

## **Video makes mark in online mix**

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Move over, words. Make way for video.

Streaming video is leading the latest push to grab more traffic and "eyeballs" on the Internet. Earlier this month, Google announced a deal to distribute on the Web video content from Viacom Inc.'s MTV Networks. TV personality Bill Maher is appearing on Amazon.com screens in "Amazon Fishbowl."

The adoption of online video reflects several trends afoot. One is the increasing adoption of broadband Internet services, like DSL and cable modems, into the home soaring 40 percent from March 2005 to March 2006, according to The Pew Internet and American Life Project.

Another factor is the simplicity of videography in the nonprofessional setting. With Web cams and even cell phones with video capabilities, professionally produced video images and amateur, blog-like content are finding a place on the Web.

Then there's YouTube. The online video service allows individuals, from grandfathers to independent cinematographers, to post their own videos and clips to the Web. Like MySpace.com before it, YouTube has stormed the Internet. Last August, the site had 58,000 unique visitors. It topped 12.8 million in July, according to Nielsen/NetRatings.

Add to the mix blogging and other content development applications, and small businesses have strong marketing and self-promotion possibilities, said Jay Berkowitz, founder of TenGoldenRules.com, a Boca Raton online marketing firm.

Central to many of these efforts are the community-building applications, he said. Forums, question-and-answer areas, and comments posted to corporate or business blogs create cohesion among user groups -- and make them return in the future, he said.

Take news aggregation site Digg.com, which like YouTube and MySpace before it is fast becoming a standard among "Web 2.0" companies that post user-generated content, Berkowitz said. Content can be created on the sites,

tagged as "favorites" using the collaborative site Del.icio.us, or voted on by visitors, yielding another link on the Internet back to the user's own Web site, he said.

Success online is all about creating more links back to your own Web site, he said.

"Powerful links help drive the search engines," he said. "All this is about creating links to your site."

Well-crafted editorial, updated frequently with appropriate language specific to a marketer's industry, will help drive future Web traffic. For Web marketers, success is about driving traffic to Web sites and posting content to lure those masses, said Owen Frager, a Boca Raton Internet entrepreneur.

Frager noted that a message to his blog (<http://fragerfactor.blogspot.com>) drew site visits from almost 400 individuals in the past week. Tracking their origins, Frager saw that many came from telecommunications firms like Alcatel, Alltel, Time Warner Telecom, Quest, Level 3, T-Mobile and BlackBerry, among others.

Why the telecom traffic? It wasn't from the ISPs one normally associates with those names, but from their own corporate HQs. Frager had blogged on a new service that tracks wireless hot spots. Google's search bots scoured his site, found the mention, which, like dominos, triggered a chain reaction; a viral pass-along to other blogs, search engines and "RSS e-mail alerts" to people who subscribe to follow topics whenever and wherever they are written about online.

"That linkage brought [these executives] directly to my door," he wrote. "You gotta learn about this kind of new marketing. Why go to them when you can use Google to get them in to you?"

Frager's own Frager Ventures, which owns more than 30 unique Web sites, has seen a spike in traffic resulting from savvy online marketing efforts. His sites, ShoeDepartment.com and ChestPains.com, are advertising-driven sites tied in with advertising placement, listing and affiliate services. Most of the ads posted are pay-per-click listings generated by several different online advertising services. As a result, Frager's sites were visited by almost 1,000 people in one day or 33,000 unique visitors over a few weeks, with a good

share of the traffic coming from outside the United States, including Japan, Germany, Mexico, the Netherlands, even Iran, Yemen and Pakistan.

"That means the cash register doesn't stop on California time," he said. "When I read that Google is having a record quarter, I know I'm going to have a record quarter and we've been consistently breaking records month after month."

Several factors like Google, streaming video content and residential broadband are converging to make a "perfect storm" for Internet marketers much faster than expected, he said.

"Now, commercials aren't appearing on Bill Maher," Frager wrote in his blog. "Bill Maher is appearing on Amazon as the entertainment break to your shopping."

Jeff Zbar is a freelance writer. Reach him at [jeff@jeffzbar.com](mailto:jeff@jeffzbar.com).

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