

YouTube, BBC Reach Partnership Agreement

In-House News:

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By Anique Gonzalez

Google, Inc.'s YouTube has reached a partnership agreement with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and BBC Worldwide. The deal, which represents the first agreement between the video-sharing site and an international broadcaster, will allow YouTube to broadcast various clips from BBC news and entertainment outlets.

According to the BBC's press release, "This non-exclusive partnership will create branded BBC 'Channels' on YouTube operating under separate BBC and BBC Worldwide agreements."

Chad Hurley, CEO and Co-Founder of YouTube, said, "We're constantly looking for innovative ways to bring the best content to our community. The BBC is a premier source for quality programming, and we're excited that they are leading the way in enabling two-way dialogue and real engagement with an entirely new audience. We hope to open up an entirely new audience for their content, while deepening their relationship with their existing viewers."

Each of the three channels—two entertainment channels and one news channel—will take on the identity of a current BBC entity. For example, the first channel, "BBC," will highlight clips of upcoming shows, special promotional content, and video diaries.

The second channel, "BBC Worldwide," will feature clips from some of the BBC's most popular television shows, such as *Top Gear*, *The Catherine Tate Show*, and *Spooks*, in addition to documentaries, including those by naturalist and broadcaster David Attenborough.

"BBC News," the third and final channel, will show an average of 30 news clips per day comprised of international news stories and analysis taken from the BBC's news program, *BBC News*.

Mark Thompson, Director-General of the BBC, had this to say about the agreement: "This groundbreaking partnership between the BBC and YouTube is fantastic news for our audiences. YouTube is a key gateway through which to engage new audiences in the UK and abroad."

As Thompson alluded to, each organization hopes to achieve several benefits as a result of the deal. The BBC has the opportunity to expand its international market presence, while YouTube has the chance to increase its integrity, a vital factor in today's marketplace. Moreover, in addition to increasing traffic to its websites, the BBC hopes the move will enable it to cultivate a new consumer base while gaining valuable insights into the habits of current viewers.

In addition to enhancing its credibility, the deal has the potential to improve YouTube's recently tarnished image. Lately, YouTube has come under fire for carrying material that some large entertainment companies allege violates copyrights.

For instance, after failing to reach a distribution agreement, Viacom, Inc., forced

YouTube to remove more than 100,000 videos from the site. (In February of 2007, Viacom reached a distribution deal with Joost, a new video-service portal.) The agreement with the BBC has the potential to ease the concerns that some entertainment companies may have because it sends the message that YouTube is willing—and wants—to work with them.

The BBC also hopes to "benefit from Google and YouTube's advertising platforms, generating new revenues for investment in BBC programme development and creation."

The BBC's advertising plans are likely to cause some controversy. Currently, the domestic BBC is funded by license fees paid by British citizens. Because of this, all domestic operations are strictly separated from its international activities. However, the line has recently become blurred, and government reports are now requesting that operations be more clearly defined.

As a result of the new deal, two of the channels, BBC News and BBC Worldwide, will have advertisements. And while the BBC News channel will not be available in Britain, thereby circumventing any possible conflicts, BBC Worldwide's content and advertisements will be accessible by YouTube users in the United Kingdom.

On the Net

YouTube

www.youtube.com

BBU

www.bbc.co.uk

Viacom

www.viacom.com