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# [Mute-social] Google do TV

From the NYT

Google and Yahoo Aim at Another Screen

By SAUL HANSELL

Two ascending Internet giants, Google and Yahoo, are to make plain today that they intend to move aggressively beyond the Internet browser and onto the television screen.

The two companies, already the most popular services for searching and organizing the vast information on the World Wide Web, want to perform the same function for television, which will increasingly be delivered over the Internet.

Indeed, much of the innovation at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, where top executives of both companies are speaking today, revolves around video gadgets of all sizes that connect online to new programming services.

Both Yahoo and Google have emerged as potent threats to television networks because they are drawing ad dollars to their existing sites. And they are poised to cause further disruption if they can establish themselves as major players in advertising on Internet video.

Moreover, Google and Yahoo want to play a role in the emerging market for paid downloads of video programming, a market pioneered in 2005 by Apple Computer, which introduced a video iPod player and video downloads priced at \$1.99 from ABC, NBC and other sources.

One of those speaking today in Las Vegas, Terry S. Semel, Yahoo's chief executive, said in an interview yesterday that he would unveil an initiative called Yahoo Go to extend the company's personalized services - from weather forecasts to e-mail - across multiple devices, from televisions to cellphones.

Most significant, the company is to introduce free software - designed for computers hooked up to television sets - that will compete with the Windows Media Center of Microsoft.

This software will allow viewers to use a television set, not merely a computer screen, to see any of Yahoo's offerings of video content - from music videos to original news reports - and the more than one million video clips in its video search service. It will offer a TV program guide, similar to those offered on digital cable services, but Yahoo's version will include reviews and ratings of shows from its users.

Google's plans will be laid out by one of its two founders, Larry Page. A Google spokesman declined yesterday to discuss Mr. Page's speech. But several executives briefed on the company's plans said that he would announce a way to allow content producers to charge fees for Google

users to watch programs on their PC's - either as downloads for later viewing or as streaming files.

Those briefed on the plans said Google would announce that CBS and the National Basketball Association would sell programming through its service, which will also be available to smaller video producers. Google's video plans were reported yesterday by The Wall Street Journal.

CBS is expected to charge \$1.99 for episodes of current prime-time programs and possibly less for older programs, an executive briefed on its plans said.

In contrast, Yahoo is to offer free advertising-supported video at first, but it will start selling downloads later this year, Mr. Semel said. "Video content on Yahoo today attracts a great deal of interest from advertisers," he said. "We are enabling our users to see video for free."

Google has said it hopes to enter the video advertising business, but advertising is not part of its current service, an executive briefed on its plans said.

CBS has not agreed to sell its programs through Apple, but it may do so later, an executive briefed on its plans said. Its deal with Google is not exclusive.

Google plans to use its own software that will allow providers like CBS to limit how many copies can be made of a downloaded file. As a result, users of Google will not be able to download such protected content to portable devices.

Apple has not allowed other companies to use its own content-protection software. Most other portable video devices use protection software from Microsoft, which Google does not support. Google will allow unprotected content to be downloaded to portable devices, a person briefed on its plans said.

Yahoo's software for TV's will run on any computer that runs Windows XP and any of the forthcoming devices that use Intel's new Viiv technology. While it can be run on a computer, it will be designed to be operated by a user watching television with a remote control. The interface will be simpler and have larger type than a typical Web page.

Yahoo will initially focus on using the television to display video, photographs and some information like movie times and sports scores. A later version will add e-mail and instant messaging. The software will also allow users to record television programs onto the computer, much as users do with a TiVo recorder.

While Google is not introducing its own software for television sets, PC's that are already linked to TV's, like those that use Windows Media Center technology, will be able to play video from Google's service on

large screens.

Both Google and Yahoo are also announcing deals with makers of cellphones that expand the services they make available to wireless users and make them more prominent.

Google announced yesterday that Motorola would start to make several wireless telephone models with dedicated buttons that will link to a version of Google's Web site formatted for cellphones, said Nikesh Arora, Google's vice president for European operations. No wireless carriers have agreed to deploy these phones yet.

Yahoo will introduce software meant to add functions to some phones by Nokia and Motorola, and Cingular Wireless has agreed to sell the Nokia versions in some markets in the United States. It will also be available in 10 European countries.

On some Nokia phones, the Yahoo software will automatically synchronize information on the telephone with information stored on Yahoo's Internet site. That means that when users change someone's phone number on Yahoo's site, their phones will automatically be reprogrammed with the new number.

Similarly, if they take a photograph with a camera phone, the pictures will automatically be uploaded to Yahoo's photo service. As a result, Yahoo's service can recreate all the information on a new phone if the old one is lost.

Yahoo will not charge for these services, but users will have to buy a compatible phone and pay for a wireless plan that allows for data transfer. Yahoo will offer a more limited service for Motorola phones.

Yahoo and Google are also expanding their efforts to offer computer software that runs even if people are not browsing the Internet. Yahoo will introduce a program called Yahoo Go Dashboard that runs on the edge of a computer screen and displays a range of information.

This is similar to the Google Desktop software introduced last year, which also offers various feeds of information and search functions.

Desktop software is important for both companies because it puts their brands and especially their search functions in front of users throughout the day. Advertising on Web searches provides most of Google's revenue and is vital to Yahoo as well.

This software also provides a way to combat Microsoft, which is expected to integrate its new Web search service into its coming Windows Vista operating system.

Indeed, Mr. Page will also introduce a service called Google Pack, which will allow users to install software from a range of companies from a single download. These include Google's desktop, instant message and

Google Earth mapping programs as well as the Firefox browser, the Real Player from Real Networks and the Norton antivirus software from Symantec.

These programs are largely alternatives to software from Microsoft but are not integrated.

Yahoo is trying to expand into television and other devices largely by offering users a more customized experience, Mr. Semel said. "We know who you are and where you are coming from," he said. "And we can show you what matters to you, whether it's your photos or sports or music."

Ken Belson and John Markoff contributed reporting for this article.