to discern when some of the content was published. Some of the content found in the Yahoo Subscriptions search also appeared in the free Web search.

Despite the early growing pains, Blossom remains positive. "There is a strong future for subscription content on the Web," he told *Intranet Journal*. "Yahoo, Google, and others are eager to acquire premium content to round out their datasets."

One of the issues with trying to aggregate content from mutiple publishers, and in this case other aggregators, is that the content has no consistent format. There is no standard display of an abstract, author, or date.

"They don't, when you do a query on the (Yahoo) service, get a compelling search result," Blossom said.

There is also the issue of payment. Individual aggregators already made available systems to buy one piece of content. LexisNexis calls it LexisNexis A La Carte. But now that content is being exposed to a broad audience through Yahoo. Paying $3 for a piece of content isn't so compelling, especially when it might be available on the open Web.

Micropayments are one of those Web innovations we keep waiting for. We're still waiting for a viable system that makes spending small amounts online easier than the tried and true credit card method.

Blossom thinks the payment scheme will need to move toward bundling, where aggregators give users ten article for $9.99 for example, to make the payments more feasible. Or the aggregators could charge a fee for the service then add the micropayments for content. You pay a flat fee for cell phone use, and that's why you don't get a separate bill for the $0.79 in calls you make.

Yahoo Subscriptions is a beta program with a limited number of publishers and its share of growing pains ahead of it. It is certain to see its share of tweaks in the future. Blossom thinks the best strategy is to make a premium content aggregator available to the broadest set of publishers possible. "Premium content needs to rub shoulders with open Web content and prove its value," he said.

This is the strategy that is being used at *The New York Times*, where there is a combination of free and paid content online. Of course, that model means more access to basic content and features in the premium content that makes it worth the cost. People won't pay for distribution of content. And they won't pay for content when the value isn't clear.

"Publishers and aggregators need to do a better job of looking at their offerings and determining what is really valuable to an open Web audience and that would be worth paying for," Blossom said. "This will mean in many instances more money for more narrow and high-feature content products succeeding on the Web and less success for trying to charge for basic distribution of content that's best supported in an open Web model. And, hopefully, no more three-dollar press releases."

May 27, 2006

The Future Of Media Is In Content Aggregation, Not In Distribution

by Robin Good

http://www.masternewmedia.org/news/2006/05/27/the_future_of_media_is.htm

Content and news aggregators, remixers, thematic content search engines and directories, topic-specific curators, newsmasters are the new front lines to where new media publishers, unbundled from the need to be tied to one, unique physical distribution network will be moving to.

The more you will be able let your content find its distribution channels online without trying to own and control each choke point, the least resistance you will be offering to the sweeping transformations that are already shaping the way that people access and engage with their favorite content.

This is how new and traditional media expert, Jeff Jarvis, sees the world of media being transformed as we go along.

Networks are all about sharing and being vehicles that facilitate access and discovery of quality content.

"*On the "consumer" side, the people formerly known as viewers have taken control of what, when, and how they watch and they do it without commercials.*"

And when "*the audience is on stage*" and "*your customers are your competitors*" what do you do next?

From "Everybody's a network" by Jeff Jarvis:

"***In the future of media**, which is now, everybody is a network.*

In the past, networks were defined by control of content or distribution. But now, you can't own all distribution and content is controlled where it's created. So, I wonder, where's the value and where's the money in the fully networked world?

What is a network now?

Your friend pointing you to something to read or watch is a network. The collection of people putting a YouTube video on their blogs makes a network. BlogAds bringing together 800 blogs for an MSNBC.com ad buy is a network. When you subscribe to a collection of feeds, or when you publish up a blogroll, or when you put a tag on your blog post, or when you use a Flickr tag that others use, you are a network.

***Networks are about sharing now**; they used to be about control.*

Networks are two-way; they used to be one-way.

***Networks are about aggregation more than distribution**; they are about finding and being found.*

Networks are now open while, by their very definition, they used to be closed. You join networks and leave them at will; you can join any number of networks at once and content can be found via any number of networks, there is no practical limit. Networks used to be static. Now networks are fluid.

***For us, the people formerly known as consumers**, this is a better world. We can find the content we want from anywhere by relying on networks we trust because we know them more intimately and they even know us; we are no longer a one-size-fits all mass.*

***For content producers**, which is any of us now, it's also better, for the barrier to entry — and to the public — is destroyed.*

***And for content itself**, it's better because the good stuff can be found, amended, corrected; it can live longer and live in context.*

...

The old networks are hosed and they are finally realizing that. Suddenly, the dominoes are tumbling, all at once. We all know the latest signs:

***ABC pissed off its old channels of distribution** — broadcast affiliates, cable system operators, and retailers — by putting up its shows on iTunes and online. Umair Haque says they didn't go far enough and that's true, but I say this journey begins with a single step and ABC's first step was a doozie.*

Warner Brothers, in turn, is willing to piss off its channels of distribution — namely, networks like ABC — by doing a deal to sell shows directly to consumers via Bittorrent. Who needs networks?

...

The power of the networks as distribution platforms and brands is diminishing fast. On the business side, the old networks have no end of new competition.

***The scarcity economy is over**; networks cannot continue to raise their rates even as their audiences shrink, because they no longer control the clock; there is always somewhere else to reach audiences — somewhere more efficient and less expensive, by the way.*

...

On the "consumer" side, the people formerly known as viewers have taken control of what, when, and how they watch and they do it without commercials.

And of course, the networks face no end of competitors in content, as well.

Rocketboom now has twice the audience of many cable news shows because the stranglehold the networks had on distribution and audience is over.

The audience is on stage.

Your customers are your competitors.

...

The smart network response to all this is to liquify.

***You let your stuff be found anywhere**, in any medium and any network.*

You let your public distribute for you

***Most important** — and this is where Umair said ABC should have been going next — **you should recommend good stuff to people and it shouldn't be just your stuff**; you use your relationship, trust, and resources to aggregate stuff and audience across the world of possibilities.*

....

In the old static-network world, it made no sense to send people to other networks; in the new, fluid world, they're going to go there anyway, and so the best thing to do is to help them find the best stuff, redefining the value of a network. And from a business perspective, I argue, you're wise to grow audience and ad inventory across open networks of the stuff you recommend. Umair says that ABC took a good move in unbundling content from distribution but what it should really be doing is rebundling content with audiences:

***Rebundling is where value capture will happen** - at communities, reconstructors, markets, networks - that direct people's attention to individualized 'casts. This is where branding will be reborn - and where advertising is already being disrupted, ripped apart, and reborn (viz, Google, PPC, pay per call, etc)*

...

But...

But what about the networks themselves?

Where is the value in networks now?

Where is the money?

Some ideas could be:

a) You put together recommended sites and sell ads across them.

b) You create content and aggregate others' content.

c) In a different context, one of the smartest media execs I know proposes another hybrid model that shares ad revenue between destination sites (to give them the motivation and resources to do good work there) and sites that send them traffic (to motivate them to do that)."

To find the answers to these, read on to Jeff Jarvis' visionary post entitled "Everybody is a network" to find and appreciate some of the possible opportunities that may await us ahead.

This is a must read.

Jeff Jarvis -
Reference: Buzzmachine [Read more]

Everybody's a network

In the future of media, which is now, everybody is a network. In the past, networks were defined by control of content or distribution. But now, you can't own all distribution and content is controlled where it's created. So, I wonder, where's the value and where's the money in the fully networked world?

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Networks are about sharing now; they used to be about control. Networks are two-way; they used to be one-way. Networks are about aggregation more than distribution; they are about finding and being found. Networks are now open while, by their very definition, they used to be closed. You join networks and leave them them at will; you can join any number of networks at once and content can be found via any number of networks, there is no practical limit. Networks used to be static. Now networks are fluid.

For us, the people formerly known as consumers, this is a better world. We can find the content we want from anywhere by relying on networks we trust because we know them more intimately and they even know us; we are no longer a one-size-fits all mass. For content producers, which is any of us now, it's also better, for the barrier to entry — and to the public — is destroyed. And for content itself, it's better because the good stuff can be found, amended, corrected; it can live longer and live in context.

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At the same time, Ad Age reports that Bolt found "only one in four 12- to 34-year-olds can name all four major broadcast networks: ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox." I tried that experiment at home with my teen son and he couldn't name them, either ("uh, ABC… NBC… CNN?"). My preteen daughter has no idea what broadcast is. The power of the networks as distribution platforms and brands is diminishing fast.

On the business side, the old networks have no end of new competition. The scarcity economy is over; networks cannot continue to raise their rates even as their audiences shrink, because they no longer control the clock; there is always somewhere else to reach audiences — somewhere more efficienct and less expensive, by the way. The upfront buying season for commercials is going on now and the only way the networks can save themselves from the inevitable shrinkage Warren Buffett predicts for newspapers is by coming up with blockbusters. But as Umair Haque points out often, the blockbuster economy is not a longterm winner and it is getting riskier and riskier. See also Seth Godin: "If your marketing strategy requires you to hit #1 in order to succeed, you probably need a new marketing strategy."

On the "consumer" side, the people formerly known as viewers have taken control of what, when, and how they watch and they do it without commercials.

And of course, the networks face no end of competitors in content, as well. Rocketboom now has twice the audience of many cable news shows because the stranglehold the networks had on distribution and audience is over. The audience is on stage. Your customers are your competitors.

Or maybe not. The smart network response to all this is to liquify. You let your stuff be found anywhere, in any medium and any network. You let your public distribute for you (see Jon Stewart's Crossfire rant). Most important — and this is where Umair said ABC should have been going next — you should recommend good stuff to people and it shouldn't be just your stuff; you use your relationship, trust, and resources to aggregate stuff and audience across the world of possibilities. (This is essentially what I'm also suggesting to the BBC in my Guardian column this week, coming soon.) In the old static-network world, it made no sense to send people to other networks; in the new, fluid world, they're going to go there anyway, and so the best thing to do is to help them find the best stuff, redefining the value of a network. And from a business perspective, I argue, you're wise to grow audience and ad inventory across open networks of the stuff you recommend. Umair says that ABC took a good move in unbundling content from distribution but what it should really be doing is rebundling content with audiences:

> Rebundling is where value capture will happen - at communities, reconstructors, markets, networks - that direct people's attention to individualized 'casts. This is where branding will be reborn - and where advertising is already being disrupted, ripped apart, and reborn (viz, Google, PPC, pay per call, etc)

Add to this Om Malik arguing that by giving and selling their shows directly to the public, the networks and producers are also disrupting the folks who *thought* they were the networks of the future: portals.

And see John Hagel saying that networks have a choice between content and relationships.

> The most powerful brands in the media business will be held by successful intermediaries that help to consistently improve return on attention for audiences. In the process, the nature of the brand promise will change in a profound way. It will be a massive opportunity for media companies that understand the shift in economic and competitive dynamics and that focus on the rebundling plays required to build these brands.
>
> There's another way to frame the strategic opportunity/challenge for media businesses going forward. In addition to unbundling and rebundling of content, media companies face a choice: do they want to remain product businesses or do they want to become audience relationship businesses? …
>
> Of course, media companies have elements of both embedded in their companies today, but their hearts and minds are firmly in the product business. Here's the test: how open is the media company to providing access to third party content on behalf of their audiences? ….
>
> [A]udience relationship businesses take these proliferating content options as an opportunity, rather than a challenge. The more options there are, the more value that can be created by organizing, packaging, presenting and adding to these options for specific audiences.

I agree that we're headed to a relationship/aggregation economy in media. I think that networks will become fluid, ad hoc, two-way, and open.

But then I still have to come back to the question: Where is the value in fluid networks? Where is the money? I don't know the answer. For once, I won't even pretend to.

: : :

These seem to be the choices:

If you just recommend great content, you may build a trusted relationship and a strong brand. But how do you get money — with ads people see on the way to the destinations you recommend? OK, there's certainly value there. (See BoingBoing, Instapundit, and portals.) But I don't know how much, or how many will make much, or how long it will last.

If you just aggregate content in full (that is, presenting the complete content over linking to it), you may have viewers but you soon won't have content, for the creators will want the traffic to come to them in their space serving their goals. (See Yahoo, Breitbart, Blogburst.)

If you just sell ads on these recommended places, you can make money and so can the sites. (See FM Publishing, BlogAds.) I've been pushing for an open — and fluid — ad marketplace.

If you just make content you will, of course, have value, but you won't recognize that unless your stuff is seen and that means you need to be part of networks or have to spend marketing dollars. (See any producer, publisher, writer.)

The advantage of the old, closed networks, of course, is that they combined all this: ABC recommended the show by putting it on the air; it aggregated the content; it aggregated the audience; it sold the ads; it shared the revenue. Life was so simple. Well, so much for that. So what systems will serve the interests of producers, audiences, aggregators, and advertisers?

I wonder whether success in the future, even in an open world, will depend on offering more than one of these aspects of fluid networks:

* You put together recommended sites *and* sell ads across them.

* You create content *and* aggregate others' content.

* In a different context, one of the smartest media execs I know proposes another hybrid model that shares ad revenue between destination sites (to give them the motivation and resources to do good work there) and sites that send them traffic (to motivate them to do that).

But the added complication in all this is that you won't join just one network. You'll go to multiple places to get recommendations, and you'll want your content to be linked on many places to get traffic, and ideally you'll be able to get ad revenue from multiple sources. This suggests an even more complex hybrid model: He who sends you traffic gets to share in (and perhaps sell) ad revenue based on the traffic sent. So if Instapundit sends me traffic, I give him a share of my revenue for doing so. Or I let my content appear on another site via, say, Blogburst, in return for a piece of their ad revenue. It's getting overcomplicated very quickly.

Sorry for this overlong treatise on networks. My point, in the end, is only that we are entering uncertain and uncharted waters in fluid networks. It's not clear where the value will be captured and how it will be shared.

: LATER: See also David Galbraith, Kevin Werbach, and Cory Doctorow on the post-scarcity economy.

Tags: Book, Exploding_TV, Media, networks

This entry was posted on Sunday, May 21st, 2006 at 1:04 pm.

TALKING TECH
By LEE GOMES

More Firms Create Own Social Networks

February 19, 2008; Page B3

Facebook and MySpace have made social networking famous -- but do you need to be a social-networking company to make use of social networks? A growing number of companies don't think so, and are beginning to create their own. Jerry Sheer, chief executive of Sparta Social Networks, builds social networks for big companies, and talks about their appeal.

Q: *So why would a company not in the tech business create a social network?*

A: Companies ... are trying to learn from the customers and develop a closer relationship with them. By creating a social network, a company can watch as its customers build their own communities and their own groups. It's a vehicle for customers to correspond, communicate and socialize with each other.

Q: *But sometimes customers might be bad-mouthing the company. Why would a company want to provide a platform for that to happen?*

A: Because they learn from the bad as well as the good. They can alter a product, or a PR decision. If a new ad gets a negative reaction, they can make adjustments in their next campaign. Most companies would much rather have that information under their own control, as opposed to being in some group bashing them in Facebook. They will be able to mine whatever information is developed on the site, rather than have it outside of their control.

Q: *What actual examples are there?*

A: Hearst-Argyle Television has Playbook. It's a niche Facebook-like product, a high-school sports platform where kids can upload video, talk about games, trash talk kids from other schools, and more. You go to a participating city like Louisville and go to your school and see all the games and scores. The network is doing very well, and growing a few cities a month. The local TV stations tie in their coverage of the sports to Playbook. They are bouncing off each other. It's YouTube-style high-school sports, but in beautiful high definition.

Q: *A lot of the things people are saying now about social networks they were saying a year or two about blogs, especially in the way that they would connect companies more closely to their customers.*

A: Blogs are part of it, but a social network is really about being able to make better business decisions. A social network can be thought of as a focus group on steroids. Instead of putting 30 people in a room, here you have thousands of people talking about a particular product. It could be a new windshield-wiper gadget on a new model of car. The company can find what the general opinion is about the gadget far more easily with a social network than they can by putting 30 people in a room.

Q: *What does it cost to build one of these?*

A: A highly customized social network can run between six and seven figures. But those are ones with lots of bells and whistles. Even with the cost, social networks have become the Web site of this decade. Back in the '90s if you didn't have a Web site you were irrelevant; the same was true with having an e-commerce site in 2001. That is where social networks are right now.

Write to Lee Gomes at lee.gomes@wsj.com

Brightcove Builds War Chest

Jan 18, 2007

-Brian Morrissey

NEW YORK Brightcove raised an eye-opening $59.5 million in additional financing as it tries to establish a leadership role in the crowded online video sector.

The Series C round, led by AllianceBernstein, Brookside Capital and Maverick Capital, is earmarked for aggressive expansion plans in 2007, the company said. The funding comes on top of a $16.7 million Series B funding in November 2005.

"If the Google-YouTube deal was any indication, 2007 is clearly going to be a major year for online video, and also a year of consolidation as many of the hundreds of online video startups seek a place in the new ecosystem," CEO Jeremy Allaire wrote on the company's blog. "We also expect 2007 to be a year where established media companies make more bets, and continue to partner with leaders they can trust and who are well aligned with their desire to maintain choice and control over how their video is used online, while also empowering consumers."

Brightcove has linked up with several major content owners to power distribution of their video on their own sites and on its syndication network. Its partners include AOL, Discovery and MTV. Last October, it recast Brightcove.com as an Internet video aggregation site, an additional distribution channel.

In addition to the lead investors, previous backers Allen & Co., AOL, General Catalyst Partners and IAC participated. The New York Times Co. and Japanese fund Transcosmos Investments also joined. The latter will help Brightcove expand into Japan, the company said.

Brightcove has several competitors, often in different facets of its model. As a destination, it battles YouTube and other video sites for consumer viewership, while its technology platform will vie for attention from media owners like Joost, a video company begun by the founders of Kazaa and Skype. Its syndication network competes with ROO and Broadband Enterprises, while its ad network is in competition with Tremor and AOL's Lightningcast.

Find this article at:
http://www.adweek.com/aw/esearch/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1003534583

Yahoo to Host Belo Video Content

Mike Shields

JANUARY 09, 2008 -

Yahoo News is continuing its expansion into local media through a new partnership with Belo Corp. that will see the leading online news site host video content from 13 local market Belo TV stations.

Through the new arrangement, Yahoo News will distribute dozens of news clips on a daily basis within its local pages, culled from Belo stations in several major markets, including Houston, New Orleans, St. Louis and Seattle/Tacoma. The content will be ad supported, with Yahoo and Belo sharing the revenue.

The partnership encompasses all of Belo's TV stations, with the exception of Dallas and Boise.

Yahoo and Belo already work together, as Yahoo News currently distributes content from various Belo newspapers. Indeed, building its footprint in local news has been a major priority for Yahoo of late – besides Belo, the site has hosted local content from 16 CBS stations since 2006. In addition, Yahoo has assembled a consortium of close to 550 newspapers over the last few years as part of an extensive advertising and content sharing partnership.

Find this article at:
http://www.mediaweek.com/mw/search/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1003694410

Nokia Launches Media Net

Mike Shields

FEBRUARY 11, 2008 -

Mobile phone manufacturer Nokia is getting deeper into the advertising business with the launch of the Nokia Media Network, which claims to bundle mobile ad inventory from over 70 publishers.

To assemble its new network, Nokia has lined up partnerships with Discovery, Reuters, Hearst, Sprint and others in an effort to offer advertisers access to premium inventory across numerous mobile sites, said officials. “The biggest brands in the world trust us with their mobile advertising because they know the Nokia Media Network enables them to reach the largest, highest quality audience on mobile and provides the best ROI,” said Mike Baker, head of Nokia Interactive.

While the formation of an ad network is somewhat foreign territory for a hardware manufacture, the formation of the Nokia Media Network seems to symbolize the uncertainty of the still nascent mobile advertising space, which has seen major content companies, Web portals like Yahoo and startup ad firms all clamoring for an early leadership positions. Plus, for Nokia, which is including several of its own branded Web properties in the network, the launch is not the company’s first entry into the advertising space. Last year, the company acquired Enpocket, a mobile advertising technology and analytics firm.

By joining the network, Hearst hopes for a bigger slice of the mobile ad pie by letting advertisers conduct one-stop shopping across all its mobile sites.

Through the network, Hearst Magazines Digital Media said it would be able to let clients buy ads across its sites as well as Nokia properties, regardless of carrier or mobile device, and both off- and on-deck.

Hearst Digital Media publishes nine mobile sites, which include the mobile sites of its popular magazines like Cosmopolitan, Good Housekeeping and Seventeen. Together, the sites generate 4 million-plus mobile site page views per month.

CBS News, Digg Sign Partnership

Mike Shields

JANUARY 08, 2008 -

One of the more traditional news organizations around is partnering with one of the more cutting edge media companies in the digital world.

CBS News announced a partnership with Digg, the social news site that allows its membership base to vote on and determine which stories and headlines receive prominent treatment. The two companies plan to work together throughout the 2008 presidential campaign.

As of Jan. 8, CBSNews.com began featuring links to various election news stories from around Web that have been rated highly by Digg's community. The site plans to weave in links from Digg throughout the 2008 primaries and general election, said officials. In exchange, Digg.com will begin distributing CBS News' "Campaign '08" video content.

In addition, CBSNews.com's own stories will now be "diggable" - meaning that readers can rate them and submit them for possible placement on Digg.com via a simple link place next to most stories. That arrangement could potentially leading to more traffic for the CBSNews.com, if enough viewers react favorably to the site's political news and feature pieces.

Plus, theoretically, users will have more incentive to spend time on the site."This is part of our strategic plan to open CBSNews.com to diverse news, analysis and voices from across the Web," said Michael Sims, CBSNews.com' vp of editorial content.

The move by CBS marks the latest example of traditional news organizations linking to content produced by other sites, in some cases that of competitors. For example, recently the New York Times Web site has begun highlighting stories from various prominent blogs and even competitors such as The Financial Times.

CNET Launches Publisher-Friendly Platform

Mike Shields

DECEMBER 07, 2007 -

CNET Networks has taken significant step toward embracing the wide-open distribution movement sweeping the Web. But rather than giving users what they want when they want it--as most in the industry continue to preach--the company is giving other publishers whatever content they want.

The San Francisco, Calif.-based tech and lifestyle publisher has launched what it calls the Open Content Platform, an automated feature through which publishers large and small can select content from five different CNET channels to post on their sites via portable widgets. The content, which includes text and video, will be updated regularly – and these sites don't need to sign elaborate licensing agreements, meet with CNET or even make a phone call. In most cases, no money changes hands, as the widget content is accompanied by advertising sold by CNET (CNET does share revenue with some more prominent sites). In select cases, CNET will run its partners' content on its own properties as part of the deal.

As part of the platform's initial launch, content will be available from flagship tech site CNET.com, GameSpot and TV.com, as well as selections from the career-orientated BNET and the hipster food site Chow.

"It's an import export relationship with no strings attached," explained CNET CEO Neil Ashe.
"And this way, we can avoid those business development, syndication nightmare meetings with a lot of lawyers in the room."

For example, the content-light job hunting site Monster.com plans to start posting editorial from the executive-aimed BNET. On the other end of the spectrum, the independent Cup Cake Blog now houses content from Chow, under the header "Content from our trusted partner."

Cheryl Porro, who runs Cup Cake blog, called the process of adding the Chow content "pretty painless." She said she's received numerous requests from readers to discuss non-cupcake recipes or even to promote specific products, which she mostly avoids. "I'm impressed with their content," she said. "I expect that other readers will get something out of it."

And she expects those readers will stick around longer due to the availability of Chow content, which is OK with CNET. "It's not about driving traffic to Chow," observed Ashe.

CNET isn't entirely abandoned the licensing business, said Ashe, but sees Open Content Platform as way to expand its reach far more quickly. Plus, since CNET will sell all of the advertising on the content distributed via the platform, it's looking at it as a way to build an instant ad network without having to represent any questionable content. "This will reach users across the Web, but only on CNET content," said Ashe. "You want your brand to associate with something you know and trust."

Of course, the obvious risk is that if CNET content can eventually be found all over the place, why will visitors bother to visit its sites? Ashe called the distributed snippets "appetizers" that should whet users' appetites for more. Besides, "No widget could contain the entire CNET experience," he said. "This is the risk we have got to take."

PBS Launches Joost Channel

Mike Shields

DECEMBER 18, 2007 -

PBS is the latest traditional network to ink a partnership with Joost, the online video service launched earlier this year geared for viewing long form TV content on the Internet.

The public television pioneer has launched a new channel with Joost that features full episodes of the series History Detectives and Scientific American Frontiers, along with specials and other shows. The episodes are free and ad supported, marking on of the few occasions that PBS – which typically does carries a limited amount of advertising on TV – is able to monetize its content.

The move follows another recent push by PBS to tap into traditional advertising revenue (to view a related article, click here.) In addition, the company continues to look to expand its reach via digital platforms. “PBS is dedicated to making our content as easily accessible on as many platforms as possible,” said Andrew Russell, senior vp, PBS Ventures. “Working with a premier company like Joost will engage new audiences and reinforce the value of supporting local PBS stations.”

Just yesterday, the National Basketball Association announced it was launching a channel on Joost. Several MTV Networks, including Comedy Central and VH1, have already begun distributing content on the service.

Links referenced within this article

click here
http://www.mediaweek.com/mw/current/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1003682923

Find this article at:
http://www.mediaweek.com/mw/search/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1003686856

NBCU, SanDisk to Sell Prime Series

Mike Shields

DECEMBER 11, 2007 -

In another sign that NBC Universal is looking for digital distributions alternatives to Apple's iTunes, the company announced a partnership with MP3/memory chip manufacturer SanDisk to sell full-length episodes of various prime-time series on the fledgling Fanfare service, a Web-based platform designed to help consumers easily shift content from the Internet to TV.

Starting in January, episodes of the NBC series The Office, 30 Rock and Heroes will be available for sale via Fanfare.com, which was rolled out in beta form in October. Using Fanfare, consumers can purchase content on their PCs and then transfer it to their TVs via SanDisk's TakeTV product – a remote control-sized piece of hardware that plugs into both devices. At launch, CBS, Showtime and The Weather Channel were among SanDisk's initial partners.

Besides NBC's hits, a variety of shows the NBCU's stable of networks will be available on Fanfare, including USA Network's Monk, Sci Fi Channel's Battlestar Galactica and Bravo's Top Chef, among others. In most cases, episodes will be available for purchase the day after they air on TV, and users will be able to purchase multi-episode packages and entire seasons at reduced prices.

In choosing to work with SanDisk, NBCU executives pointed to the company's willingness to offer pricing flexibility and its emphasis on copyright protection as strengths – i.e. the same issues that were the major points of contention in NBCU's defunct Apple partnership. “Those are the two key parts of this deal,” said JB Perrette, president, NBC Universal Digital Distribution. Perrette said that while NBCU remains at an impasse with iTunes, the company will continue to explore working with other online retailers (it signed onto Amazon's Unbox service earlier this year), “just like we don't exclusively retail at Wal-Mart [in the offline world],” he added.

As for why NBCU is banking on SanDisk to succeed where others have struggled – helping consumers tackle the somewhat daunting task of linking their computers to their TVs, Perrette cited TakeTV's ease of use. “Nobody has successfully married the two devices,” he said. “But this is a fairly neat, clean and easy way for people to do so.”

Other assorted clips

Half Of All Bit-Torrent Downloads Are TV Shows

Reports show that 50% of all people using BitTorrent at any given point in time do so to download TV-series, quite an impressive number. In total, over a billion TV-shows are downloaded every year, and this number continues to rise. It is safe to say that BitTorrent may be slowly replacing Tivo. Some episodes of popular TV-shows such as “Lost”, “Prison Break” and “Heroes” get up to 10 million downloads per episode, spread over hundreds of sites. This number is getting awfully close to the average number of viewers on TV in the US. However, the major difference is that the BitTorrent “viewers” come from all over the world.

How To Get Detailed Info On Online Video Viewing Patterns

Fans usually tune into a network TV Web site to watch a particular show, find background information or interact with the show in other ways. For example, just 16% of the viewers who watched video content on ABC.com also watched shows on NBC.com. According to the Wall Street Journal, marketers are eager for more information about viewership patterns to help them decide how to advertise alongside this content. At SmithGeiger – this is exactly the type of research we conduct for clients like ABC.com, Yahoo!, Scripps, Hearst, Weather.com, etc. And our strategists have worked on the front lines of successful online companies like IBS, Digital Information Network and Shopzilla. We can help you maximize and grow your audience and revenue with online video. Give me a call at 214-544-7595 or email at mark@smithgeiger.com to discuss further

It's About Letting Consumers Grab Your Content Everywhere

Consumers like watching conventional network TV programming online, and they are still loath to watch much of the advertising that accompanies it. Despite that latter challenge, the major TV providers are moving aggressively online--and not only to their own online destinations, but in an array of "distributed" online content options to deliver their programming directly to consumers regardless of where they are on the Web. "It's not just the idea that you can put the content where you want on the Web. It's about letting the consumers grab your content," said Kevin McGurn, vice president-national sales at Hulu, the joint venture of News Corp. and NBC Universal wants to become the Google of online video. In fact, he noted that the design of Hulu--stark and minimalist--is more akin to Google's interface than the cluttered, portal-like designs popular on other video aggregation sites. But McGurn said Hulu's site is but one entry point for users, an! d that real goal of the venture is to "give users a curated environment" to find, watch and manage online video content wherever it comes from, or wherever it is. Among other places, he said that might be on embedded video players located on a user's own page.