Summer TV Ad Slump

Broadcast, cable nets scramble to fill scatter inventory holes

TV SPORTS

Baseball’s Shaky Pitch

Tepid ratings may hurt rights talks with nets

SYNDICATION

Dr. Laura Plays Hard to Get

Paramount cuts host’s TCA appearance

MAGAZINES

Out Wants To Be In Again

New owners hope to energize title’s editorial

Sydney Schanberg’s Online Journey

The legendary reporter discusses what he learned about online journalism from the rise and fall of APBnews.com.

By Wayne Robins

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www.what? someone out there knows local media buying like nobody's business? someone can get me the top sites in 6 of the 11 most wired cities in the country? so I don't have to keep busting my hump cold calling everyone from Seattle to Charlotte just to find out half of them have never even heard of the internet and the other half couldn't give a hoot about me and my problems.com
Big Brother Shrinks After Debut
CBS reality show Big Brother dropped sharply from its July 5 premiere night. The reality series’ hour-long debut earned a 13.8/23 in households, a 10.2/30 in adults 18-34 and a 10.0/27 in adults 18-49, according to Nielsen Media Research. But on night two (July 6), a half-hour episode, Big Brother dropped to 8.0/16 in households, 4.3/26 in adults 18-34 and 4.3/15 in 18-49. Despite the lower results, the show delivered CBS’ best numbers on the night since the mid-1990s. Media buyers said 30-second spots sold for $150,000 on the premiere and are going for $100,000 for subsequent episodes through September. CBS has sold the first 20 episodes of the show’s 90-episode run, with many advertisers buying multi-show packages.

Editorial Rules Under Attack
The Radio-Television News Directors Association and the National Association of Broadcasters filed a petition in the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington last week, asking that radio and TV’s 20-year-old personal-attack and political editorial rules be thrown out. The FCC had been directed by the court to reconsider the rules last August, but it did not act. The rules require broadcasters to give rebuttal time to persons who have been attacked and opponents of politicians who have been endorsed by a broadcaster.

IBlast Adds 7 More Broadcasters
IBlast Networks has signed seven more TV groups, representing 85 TV stations, to its network, which plans to test datacasting using digital broadcast spectrum this summer. Bahakel Communications, Bonneville International, Cosmos Broadcasting, Emmis Communications, Evening Post Publishing Co., Gray Communications Systems and Raycom Media bring iBlast’s total reach to 225 stations.

Men’s Journal Gets Publisher
Rob Gregory, publisher of T&L Golf, has been named publisher of Wenner Media’s Men’s Journal. The position has been vacant since Kevin O’Malley quit in April. Gregory was with the American Express bimonthly for two years, during which its rate base grew from 200,000 to 400,000, frequency was upped from quarterly to bimonthly and the title was shortened from Travel & Leisure Golf.

Cox Buys Pittsburgh-Area NBC Affiliates
Cox Broadcasting has agreed to purchase two NBC affiliated stations, WPXI-TV in Johnstown, Pa., and WTOV-TV in Steubenville, Ohio, from Sunrise Television for an undisclosed sum. The stations are located near Pittsburgh, where Cox owns WPXI-TV, also an NBC affiliate, and the Pittsburgh Cable News Channel.

TNT Rejiggers Nightly Schedule
TNT will revamp its weekly lineup next month, choosing Tuesday nights to air its new original series Bull, premiering in August, and Breaking News, arriving January 2001. Mondays will still be reserved for a two-hour block of WCW wrestling, while Wednesdays and Thursdays will be devoted to NBA coverage. On weekends, TNT will premiere its broadcast-window theatrical acquisitions and films from its own library.

News About Us: A Digital Deal
Beginning with its Oct. 2 issues, Adweek Magazines will be the exclusive advertising trade publications to offer :CueTM coding on advertisements and selected editorial, according to Mark Dacey, president of Adweek Magazines. The technology, developed by Digital Convergence.com, lets readers connect instantly with related content on the Internet with a swipe of a :Cue:CAT™ device. In its application for advertisers, companies that wish to participate will be issued a :Cue, similar in look to a traditional bar code when printed on their ad. At the end of selected editorial features, readers will be able to scan a :Cue to be connected with related information. At the end of September, Adweek Magazines will distribute a free :Cue:CAT device, which is similar to a computer mouse, to all subscribers of Mediaweek, Adweek, Brandweek and MC.

Addenda: Sean Cunningham was named executive vp/media director for the New York office of Universal McCann, the media arm of McCann-Erickson Worldwide...Wayne Cornils, known throughout the radio industry as “Radio Wayne,” died last week following a 12-year battle with cancer...Pax TV said last week that four NBC-owned stations—WNBC-TV in New York; KNBC-TV in Los Angeles; WMAQ-TV in Chicago, and WCAU-TV in Philadelphia—have launched joint sales agreements with its local TV stations...Marian McEvoy has left Hachette Filipacchi Magazines’ Elle Decor as editor in chief to take the same post at Hearst’s House Beautiful...Jim Henson Television Group Worldwide quickly replaced resigning president Rod Perth with creative affairs senior vp Juliet Blake and international production/distribution senior vp Angus Fletcher.

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www.mediaweek.com July 10, 2000 Mediaweek 3
Established Quorum: For sale, or a merger?

Quorum Broadcasting, a two-year-old, privately held TV group with 16 stations in small and mid-sized markets, last week retained investment bankers Salomon Smith Barney to explore a possible sale or merger. Boston-based Quorum, run by veteran TV stations executive Daniel Sullivan, owns two outlets in each of five markets: Springfield, Mo.; Amarillo and Lubbock, Texas; Utica, N.Y.; and Billings, Mont. The duopolies make the group highly attractive for a buyer or a merger partner.

Possible suitors for Quorum include Emmis Communications, Cosmos Broadcasting, LIN Television and Scripps Howard Broadcasting, analysts said. —Katy Bachman

Actors Unions, Advertisers Still Far Apart; Talks Set

While federal mediators have tentatively scheduled talks between striking SAG/AFTRA members and the advertising community beginning July 20, both sides seem unwilling to budge on positions that have kept them from the bargaining table since the actors' walkout began May 1.

Chief negotiators John McGuire (for SAG) and Mathis Dunn (AFTRA) last week issued a statement stating their organizations' "willingness to resume full negotiations." But SAG president William Daniels vowed not to accept any "pay cuts" from advertisers. And Dan Jaffe, a vp with the Association of National Advertisers, said "major movement" is needed on SAG/AFTRA's part before anything meaningful can come from talks.

Neither side is easing up in its maneuvering, with the actors' unions planning a series of nationwide protests this week against AT&T for refusing to sign an interim agreement that would allow actors to perform in commercials for a higher rate of pay than in the expired contracts. SAG/AFTRA also made public a list of other advertisers that the unions said have agreed to produce commercials under interim agreements. Among them are Pepsi, McDonald's, Chevrolet, America Online, Sprint, Toyota and Levi Strauss. —John Consoli (continued on page 6)

Slowdown Hits 3Q TV Spending

Broadcast, cable networks scramble to sell summer scatter

THE MARKETPLACE / By John Consoli and Megan Larson

Just six weeks after advertisers aggressively committed a record $12.7 billion in upfront buys to broadcast and cable TV networks for the 2000-2001 season, the market for third-quarter scatter inventory has gone surprisingly soft, with most networks left with more unsold inventory than usual this summer.

Network executives note that it is always harder to get advertisers to commit significant dollars to summer programming, when audience levels are lower. But media buyers are pointing to the availability and attractive pricing for third-quarter scatter as evidence of advertisers' desire to curtail their rampant spending a bit due to uncertainties about the economy.

One sure sign that broadcast and cable networks are concerned about a summer spending slowdown is that sales executives have been aggressively contacting advertisers in attempts to sell an abundance of remaining third-quarter ad time. In the type of sellers' market that has existed for more than a year until now, networks usually do not contact advertisers, even for scatter inventory, until ad budgets are registered.

"Everyone is dialing for dollars," said Kris Magel, vp of national broadcast for Optimedia, said sales execs from some cable networks are even asking buyers to take dollars committed in the upfront for fourth quarter and shift them ahead into third quarter so that the nets can hit their quotas.

"We could be returning to a buyers' market, after two upfronts where the sellers controlled the prices," said another buyer.

The days of doing scatter business in cable at 45 to 50 percent year-to-year increases are likely coming to an end, a cable sales executive admitted. "It can't last forever," he said.

In noticeably short supply among third-quarter scatter advertisers are the dot-coms, whose frenzied spending lifted the broadcast and cable networks to revenue records last season. For example, while the hour-long July 5 premiere of CBS' reality series Big Brother scored strong double-digit ratings in both 18-34 and 18-49 viewers, the prime demo for Internet advertisers, only three dot-coms were among the show's 25 different advertisers.

"The dot-coms are not spending as freely," said Tim Spengler, executive vp and director of national broadcast at Initiative Media North America. "The venture capitalists are releasing less money, and that was what the dot-coms were using to advertise.

About 25 percent of last season's fourth-quarter broadcast scatter dollars came from dot-coms. "I don't know how much of that will be there this year," Spengler said.
Cable Networks Pray for a Heat Wave

Buyers will be watching to see if basic channels can revive ratings

CABLE TV / By Megan Larson

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ough the number of households using television always dips in the summer, basic cable networks have rolled out some of their heavy-hitter programs during this season because broadcasters are often in rerun comas. Not so this year. Fresh programming juggernauts—Survivor and Big Brother on CBS and Who Wants to Be a Millionaire on ABC—have helped stifle the unremitting ratings growth of cable.

Cable networks, however, will launch an array of original movies, specials and series between July and September, when NBC will offer the Summer Olympics. Buyers will be watching closely to see if cable can regain momentum against broadcast during that period. "The cable networks didn't offer up a huge challenge [in counterprogramming] to broadcast last quarter," said Mike Goodman, Yankee Group senior analyst. Goodman believes that cable is better positioned this quarter but said that if cable's ratings are again flat, "we could argue that we have a trend forming."

Cable's arsenal in July and August is diverse. TNT has Nuremberg (with Alec Baldwin), Running Mates (Tom Selleck) and the launch of the series Bull. Lifetime is premiering its new series Strong Medicine. VH1 will air an original movie, Meat Loaf: To Hell and Back. USA has the finale of its cult favorite La Femme Nikita. Discovery is bringing back Raising the Mammoth and Walking With Dinosaurs, which generated unprecedented ratings.

"It should put us back on our feet, but with broadcast having some unusual success with original programs, it paints a different picture," said Food Network senior vp/general manager Judy Girard, who announced a new special, Celebrity Restaurant, and six new series, including B. Smith With Style, for third-quarter premieres.

Some media buyers questioned the relevance of categorizing programming by media. "It's a program thing, not a network thing or a cable thing. That battle should be put to bed," said David Lerner, partner/associate director of national TV for MindShare.

Major League Mediocrity

Flat household ratings may make it tough for baseball to win big fee hike

TV SPORTS / By John Consoli

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ajor League Baseball may have a tough time tripling its current network TV rights fees, if ratings mean anything. With MLB executives in negotiations with both Fox and NBC to renew their deals beyond this season, household ratings on Fox's Saturday-afternoon telecasts are up just 0.7 percent this season, to a 2.8, according to Nielsen Media Research data compiled by TN Media. Ratings for men 18-34 are up 4.1 percent, to a 1.5, and men 18-49 are up 7.2 percent, to 1.6. NBC's first MLB broadcast is tomorrow night's All-Star Game; the network will also carry postseason play.

A Fox executive said the network's baseball ratings this season would dictate a "reasonable increase" in a new contract, but "not 300 percent."

"I don't think the networks want to continue to lose money on these deals," said one media buyer. "The networks have already overpaid to renew deals with the NFL, NCAA basketball and the NBA.
Local Stations Air TiVo Spot Rejected by CBS Network

While CBS last week refused to air the first commercial in TiVo's new $50 million ad campaign, TV stations in six major markets, including New York and Los Angeles, ran the spot, which lampoons network TV executives. "Four of our stations cleared the ad and found it to be tongue-in-check and in good humor," said a representative for ABC.

CBS was the only network TiVo approached about running the commercial nationally. TiVo, maker of a personal TV-programming device, had sought to break its campaign with national spots on the July 5 episode of CBS' Survivor. "We don't care to run advertising that disparages our business," said a CBS rep. Other TiVo ads have been accepted and will air on CBS, which owns a stake in TiVo.

"I don't think it should be taken too seriously," Brodie Keast, TiVo vp of marketing, said of the pulled spot. Keast said the company was talking with other nets for carriage of future commercials in the campaign, some of which will premiere this week. —Megan Larson

Publishers to Fight Suit on Mag Subscription Pricing

Magazine publishers have vowed to "vigorously defend" themselves against a lawsuit brought last week by three consumers alleging a price-fixing scheme on subscriptions. A dozen publishers, including Time Inc., Condé Nast Publications and Hearst Corp., along with the Magazine Publishers of America trade group, were accused of conspiring to inflate prices by insisting that subscriptions be sold at no less than a 50 percent discount from the basic price. The complaint, filed in U.S. District Court in Manhattan, offers up Audit Bureau of Circulations' rules defining "paid circulation" and the MPAs guidelines as evidence of such a scheme.

The MPAs said the suit has "no merit whatsoever." The trade group said the complaint failed to recognize that paid circulation standards have their roots in postal regulations, and that the magazine industry does not control the Audit Bureau of Circulations, which was not named in the suit. —Tony Case

What it's come down to is, how many loss leaders does a network want to carry to reach a small male audience?"

Brad Adgate, senior vp of corporate research at Horizon Media, said: "The biggest value of the baseball agreement is the postseason coverage. Last year, the New York Yankees played the Atlanta Braves...and the ratings were the second-lowest in the history of the World Series."

The lowest Series rating ever was the year before, when the Yankees defeated the San Diego Padres in four games. That Series did a 14.1 rating on Fox. Network officials said the fact that the Series did not go longer kept Fox from making a profit for the 1998 season.

Late last year, to extend its deal through 2005, ESPN agreed to pay $851 million for a five-year extension, more than three times its previous $255 million deal.

ESPN has suffered much softer ratings. Season-to-date household ratings for ESPN's 45 MLB telecasts are averaging just a 0.77, down 29 percent, while men 18-34 are 0.55, down 26 percent, and men 18-49 are 0.52, down 34 percent.

But ESPN is in a somewhat different situation than the broadcast networks. ESPN airs baseball three nights per week throughout the summer, and the network would have a tremendous programming hole to fill if it had not renewed baseball. In addition, ESPN is able to package its baseball coverage to advertisers with its sports highlight shows, Baseball Tonight and Sportscenter, which air multiple times each night. ESPN also packages baseball with its other sports programming.

Horizon's Adgate said baseball, except for the postseason coverage, skews older than most other sports and gets lower ratings. Noting that every Major League team except for the Montreal Expos has its own local TV deal, Adgate said: "Most people each night are watching their local team, not the national game."

Like slugger Frank Thomas, MLB's TV negotiators are swinging for the fences.

Dr. Laura in Stealth Mode

Paramount cancels TCA appearance but says show is still a go

SYNDICATION / By Daniel Frankel

Is Paramount Domestic Television trying to hide Dr. Laura? The major syndicator pulled a scheduled appearance last Friday at the Television Critics Association's summer press tour for Dr. Laura Schlessinger, whose new TV talk show debuts Sept. 11, citing a conflict with a prior charity commitment. But industry observers believe the move is as much to avoid what would probably have been a hostile reception at the press tour, considering that the controversial talk-show host's anti-gay comments on her radio program have infuriated a variety of activist groups.

Schlessinger's schedule conflicts aside, Dr. Laura's TCA absence in no way seems to indicate the show—cleared in more than 90 percent of the country—isn't moving forward. Paramount officials have publicly stated they intend to launch the talk strip as scheduled, and insiders said a set is currently being built at an off-lot location in the San Fernando Valley.

"We're not going to cancel it, we're not going to give it a half-hearted [promotion al] effort, and we're going to produce the best show possible," said Paramount co-president Joel Berman at an Industry luncheon several months ago, one of the few times he's publicly broached the subject. (Berman has deferred all press inquiries on the Dr. Laura matter—including one for this story—to a company representative.)

Does the show's absence from such a major publicity event contradict Berman's assertion? No, said Ruth Leaycraft, vp/director of programming for station rep firm Continental Television Sales. "I think they simply don't see an upside to going," she explained. "[Stations] are just starting to
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Fox's Summer School

With ‘American High’, net tries a new approach to reality

TV PROGRAMMING / By Alan James Frutkin

Can reality programming get too, or, real? Fox may find out when it launches its high school documentary series, American High, Aug. 2. The program follows a group of suburban Chicago high school seniors filmed throughout the past year. However, the success (so far) of CBS' Survivor and Big Brother has cast doubts on whether American High's straightforward approach to non-fiction programming can prove a match for hidden cameras and cash prizes.

Executive producer Erwin More believes the drama come from. “That’s where the power, the emotion and the drama come from.” Still, contrivances have their upsides. Both of CBS' summer reality shows launched to impressive numbers. In contrast, Cutler's more traditional verite approach to his subjects may require greater patience on Fox's behalf in attracting an audience. American High "lacks the great conceptual hook that Survivor has," admitted David Nevins, Fox's executive vp of prime-time programming. "It will take time to hook viewers. Hopefully, people will hang in long enough to see what happens."

The show will have to find its audience quickly. To avoid being trumped by NBC's Olympics coverage, Fox will air all 13 half-hour episodes in weekly hour blocks, leading up to NBC's Sept. 15 opening-ceremonies broadcast.

The series has already generated buzz among viewers. If it hits, Fox will have created a new hybrid—Cutler calls it non-fiction drama—of the network's most successful genres. "Reality programming has worked well for Fox," said Laura Caraccioli, vp/media director for Starcom. "With Melrose Place and Beverly Hills 90210 fading, this presidential campaign documentary The War Room. "That's where the power, the emotion and the drama come from."

Executive producer Erwin More believes Cutler has gone even farther by raising the bar for reality programming, and warns against underestimating viewers. "I think it's absolutely possible to believe that audiences don't need a gimmick or a million-dollar bonus at the end of every episode to tune into something that's good," More said.

Fox's American High: 90210 with a verite twist

Focusing on its characters' growing pains, American High has more in common with MTV's The Real World than Survivor. But where Real World plots are contrived to create tension among the show's participants, American High's drama unfolds more organically. "Our goal was to have these people be who they really are as much as possible," said American High creator R. J. Cutler, whose filmmaking credits include the 1993 Clinton presidency campaign documentary The War Room. "That’s where the power, the emotion and the drama come from."
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CBS Regionals Nearly Sold

News is expected by mid-July of an ownership change for three Viacom-owned regional cable sports channels in the upper Midwest and Maryland. The leading candidates to buy Minneapolis-based Midwest Sports Channel, its Wisconsin-area satellite service, MSCW, and Home Team Sports, which serves the Baltimore and Washington areas, are Fox Sports Network and Comcast Corp.

One scenario has Comcast buying both sports channels and then selling MSC to Fox, which has a strong presence in the Midwest, and keeping HTS for Comcast's stronghold in the East.

MSC general manager Steve Woelfel confirmed that both Fox and Comcast have expressed the greatest interest so far. However, Woelfel noted that Viacom executives have also talked with at least a half-dozen other potential suitors. "The sale process is moving along," Woelfel said. "We definitely expect something by mid-July."

Word leaked out in May that after merging with CBS, Viacom planned to put CBS properties MSC and HTTS on the sale block. MSC founder and former general manager Kevin Capoor had left the sports channel in March for a management position with Internet Broadcasting Systems in Minneapolis. John Mansell, a Paul Kagan Associates analyst, estimates that the services together could fetch $360-400 million, or about 20 times annual cash flow.

MSC and MSCW reach 2.7 million households in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and the Dakotas. The service owns cable rights to the Minnesota Twins and Timberwolves, University of Minnesota sports, the Milwaukee Brewers and Bucks and some U. of Wisconsin and Marquette University teams. MSC is also a Fox sports affiliate.

Home Team Sports has cable rights to the Washington Wizards, the Washington Capitals, the Baltimore Orioles and college teams. Fox already owns one-third of HTS, which carries Fox Sports Net programming.

Fox Sports Net representative Lou D'Ermilio confirmed that FSN is "interested in both outlets." He declined to comment on the status of negotiations. Comcast VP Victoria Glazer said she couldn't confirm "rumor" about her company. However, she said Comcast is seeking additional content providers for its cable systems and has cash available for acquisitions. "It certainly is something within our structure," she said.

If Fox Sports Net took over MSC, it would boost the channel's programming quality, said Pam Pollastrini, general manager of advertising sales at Time Warner Cable in Milwaukee. When MSC isn't running Fox programming or coverage of Twin Cities and Milwaukee teams, its programming veers into a mixed bag of local sports talk shows and shows on high school and small-college sports. "They've been struggling with programming," Pollastrini said. "It would bring in a whole new level of content," she said.

CHICAGO RADIO

Sweet Home For ABC's Doug Banks

Doug Banks is back home on the Chicago airwaves after a three-year absence, and he can't wait to take on the city's Urban powerhouse and his former radio home, AMFM-owned WGCI-FM.

"Chicago is home to me, and it's wonderful to be there again," said Banks, who starts today on his 35th affiliate, Urban Contemporary WVITM-FM. "My wife is from Chicago, and one of my kids was born there. It'll be a great battle to go up against WGCI."

Banks' laid-back, conversational style has netted him and co-host DeDe McGuire the No. 1 spot in Columbia, S.C., and Savannah, Ga., and a high ranking in Milwaukee and Sacramento, Calif.

In Chicago, Banks will be going up against "Crazy" Howard McGee, Chicago's second-highest-rated morning host after WGN-AM's Spike O'Dell. Ironically, he'll also be competing with ABC's other syndicated Urban host, Tom Joyner, on AMFM-owned WVAZ-FM. ABC execs say there's plenty of room for all of them in the same market. "There is a lot of advertising demand for the Urban marketplace," said Kevin Miller, senior vp/chief marketing officer for ABC Radio Networks. "Joyner's target is Adults 25-54; Banks' is 18-34. He's younger, hipper, more contemporary."

"Markets where both Joyner and Banks coexist have increased Urban audience shares," added Brenda Freeman, senior director and urban brand champion for ABC Radio Nets. Since ABC Radio Networks moved Banks from afternoons to mornings in spring 1998, the network has been working to increase his distribution, especially in Chicago, where Banks was No. 1 in afternoons on WGCI-FM. So when Banks' Web site (www.dougbanks.com) was relaunched in January, complete with video streaming of the syndicat-
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BUSINESS INNOVATION POWERED BY TECHNOLOGY
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ed show, ABC set out to promote it, choosing Chicago, where Banks' popularity could be easily exploited.

So far he is the only on-air personality on WVJM. Even with Banks' ability to score ratings, WVJM has a ways to go before it can effectively challenge the top station in the market. For starters, WVJM's signal doesn't cover the entire Chicago metro. It does, however, reach the audience Banks needs to attract on the south side of the Chicago suburbs, including northwest Indiana. "Most African Americans are concentrated in the southern areas, so with the right format, [the station] could penetrate the market enough to get the ratings," noted Karen Reid, senior broadcast buyer for E. Morris Communications. "We believe Banks has a younger following, but we're holding back until we see if he can create a niche for himself." —Katy Bachman

NEW JERSEY/PENNSYLVANIA NEWSPAPERS

Advance Moves On Singleton Titles

The recent rash of newspaper consolidations kept pace last week, as Denver Post owner MediaNews Group agreed to offload four dailies and 40 weeklies in New Jersey and Pennsylvania to Advance Publications. With the purchase, Advance strengthens its presence in the Garden State, where it publishes the Newark Star-Ledger. The closely held publishers did not report the deal price.

The dailies—the Express-Times in Easton, Pa., and in New Jersey, the Gloucester County Times of Woodbury, today's Sunbeam of Salem and the Bridgeton Evening News—have a combined circ of about 97,000. The weeklies reach about 548,000 homes.

Newspaper analyst John Morton said, "I'm sure part of it is, New Jersey is very, very competitive. You've got Gannett and Newhouse, which are both powerhouses in that state, and I suspect [MediaNews CEO William Dean Singleton's] conclusion was it was better to take the money and put it somewhere else." —Tony Case

CHICAGO RADIO STATIONS

NextMedia Owns 11

Year-old radio group NextMedia announced two deals last week that give it 11 radio stations in the suburbs surrounding Chicago. For just under $57 million, NextMedia is acquiring Pride Communications, owner of six FM and three AM stations serving Joliet and Crystal Lake, Ill., as well as Kenosha and Racine, Wis. Pride's founder and CEO, Jim Hooker, will join NextMedia as senior vp of organizational learning and development.

NextMedia also has an agreement to purchase Marathon Media's Belvidere Broadcasting, owner of WXLC-FM and WKRS-AM, for $9.4 million. As part of the transaction, NextMedia will begin operating the two stations Aug. 1 under a local

NEWSPAPERS

Hearst Lures Helen Out of Retirement

Veteran White House reporter Helen Thomas, who recently retired after decades with the newly acquired United Press International wire service, last week agreed to once again pick up her pen and notepad, joining Hearst Newspapers as a Washington columnist.

Beginning later this month, Thomas every week will author two columns on national issues for the Hearst News Service, which serves more than 650 news outlets, including such Hearst dailies as the San Francisco Examiner, the Seattle Post-Intelligencer and the Houston Chronicle.

The seventy-nine-year-old scribe—who covered eight American presidents, from Kennedy to Clinton—left UPI in May, the day after the news service was bought by Washington Times parent News World Communications, which was founded by Unification Church leader the Rev. Sun Myung Moon. —TC
marketing agreement. Including pending transactions, Denver-based NextMedia owns 55 radio stations.

Because of their location, only four of the 11 stations make the Arbitron book: Adult Contemporary WZSR-FM (0.5), Nostalgia WAIT-AM (1.7), Adult Rock WII-AM (0.4) and Hot Adult Contemporary WXLC-FM (0.3). Discounting the small ratings, NextMedia president/COO Skip Weller noted the stations are located "in the highest growth areas surrounding Chicago." —KB

FORT LAUDERDALE, FLA. MAGAZINES

Ready to Where

Where, a visitors magazine franchise, will expand to the Fort Lauderdale area in September. Where Greater Fort Lauderdale, published by Miami-based Abarta Media, will offer visitors tips and guides on area shopping, dining and entertainment. The monthly will have a controlled distribution of 30,000. The copies will be placed in hotels and resorts in the area. Advertisers in Where GFL also will receive free advertising on Travelfacts.com, as well as a full range of promotional and support services. Abarta, which also publishes Where Miami and Where Orlando, is pursuing advertising packages with its other titles. —Lori Lefevre

RADIO STATIONS

ABC Buys Hibernia

ABC, which currently owns 17 of its 46 Radio Disney affiliates, has agreed to purchase Hibernia Communications, which owns six Radio Disney affiliates, from Palladium Equity Partners for an estimated $10 million. As Radio Disney's largest affiliate group, Hibernia operates WMKI-AM in Boston; WHRC-AM in Providence, R.I.; WZDK-AM in Hartford, Conn.; WZDY-AM in Richmond, Va.; WGFY-AM in Charlotte, N.C.; and WMNE-AM in West Palm Beach, Fla. Founded by radio vets Mike Craven and Jim Thompson in partnership with Palladium, Hibernia was created in 1997 specifically to take Radio Disney's 24/7 children's programming.

In a related announcement, Radio Disney signed its 46th affiliate, KDEF-AM in Albuquerque, N.M. Owned by RAMH Corp., the station dropped its Sports programming and switched to the kiddie format on July 1. —KB

Birmingham, Ala.

Birmingham, Ala., has made significant strides in recent years to bridge the chasm that split the city along racial lines for decades, even as media around the country have continued to replay graphic images of racial discord from the past. "Birmingham has suffered from that imagery, but I think the people here have worked hard to overcome that," says Gary Stokes, president and general manager of NBC's owned-and-operated WVTM-TV in Birmingham. "[Visitors] realize that this market is a lot more progressive than it's given credit for," adds Stokes, who is African American.

In addition to Birmingham, the DMA also includes the cities of Tuscaloosa and Anniston. The local economy, formerly heavily reliant on the steel industry, has been expanding and welcoming other forms of manufacturing. On the western side of the market, near Tuscaloosa, Mercedes-Benz is planning to double the size of its auto plant. Toward the east, Honda has committed to building a large facility to produce its Odyssey cars. "Big box" retailers including Target and Costco have opened outlets in the area.

Like the market itself, the local TV business in Birmingham has seen some significant changes in recent years. In November 1998, Nielsen Media Research introduced people meters to measure viewership in the market, replacing diary returns. As is usually the case when Nielsen meters are brought in, the stronger stations in the market took a bit of a ratings hit, while the stations with weak numbers in the diary returns enjoyed a ratings boost. Nielsen subsequently expanded its Birmingham measurement area to include Tuscaloosa and Anniston, moving the DMA from No. 51 in the U.S. all the way up to No. 39. The addition of Tuscaloosa brought 61,000 TV households, and Anniston added another 44,000. The total number of TV households in the DMA is 667,650.

A complex network-affiliation swap and a flurry of ownership changes also have brought changes to the Birmingham TV scene. When Fox Television Stations purchased ABC affiliate WBRC in July 1995, ABC was temporarily left without an outpost in the market. Allbritton Communications stepped in and purchased one station in Tuscaloosa and another in Anniston and combined the two properties with its low-powered outlet in Birmingham to create a new ABC affiliate, WBMA-TV (available...
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WBRC-TV officially became a Fox O&O in September 1996, having served the market as an independent for one year after it shed its ABC affiliation. WBRC is one of the strongest Fox O&Os in the country, with the highest ratings of any Fox-owned station in morning, evening and late news as well as in prime time. WBRC produces more local news than any other station in Birmingham, at 42½ hours per week.

Dennis Leonard, vp/gm of WBRC, came to the station in 1998 from Fox O&O WGHP-TV in Greensboro–High Point–Winston-Salem, N.C. Last fall, Leonard overhauled WBRC’s news product, adding a new set and reformatted graphics. The station is unique because it has both a 9 p.m. newscast (following Fox’s two hours of prime-time network programming) and a 10 p.m. newscast. Since WBRC’s 10 p.m. news was a popular program in the market before Fox acquired the station, Fox did not want to give it up. At the same time, Leonard says, WBRC did not have the resources to produce a newscast from 9 to 10:30 p.m. The solution was to create two separate half-hour newscasts, which are bridged by a syndicated program called Scinfeld.

WBRC’s unusual post-prime-time schedule creates some problems for the outlet. “A lot of stations have an hour of news coming out of prime time. We have two half hours. So it presents a marketing challenge,” Leonard says.

The addition of Nielsen meters and the expansion of the DMA outside of Birmingham have negatively impacted WBRC’s ratings in the past few years.

In a move to lift WBRC’s second-ranked early-evening newscasts, Leonard is taking a calculated gamble this fall by not renewing the syndicated Oprah Winfrey Show as a lead-in. ABC affiliate WBMA, which leads WBRC in the local news race at 5 and 5:30 p.m. (See Nielsen chart on page 22), has signed on to pick up Oprah. “The ratings [for Oprah] were declining, and the price was going up,” Leonard says. “I think Oprah’s time has come and gone.” About 36 percent of Oprah viewers did not stay tuned in to WBRC through its 5 p.m. newscast, Leonard adds. WBRC is replacing the Queen of Talk this fall with Judge Judy and Divorce Court, leading into its 5 p.m. newscast.

NBC acquired WVTM-TV in 1996. GM Stokes says he has worked to maintain stability with the on-air news talent, something the outlet had problems with in the past. Last fall, WVTM revamped its 5 p.m. newscast; its anchors now move around the set instead of staying behind a desk, and the program has more feature segments.

Stokes concedes that a weak lead-in, the syndicated Judge Mills Lane, is not helping WVTM’s 5 p.m. news, which ranks third in household ratings. But he notes that overall, WVTM’s newscasts have finished first or second in demographic ratings in several recent Nielsen books.

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While competitors average 10 to 12 stories hours at 5 and 10 p.m. "The station went produces an hour of local news daily -half WPXH began rebroadcasting WVTM's 6 WPXH into its facility. The same day, talk show that airs after Rush Limbaugh on also the host of a four-hour daily sports Post Herald, the afternoon daily, and he is also the host of a four-hour daily sports talk show that airs after Rush Limbaugh on

WERC-AM, the market-leading News/ Talk/ Sports stick owned by AMFM Inc. The Sinclair Broadcast Group owns Birmingham WB affiliate WTTO-TV and also manages UPN affiliate WABM-TV under a local marketing agreement. Sinclair is in the process of purchasing WABM outright under the federal government's newly relaxed duopoly regulations.

WTTO, one of the fastest-growing WB affiliates in the country in terms of ratings, hopes to keep its momentum going this fall with the syndication premiere of Spin City. WABM will be picking up Jamie Foxx and Moesha in syndication.

While neither station carries local news, both have found a niche with local sports programming. "College football is king in Alabama," notes Stephen Mann, WTTO general manager. "Without any pro teams here, it's huge." And high school football is just as important to many Alabamans.

WTTO this fall will carry a total of 13 Southeastern Conference football games, including a total of four games involving the University of Alabama and Auburn University, another big sports school in the state. The station also will carry a weekly show featuring the Alabama team's coach.

Beginning this fall, WABM will air six Alabama Athletic Association state high school football championship games live—a first for the state. To promote the new deal, WABM is promoting itself as

In another ownership change in the market, CBS affiliate WBMG-TV was one of 13 Park Broadcasting outlets acquired in 1997 by Richmond, Va.-based Media General Corp. "At the time, [WBMG] was one of the worst-performing CBS affiliates in the nation," says Eric Land, president and gm, who arrived at the station in March 1997. Land took a drastic step to turn the tide: He cancelled all of the station's newscasts for five weeks in early 1998 while he overhauled the news product, hired all new anchors and relaunched the station with the new call letters WIAT ("It's About Time").

The station, which first launched in 1965, operated as a low-power outlet until four years ago. Park did not invest sufficient resources in the station, further dimming its ratings prospects, Land says. In the May sweeps, WIAT ranked fourth in the market at 5 p.m. and fifth at 10 p.m.

On WIAT's newscasts, anchors do not sit together—cutting down on on-air banter and increasing the pace of the program. While competitors average 10 to 12 stories per newscast, WIAT airs about twice as many, Land says. In their first year on the air, the newscasts won two Emmy awards, for best anchor and best live news reporting.

WIAT's news team boasts the ubiquitous Paul Finebaum as its sports anchor. Finebaum is well-known in the market as a sports columnist for the Birmingham Post Herald, the afternoon daily, and he is also the host of a four-hour daily sports talk show that airs after Rush Limbaugh on
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viewing to basic cable," Clark notes. Scarborough Research puts the entire DMAs cable penetration at 66.3 percent, slightly below the 69.3 average in the country's top 50 markets (see Scarborough chart, page 20).

Nielsen's metering of the Birmingham market has contributed to cable's audience. Where only three or four networks used to show up in Nielsen's diary returns for basic cable, today 10 networks do, Clark notes.

Growth in local cable advertising in Birmingham has been led largely by the telecom industry, although automotive also has been strong and retail, particularly from grocery stores, is gaining, Clark says.

Birmingham is one of the few markets left in the country with two daily newspapers. Advance Publications' morning The Birmingham News (circulation 159,213 daily, 198,827 Sunday) and Scripps Howard's afternoon Birmingham Post Herald (circulation 17,712 daily) are run under a joint operating agreement, so only their news departments are competitive. The Post Herald's circ has been in steady decline for years and fell 11 percent in the last reporting period.

Last fall, the papers' presses were refitted for a narrower, 50-inch web, to save on newsprint costs. At the same time, the Post moved its popular TV-listings section from Friday to Sunday and expanded its Friday entertainment section.

On the local radio scene, AMFM Inc.'s Country station, WOWC-FM, last year changed its call letters to WDXB-FM. The station remained in second place in total listeners 12-pluss among the market's Country stations in the winter 2000 Arbitron Radio Market Report, behind Cox Radio's Country powerhouse WZZK-FM, the top-ranked radio station in Birmingham. WDXB did see a modest uptick among adult listeners 25-54 in the winter book.

AMFMs WERC-AM is the dominant News/Talk station in the market. But the outlet's popular morning team, husband-and-wife duo Russ and Dee Fine, recently left after they could not reach a deal on a new contract. "The team made it public, saying that the contract was not acceptable," notes Suzanne Wright, senior broadcast buyer with Luckie & Co., a Birmingham ad agency. The Fines took their act over to Crawford Broadcastings' WYDE-AM.

Lamar Advertising is the market's dominant player in out-of-home, although Outdoor Systems operates some positions. Lamar has about 450 facings in the metro area. Lamar also offers about 1,100 12-by-24 poster panels, predominantly on secondary roads (including some in downtown Birmingham) and about 500 eight-sheet displays.

Lamar entered Birmingham in October 1998, when it acquired Outdoor Communications. Since then, Lamar has purchased several more local outdoor companies, consolidating its grip on the market.
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Despite ABPnews.com's financial woes, Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter Sydney Schanberg believes there's a future for journalism online.

By Wayne Robins

The message on dozens of computer screens in the mammoth newsroom of APBnews.com during the last week of June instructed: "Press Ctrl + Alt + Delete to log on." But it went largely unheeded, even unread. The video terminals looked like headstones in a computer graveyard. Only a tiny fraction of journalists and technicians remained of the more than a hundred who once filled the crime-and-justice Web site's football-field-size offices on lower Broadway in New York. APBnews.com has lived in the city's financial district, and it has been battered by financial constraints. Having gained much respect and many accolades as a niche Web site, it saw its venture capital disappear in the tech-stock scare of spring 2000.

Then, last week, APBnews.com announced it was filing for bankruptcy under Chapter 11. "Bankruptcy establishes a legal environment and process for new investors to come in, and maximize the return to creditors," said Joe Krakowiak, a company spokesman.

Among the few who remains logged on, as APBnews.com executives hunt for an angel, is Sydney Schanberg. Foreign cor-
respondent, Pulitzer Prize winner for his "Killing Fields" articles about Vietnam and Cambodia (later turned into an award-winning movie), former metro editor of The New York Times, ex-columnist for New York Newsday, and passionate defender of truth, justice and the Boston Red Sox in a society in which all three are often under attack, Schanberg has another distinction: He is the most widely known newspaper veteran to have joined a stand-alone Internet Web site, and therefore, the first to feel it when the bottom fell out.

"My interest here was very closely defined," he says at his desk by the wall of a newsroom nearly devoid of people, but full of stacks of newspapers, Freedom of Information Act documents, and moving boxes ready for evacuation. One challenge was to pursue investigative work, unburdened by the entropy and inertia of too many newspapers whose mission seems limited to infotaining their readers. The other was to see if such online journalism could energize newspapers, where Schanberg, now 66, has spent virtually all of his 40-year career.

"One of the things I wanted to find out was whether the Internet could have a positive influence on mainstream journalism," Schanberg explains. Believing that most news organizations are stubbornly reluctant to confront sacred cows, Schanberg wondered "if such stories appeared on the Web whether newspapers would feel sort of pressured to use them."

APBnews.com certainly gave them some incentive. In February, it won the first National Journalism Award for Web Reporting from the Scripps Howard Foundation. Then, in April, the site won a citation from the Investigative Reporters and Editors organization for "pioneering work to gather data and post it on the Internet for the benefit of the public."

Still, the answer to Schanberg's question about whether online journalism could enliven the mainstream might still be no.

Last fall, he did an APBnews report questioning the publishing of transcripts of videotapes of John Gotti and his family visits in prison, leaked to the New York Daily News, perhaps illegally, by federal officials as a favor to the U.S. Defense Department records about POWs and MIAs left behind after the Vietnam War.

That Schanberg package noted that McCain's "staunch resistance to laying open the POW/MIA records has baffled colleagues and others who have followed his career." McCain's clout, he wrote, has resulted in "literally thousands of documents that would otherwise have been declassified long ago [being] legislated into secrecy." It is one topic that McCain has consistently declined to discuss.

"This role that McCain has played has never been written about by the mainstream press," Schanberg observes. "I was waiting, but there was not one peep out of any mainstream newspaper."

What this suggests to Schanberg is that online journalism has not yet been given proper respect by the elders of the news business. "They're still treating the Web as an alternative publication, just the way The..."
New York Times treats The Village Voice," Schanberg says. "The Times almost religiously and intentionally does not follow stories The Village Voice discovers, no matter how fascinating the story may be. It's a caste system that still hasn't gone away, and I think the Internet is considered a lower caste by the mainstream."

It was almost exactly a year ago when a mutual friend suggested Schanberg, whose career achievements make him a Brahmin among mainstream journalists, meet with Mark Sauter, one of the founders of APBnews.com. Schanberg went to visit the new company's offices, then in a smaller space on Maiden Lane, also near Wall Street.

"It had a lot of seductive qualities about it," Schanberg recalls. White-haired, wiry and robust, Schanberg speaks with professorial authority about politics, journals, and the media. An occasional pontification is balanced by subsequent self-deprecation. He knows what he knows, but he knows he doesn't know it all—especially about Internet journalism—as he talks about his first visit to APBnews.com.

"The room had too many people in it for the air conditioning, but it was a real newsroom, with a lot of energy," he explains. "And they were using a technology I wasn't familiar with. I love newsrooms, and there aren't many I would want to work in. I talked to people, and when the tour was over, Mark and [executive editor] Hoag Levins asked me what I thought. I told them I was impressed with the newsroom sense of the place, but if they were asking about myself, garden-variety crime wouldn't hold my interest very long. But if they were interested in expanding it to the whole range of the criminal-justice system—government corruption, civil crime, corporate crime, standards and ethics, doing the right thing as opposed to doing the wrong thing—then I'd be intrigued."

What Schanberg had in mind, an idea he was given his own interests with the wide-open spaces of the Internet, was investigations, loosely defined. And so it was with much fanfare that he joined APBnews.com last August as editor for special investigations.

"Uncompromising editorial standards and our absolute dedication to building the authoritative news source on crime, justice and safety have allowed us to attract journalists like Sydney," Marshall V. Davidson, CEO and chairman of APB Online Inc., boasted in a press release at that time. "From the beginning, we have hired veteran reporters and producers who understood the potential of combining the editorial disciplines of top newspaper and television newsrooms with the power of the Internet."

APB Online had indeed hired a few big guns. Sauter, a co-founder and chief operating officer of the company, is a former investigative correspondent for Inside Edition, and Levins is a former executive editor of Editor & Publisher. Schanberg worked closely with Robert Port, a former special projects editor at Inside Edition, and Levins is a former investigative correspondent for Inside Edition, and Levins is a former executive editor of Editor & Publisher. Schanberg worked closely with Robert Port, a former special projects editor at Inside Edition, and Levins is a former executive editor of Editor & Publisher. Schanberg worked closely with Robert Port, a former special projects editor at Inside Edition, and Levins is a former executive editor of Editor & Publisher. Schanberg worked closely with Robert Port, a former special projects editor at Inside Edition, and Levins is a former executive editor of Editor & Publisher.

But the investigative reporting team Schanberg had been promised was slow to materialize, although APBnews had 55 full-time reporters among its staff of 140. "None of this stuff ever gets done unless you dedicate people to it and don't take them off, and they agreed," Schanberg says. "We didn't really have an investigative team until fairly recently, the last couple of months. I had some reporters who were allowed to work part-time, and a lot who wanted to be part of investigations, but most of the energy in this newsroom had to be spent getting up a fresh story or adding something fresh to the site three times a day, churning out the daily diet."

The Web site's huge appetite for copy—"pushes" for new stories all day—meant more dependence on telephones and computers and less on the shoe-leather work that gives the best reporting its color, immediacy and impact. "People found that confining, the lack of contact with the human world, except by phone," Schanberg says.

And yet Schanberg has nothing but praise for the quality of the reporters, the mix of youth and experience, and the widely shared sense of mission that characterized APBnews. "As important as anything else, it was a very, very civilized newsroom, with very little backbiting, almost none," he says. "Most everyone had come from newspapers, most had good reporting skills and wanted to learn more. For me, it was a blessing, because they knew more about the Internet world, so I picked their brains and they picked mine." And there was, according to Schanberg, strict adherence to high reporrtorial standards.

APBnews brought special emphasis to uncovering government documents using the Freedom of Information Act and posting revealing results on its Web site. FBI files on people ranging from Frank Sinatra to Mike Royko were published online, and it took nine months for APBnews.com to
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“The rule here,” he boasts, “was that you had to confirm everything yourself; you couldn’t lift it from a newspaper or Web site or say, ‘CNN reported....’ So the rules were very much old-fashioned traditional journalism.”

Schanberg learned the “traditional” way well, starting more than four decades ago, well before the era of “strategic partnerships” and “Web business models.”

He began his newspaper career as a copy boy at The New York Times in 1959, after graduating from Harvard with a degree in government in 1955, then serving in the U.S. Army. Working on local and national news beats through the 1960s, he became a foreign correspondent for the Times in 1971, based in its New Delhi bureau during the war between India and Pakistan over Bangladesh.

Southeast Asia became his passion. Schanberg spent much of 1972-1975 covering the civil war in Cambodia, a fratricidal bloodbath that left millions dead. His indispensable colleague was a Cambodian named Dith Pran, a photojournalist who became Schanberg’s translator. When the capital, Phnom Penh, fell to the Khmer Rouge, Pran and Schanberg stayed, and were captured and nearly executed. Schanberg learned the “traditional” way well, starting more than four decades ago, well before the era of “strategic partnerships” and “Web business models.”

When he returned to the United States, Schanberg became metro editor of the Times in 1971, based in its New Delhi bureau during the war between India and Pakistan over Bangladesh.

The story of how Schanberg made his way out, thinking Pran dead, and their reunion after Pran’s escape from starvation and torture in his homeland, was made into the movie The Killing Fields, with Sam Waterston starring as Schanberg. “I do not see him much, but he is still my real brother,” Pran, now a photographer for The New York Times, says today, referring to Schanberg. When he returned to the United States, Schanberg became metro editor of the Times, and then a columnist. In 1986, he left the Times to join New York Newsday, a new big-city edition of the profitable and highly regarded Long Island newspaper Newsday, as a columnist. Mark E. Willes, the now disgraced former CEO of Newsday’s former parent Times Mirror Co., abruptly shut down the New York paper in July 1995.

Ironically, New York Newsday’s slogan was “truth, justice and the comics.” APB-news.com’s was “crime, justice, safety.” New York Newsday’s bottom line offered Wall Street too little, too late; APBnews.com has been undone by trying to be too much, too soon.

While Schanberg himself had little patience for standard cops-and-robbers stories, or weird wide Web oddities such as “some student in Ann Arbor who microwaved his roommate’s parrot,” APB-news was well-respected when it started staggering in the second week of June, gaining praise from magazines as varied as Brink’s Content (“timely and informative”) and Entertainment Weekly (“its saving grace is its gravitas”).

“We had a safety channel, celebrity channel, media channel—I think we were hitting a lot of interest groups out there,” Schanberg points out. “It was nice that people recognized us. What we wrote about may not have interested everybody, but it was quality journalism.

But all the journalism prizes in the world won’t keep a stand-alone media site afloat if it doesn’t have a workable business plan. Originally, Schanberg says, the path to profit backed by free-flowing venture capital was a full-service model. Among the haunting cul-de-sacs in APBnews’ now-ghostly newsroom is a small radio studio, complete with sound mixing boards and a soundproof broadcast booth that looks like a very expensive Finnish sauna.

“For awhile, they were saying that would be the ideal plan, to be a full-service Web site, and that’s why they expanded into radio and television and so forth,” Schanberg says. “At least that’s what the proprietors were being told. That was the consensus four or five months ago.” Now, the belief system du jour for media Web sites is “Strategic Partnership” with a much larger media company—the media site providing content that the strategic partner can distribute in multiple mediums to a larger, already existing customer base.

“The conventional wisdom now is, you should try to do these things in a very incremental way, starting off in a shoestring fashion, not trying to become a big media company right away,” Schanberg observes. “Because with that kind of budget, you’re going to spend a million dollars a month, and you may not be able to get that cash flow from advertising or whatever to support that. This is all hindsight now, because we ran out of money.”

Newspaper Web sites, on the other hand, are now an essential element of the business, Schanberg believes, whether or not they can draw profits on their own.

“I think the idea is, even if you don’t make money on it, you’re drawing attention to the paper and perhaps bringing more readership to the paper, maybe leading to more information product—magazines, newsletters, whatever—that somebody will pay for. You [the newspaper] have got to be there, because you have to learn about this new methodology for conveying information.”

And Schanberg’s newly discovered fascination with journalism on the Web remains intact. “I don’t think we’re at the end of anything, or in the middle,” he says. “I think we’re at the very, very beginning. I just don’t know where it’s going to go. Maybe if I had a better business sense, I’d start devoting myself to ideas to make money, but I don’t think I’m going to do that. Because the moment you start that, you come quickly to the places money is made, which is the superficial stuff, ephemeral stuff, that’s gone in a day. My goal is to continue to do things that please me, that I think are good journalism.”

Wayne Robbins is associate editor of Editor & Publisher, a sister magazine of Mediaweek.
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Movers

SYNDICATION

Lori Shackel has been promoted to senior vp/marketing and creative services for Universal Worldwide Television. She was vp/marketing and creative services....

...Michael Steger was named counsel/business and legal affairs for Twentieth Television's true-crime series America's Most Wanted: America Fights Back. He was an attorney with the Santa Monica, Calif., firm Stern, Neubauer, Greenwald & Pauly...

Kevin Hylton was named chief financial officer and senior vp of the Ackerley Group. Hylton comes to Ackerley from Nordstrom, where he was director of finance....

Jennifer Dreyer was named counsel/business and legal affairs at closing. Ongaro was formerly the cluster vp/sales administrative services for Universal Worldwide Television and Networks Group. He was vp/programming operations for video-on-demand systems for Diva Systems Corp....

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RADIO

Brian Ongaro was named executive vp and marketing manager of the soon-to-be-combined AMFM/Clear Channel cluster of radio stations in Dallas, effective at closing. Ongaro was formerly the cluster vp for AMFM's Dallas stations....

Dean Gavoni was promoted to executive vp of NBG Radio Networks, from vp....

Len Klatt was promoted to vp and director of research at Premiere Radio Networks, from director of research....

Dana Hannon was named general manager of Root Communications' eight-station radio cluster in Florence, S.C., comprising WDAR-FM, WJMX-FM, WJMX-AM, WSQN-FM, WPFM-AM, WGSS-FM, WEGX-FM and WDSC-AM. Hannon joins Root from Cumulus Broadcasting, where he was market director of sales for Cumulus' seven-station cluster in August, Ga....

Steve Smith was named executive vp of programming for AMFM's western operations, from senior vp of programming. And Tom Poleman was named senior vp of programming for eastern operations, from senior vp of (continued on page 34)

The Media Elite

Edited by Anne Torpey-Kemph

Meidel Talks Tech

Unlike many high-profile entertainment execs who've jumped to new media, Greg Meidel wouldn't have gone to a straight content company. For Meidel, who spent 20 years in television, most recently as CEO of studios USA, it was content-protection technology that lured him to the Internet.

Now president/COO of Los Angeles-based Massive Media Group, Meidel, along with fellow old-media honchos Frank Biondi, Howard Weitzman and Michael Kassan, has teamed with Santa Clara, Calif., encryption technology developer InterTrust to provide solutions for established film and television studios and record companies, to securely distribute digital content. Several major music labels have already licensed the technology for future releases of everything from CDs to MP3 files.

"My entire career has revolved around distribution," Meidel explains. "In syndication, I had six TV stations in a local market to sell to. With the Internet, the distribution channels are infinite." Meidel adds that he wasn't necessarily looking to go into the Internet when he left Studios USA in 1998, but InterTrust's technology made the distribution of content on the Internet look profitable. "It's very difficult to establish brands in a crowded marketplace," he says. "The content owners we do business with have established brands [that have] been producing well-known motion picture and TV products." —Daniel Frankel

SPOTLIGHT ON...

Sheraton Kalouria

Senior VP/Daytime Programs, NBC

When Sheraton Kalouria joined NBC as senior vp/daytime programs in May, the advice he got from the network brass was to "make noise, make us a player and make us a winner" in daytime. Kalouria, who had an impressive track record of marketing daytime soap operas at ABC, says, "I didn't come to NBC to lose."

Key to Kalouria's success thus far in network daytime is his "absolute belief in the serial drama in a network TV landscape," he says. He wants to use the Internet as an extension of NBC's two soaps, Days of Our Lives and Passions, and he would like to get the 25 percent of NBC affiliates that are not airing the two soaps back-to-back to begin doing so, to facilitate promotion.

Kalouria began his career developing marketing strategies for Internet service provider CompuServe. Later, he learned brand marketing strategy as an account exec on General Foods cereals at Grey Advertising. He earned a master's of management degree from Northwestern's J.L. Kellogg Graduate School and went on to ABC in 1993. Initially working in sales, he came up with strategies to keep advertisers from leaving daytime for other media. After working as an assistant to some key ABC execs, he became director of marketing for The Wonderful World of Disney and helped create the ABC kids block "One Saturday Morning."

Kalouria says his marketing mission at NBC will be to "tap into the great history and heritage of Days and the youthful outrageousness and zest of Passions." —John Consoli
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Radio Active!

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MOVERS

Guralnick takes helm at T&L Family

Martin to manage KNSD-TV brand

(continued from page 32) programming... Michael Marino was named program director for AMFM-owned KCMG-FM in Los Angeles. Marino previously served as program director for Infinity's WKRQ-FM in Cincinnati. He replaces Don Parker, who recently resigned... Jill Sochacki was named vp and regional director of operations for Westwood One's Metro Networks, responsible for overseeing operations in Charlotte, N.C.; Greenville, S.C.; Detroit; and Grand Rapids, Mich. She was formerly the Metro Networks director of operations for San Francisco... Brad Bedford was promoted to vp of Asian marketing for Arbitron. He will retain his post as manager of Arbitron's western division... Michael Calderon was named director of new media for One-On-One Sports radio network. He was previously a producer and an Internet consultant for the network... David Forr was named director of encoding operations for Arbitron's portable people meter. Forr comes to Arbitron from Statistical Research's SMART project, where he was director of engineering. Previously, he was with Arbitron as manager of ScanAmerica national field operations.

CABLE TV

David Safran was appointed senior vp of ad sales for Burly Bear Network. Previously, Safran headed up the national ad sales division for the Internet TV network Pseudo Programs... Holly Lim, previously a consultant for Internet startups, was named vp of strategic planning for Comedy Central. Lim is responsible for identifying business opportunities and partners... Jennifer Page was named music director for Jones International Networks' Great American Country. She will continue in her role as part-time on-air talent for Jones' 24-hour radio format U.S. Country.

TV STATIONS

Andrew Wallace was named general sales manager of Univision-owned WGBO-TV in Chicago. Wallace was most recently national sales manager at Univision's KMEX in Los Angeles... Vanessa Oubre was named to the new post of vp of television research for Emmis Television Broadcasting. Oubre was formerly the research director for WVUE-TV, Emmis' Fox affiliate in New Orleans. At KNSD-TV in San Diego, Penny Martin has been upped from director of programming and research to vp of programming and creative services. In her new post, Martin will manage the NBC 7/39 brand and the department's creative team. She will continue with her responsibilities in program acquisition and scheduling, as well as the oversight of the station's research and community relations departments.

MAGAZINES

Anne Holton has been upped from publisher of World Publications' Garden Design to group publisher of Garden Design and Savour... Rambabu Yarlagadda, founder of management consulting firm Baba Worldwide, has been named chief financial officer of Upside Media Inc.... Travel & Leisure Family senior features editor Margot Guralnick has been named editor in chief of the American Express Publishing title. Guralnick has been with the T&L group since 1994 and before that she was features editor at Conde Nast's House & Garden... At Gruner & Jahr USA Publishing, Andreas Dietrich, former vp of finance and administration, has been promoted to the new position of CFO. Also, Lawrence Diamond, former COO/CFO at Worth Media, has been named to the new position of chief administrative officer... David Forier has been promoted to director of research and advertising planning for Emap USA, from senior research manager. Also, Paul Sisia, former director of eastern advertising sales at Primedia's Automobile, has been named vp/marketing director for Emap USA's Motor Trend magazine.
At the home of *Rolling Stone* founder and chairman Jann Wenner for a recent party feting the mag's new fashion editor, Patti O'Brien, (l. to r.) RS associate publisher John McCarus; ABC News correspondent Elizabeth Vargas; and Wenner

Yahoo! Internet Life marked its 1 million-circ milestone with a recent bash at New York's L-Ray restaurant. (l. to r.) James Dunning Jr., chairman, chief executive officer and president, Ziff Davis Media; James Spanfeller, president, consumer magazine group, Ziff Davis Media; Marlene Kahan, executive director, American Society of Magazine Editors; Barry Golson, editor in chief, *YIL*; and Andrew Kramer, publisher, *YIL*

Gourmet publisher Gina Sanders hosted an intimate gathering at her Manhattan townhouse for a vodka tasting and Scandinavian specialties from NYC restaurant Aquavit. (l. to r.) Marcus Samuelsson, executive chef, Aquavit; Ruth Reichl, editor in chief, *Gourmet*; and Carol Brodie-Gelles, director of communications, Harry Winston

At Manhattan's Tribeca Rooftop for the East Coast launch party for Imagine Media's music magazine *Revolution*, (l. to r.) Neil Feineman, editor in chief, *Revolution*; Jonathan Simpson-Bint, president of the entertainment division for Imagine Media; and Shari Covens, national ad director, *Revolution*
ESPN Hits Spanish-Language Simulcast
ESPN will become the first national, English-speaking basic cable network to provide Spanish-language simulcasts through its partnership with Major League Baseball. Beginning today, with the 2000 Century 21 Home Run Derby program, the network will offer graphics, commercials, on-air promotions and player interviews in Spanish. AT&T Broadband will carry the simulcasts in some markets, while DirecTV will offer them nationally.

Baldwin to Host Live Online Chat For TNT
In association with the upcoming TNT miniseries Nuremberg, Alec Baldwin will host a live on-line chat from his new Web site AlecBaldwin.com, today at 9 p.m. Baldwin acts as both executive producer and star of the two-part miniseries, which dramatizes the trials of Nazi war criminals.

UCF & Sunshine Net Renew TV Contract
Sunshine Network and the University of Central Florida last week announced a multi-year extension of their television agreement for football, basketball, baseball and other sports. Under the agreement, Sunshine Network will annually produce and televise football, men's basketball and baseball games, with additional sports selected on a per-event basis into 2005. As in the previous agreement, Sunshine Network will also televise a select number of women's events and provide assistance to the university in promoting UCF's women's athletic programs.

Online Tonight Ups Affils With New Deal
Launched by Dame-Gallagher Networks in August 1999, Online Tonight With David Lawrence has jumped to 70 affiliates from 30 through a single deal with Business Talk Radio. BTN's 40 radio station affiliates have agreed to carry the daily show live. It broadcasts from Washington, D.C., from 10 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Shelter Advertising Assoc. Joins OAAA
The Shelter Advertising Association voted recently to merge with the Outdoor Advertising Association of America. The SAA, which represents shelter companies that provide advertising on street furniture and transit shelters, will

Iron Chef Cuts Food's Largest Sitting
New York City chef/restaurant owner Bobby Flay took on ginsu guru Masaharu Morimoto on his own culinary turf last month and served up the Food Network's highest ratings to date. The two-hour special on June 25, Iron Chef NY Battle, generated a 1.5 household rating during the first hour, which offered a behind-the-scenes look at the Iron Chef series.

The Japanese import has heated up NYC.
We can even hit a moving target.

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focusIN™ Specialty Web Network can close in on your market like never before - with targeted sub-channels to help you reach consumers who are geared up and ready to go. You can go wide and buy up to 75 million impressions per month on our general sports channel, or focus in on auto racing and see a more clearly defined market. In fact, racing fans are 44% more likely to own a pick-up truck, and 50% more likely to own a motorcycle than your general sports surfer.*

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Don't insult it by calling it a receipt. It's a new medium.

Inside Media

**Time Launches Innovators Series**

*Time* magazine will launch its latest series, *Time Innovators*, this week in its July 17 issue. The 18-month series will name 100 future leaders in fields ranging from design and religion to sports and politics. The first issue will focus on six leaders in the field of design. A new batch of innovators will be named each month. Also as part of the series, CNN Radio will do twice-weekly profiles on the chosen innovators for all its affiliates.

**Radio Unica Partners with SportsYA!**

Spanish-language talk and sports network Radio Unica has agreed to invest $3 million in SportsYA!, a Spanish- and Portuguese-language sports portal on the Internet serving Latin America, Spain and U.S. Hispanic markets. The partnership calls for both companies to share content, cross-promote their Internet sites to increase visitor traffic and jointly cover sports events beginning with the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney.

**AT&T Names New Directors for Liberty**

As part of the Federal Communications Commission's approval of its merger with MediaOne, AT&T last week tapped three new non-AT&T executives as directors of Liberty Media Group. The new directors are: Harold R. Handler, 64, a lawyer with Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett; Frank J. Macchiara, 58, president of Francis College; and Michael T. Ricks, 40, a retired MediaOne finance executive.

**MegaMags, MultiMedia Newsstand Partner**

MegaMags Inc., parent company of MegaMags.com, and MultiMedia Newsstand, a division of the Hearst Corp.'s subscription service Periodical Publishers' Service Bureau, have formed a new partnership. MegaMags.com will provide single-copy magazines for MMNews.com and its partners. In turn, MMNews.com will be the exclusive subscription provider on MegaMags.com.
That's where Classified Advertising Executives from around the globe will be gathering to analyze, strategize and capitalize on their classified businesses.

- Automotive
- Recruitment
- Real Estate
- General Merchandise/Auctions
- Personals

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(And we’ve done it for every other category of business too.)

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It appears that those 15 minutes of fame promised to all of us are being doled out at a clipper pace. With so-called reality-based TV programming flooding the airwaves, voyeurism has become the national obsession du jour. Last week’s debut of Big Brother upped the ante for the genre of schadenfreude-as-game show by adding an online viewer poll that decides who stays and who goes. It seems that if you want to be famous (or at least infamous), you have to be popular too. Goes to show that reality TV is just like the real world.—Kipp Cheng

@deadline

NetZero ‘Cashes In
Looking to provide consumers with a secure e-commerce solution without requiring a credit card, NetZero, a Westlake Village, Calif.-based free ISP has acquired RocketCash, a Mountain View, Calif.-based online gateway that enables shopping at selected merchant Web sites.

Ecast, Mojam Unite
San Francisco-based Ecast, which delivers content to broadband appliances in public venues, last week announced an alliance with Mojam, an online calendar of live music event listings. Using Mojam as its exclusive provider of live music events, Ecast users can access Mojam’s entire database of more than 15,000 artists in 10,000 venues and 5,000 cities worldwide via a co-branded Web site on the Ecast network, located at www.mojam.com.

Hive4.com Breaks Out
Advanstar, a Boston-based business information company, has unveiled the Hive4.com brand, which plans to launch 20 B2B e-commerce and information sites in the next 18 months.

HBO Taps Talk City
Looking to enhance the interactive dialogue with its user base, HBO.com, the interactive arm for the New York-based cable network, has selected Talk City, a Campbell, Calif.-based provider of online services, to implement a range of online initiatives, including discussion boards, chat rooms, events and polls.

Correction: Regarding the Internet kiosk story “Terminal Velocity” (June 26), the correct URL of Rockville, Md.-based consultancy Summit Research Associates is www.summit-res.com.

Advertising.com Serves Up Ad Delivery Software
By Ann M. Mack

In a move that promises to rival other online ad-serving technologies, Advertising.com today announced that it is licensing its ad delivery system to third-party companies—the first being New York-based Hot Socket. As a part of the licensing agreement, Hot Socket, an online marketing company that implements real-time bidding campaigns for businesses such as AT&T, Business Week and Nova International, has contracted to use the technology for its entire client base.

With the software, the company expects to deliver 2 to 3 billion ads per month. “Using [Advertising.com’s ad-serving technology], we can further capitalize on the attributes of the Web that make it such an effective direct marketing channel,” said Dev Bhatia, president and CEO of Hot Socket. Financial terms of the licensing agreement were not disclosed.

Called AdServe, Advertising.com’s licensed ad delivery system goes head to head with DoubleClick’s DART and Engage’s AdManager, both ad management tools. AdServe, which works from an application service provider (ASP) model, offers delivery of targeted messages, as well as ad campaign reporting and compliance. In addition, Baltimore, Md.-based Advertising.com plans to license its AdLearn technology—software that evaluates visitors’ past preferences, matches them with previous campaign performance and serves the ad most likely to elicit a response—as another module of AdServe.

Instead of using Advertising.com’s AdLearn optimization software, however, Hot Socket will employ its proprietary SMART (Sales-driver Measurement Analyzed in Real Time) technology, in conjunction with AdServe. SMART delivers targeted sales offers and messages based on live consumer interaction. Josh Reznick, media director for Hot Socket, said Advertising.com’s ad serving software coupled with Hot Socket’s optimization technology should help produce higher ROIs—something of utmost concern for a company that collects compensation based on delivering sales to clients. Hot Socket specializes in bringing “traditional direct marketers with tried and true methods over to the Web with minimal risk,” said Reznick. “To that end, we are compensated on a per-performance basis.”

Initially, Advertising.com only used AdServe for its own network of Web sites. But, the company decided to lend the technology out, realizing that companies outside of the network might be interested in applying it. “Now third parties can utilize our technology to greatly improve the performance of their online marketing efforts,” said Scott Ferber, CEO and co-founder of Advertising.com.

www.mediaweek.com July 10, 2000 Mediaweek 43
Albert Barber, COO of e-Media, was brought in last June to develop strategic alliances and refine corporate strategy for the New Canaan, Conn.-based broadband solutions provider.

Barber, a broadcast industry veteran, was founder and president of cable news channel CNBC, where he led the acquisition of the Financial News Network and its integration with CNBC, and represented NBC on a Cablevision/NBC programming venture. For seven years he was executive vice president and chief financial officer for NBC.

E-Media’s forte is bundling merchandising, marketing and data-mining with video streams. Company CEO John Engel—an avid sailor—may have brought Barber on board to keep the company running before the wind as broadband becomes ubiquitous and TV and the Internet converge.—Karl Greenberg

What assets does a traditional media exec bring to a technology company such as e-Media?

I came here with experience and connections to the media, sports and entertainment worlds, which makes up a majority of e-Media’s ventures. Online pay-per-view events within the entertainment vertical comprise 40 to 50 percent of e-Media’s business.

From a marketer’s perspective, how does media streaming on the Web differ from traditional broadcasting?

Streaming for the sake of streaming is a waste of time. It’s TV. The value in online or convergence streaming is that it’s a two-way "unicast," [meaning] you’re doing interactive broadcasting and marketing to individuals. That lets us do things on the Internet you can’t do on TV. It’s streaming plus micro-marketing and merchandising, all backed by the ability to watch, in real time, where pay-per-view buys are coming in, allowing us to flexibly direct information, ads, discounts and offers to different regions during a streamed event.

What’s driving e-Media’s success?

It’s being leveraged off two things: one is the fact that we’ve added the resources necessary to bring up the volume in terms of sales and execution of events [the company has around 500 servers employed in Vienna, Va., another 500 in San Jose, Calif. and the capability, according to CEO John Engel of serving one million concurrent streams and 1.4 million e-commerce transactions per second]. Second, we’ve expanded across all four verticals: entertainment, merchandising, B2B and learning. For example, we have built a site called MedLecture.com for continuing medical education, streamed from major medical schools on a pay-per-view basis.

What resistance do you see from traditional media companies to the Internet, streaming broadband-enabled media and convergence?

The biggest issue is that the traditional content owners [cable and broadcast] are a bit scared of the Internet and don’t know how to do business on it. The potential is a bit scary for the networks and traditional agencies when they consider how much the Internet-savvy advertiser is going to know in the future about his viewer: where they live, their economic strata, what they buy and how long, in minutes, they’ve been watching such and such event. It’s a different model than the one they’re used to.

What must agencies, cable companies and broadcasters do to face the ubiquity of the Internet and expansion of broadband access?

What they need to do is to enter broadband, and many are afraid to take that big leap. The big winners will be the ones who get out of the box. If some major cable players made the choice, they could run away with the cable business in terms of adding value to delivery of video. Build the capability into set-top boxes, put our software in and suddenly people have Internet on TV. We [e-Media] have the technology to do that now.

I may be an "old guy" in this space, but I feel more aggressive about it than anyone I know, and if I were back in the TV business, I’d feel the same. By the end of the year, I would guess there will be between 30 to 40 percent of homes with broadband access. Robert Wright [president and CEO of NBC] may be struggling a bit with NBCI [NBC’s broadband site] because they are taking a positive chance, but ultimately it will be a winner for them.

How is e-Media positioned for interactive TV?

We are looking for relationships with cable operators so we can turn their systems into intelligent systems. That's what this is about: two-way unicast. That's the value of convergence. People five years from now won't be sitting at home with a computer and a TV. They will have a single device.
Why pay for customers you don't get?

(Try performance-based advertising instead.
Now on sale at Xdrive.)

Forget pay as you go. Say hello to Xdrive. And pay as you get. As the 67th most trafficked site on the Web,* we're adding up to 35,000 new college educated, web savvy, early adopters a day.** We also work with advertisers on a cost per click or cost per acquisition basis. No voodoo economics. Just results. And a great variety of advertising, promotional and sponsorship packages to meet your needs. Call us directly at 310-586-6848. Or, email us at advertising@xdrive.com. We'll give you the full demo.

*Based on PC Data Online April 2000 Data.
**Based on Xdrive Tracking Data.
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IQcooltool

Going Local

GeePS.com’s location-based ad-serving technology reaches consumers on the go. By Ann M. Mack

Strolling down 34th Street in Midtown Manhattan, a connected consumer picks up her cellular phone and surveys the scene. Just then, Macy’s, the venerable department store giant, serves the potential customer a can’t-resist promotion—a price cut on summer selections—on her Internet-enabled device. Without hesitation, the savvy shopper races through the revolving door and picks up sundresses, swimsuits and sandals. To the consumer goes summer style and super savings. More importantly, though, for Macy’s, the transaction means a stroller turned shopper.

Miracle on 34th Street? One might call it that.

Just a possibility now, this scenario eventually could be played out through a new location-based advertising service from GeePS.com, a wireless technology company that delivers targeted ads to users of cell phones and handheld computers using wireless application protocol (WAP) and pocket query application (PQA).

The Cranbury, N.J.-based startup employs global positioning system (GPS) satellites to identify a user’s location and send them ads for nearby merchants over a wireless Internet connection. The service promises to enable brick-and-mortar businesses—from large retail chains to small “mom-and-pop” restaurants—to acquire new customers with personalized, locale-sensitive shopping announcements.

“Think of GeePS as a local market, a one-mile circle of energy around a potential customer, which moves with him or her, providing local information that fits individual needs,” explains Arshad Massod, GeePS president and co-founder. “This information is dynamic and controlled by the merchants, communities and establishments in that radius.”

Initially, GeePS CEO Andy Goren expects “GeePSters” to be primarily business travelers and executives using wireless devices, followed soon after by younger early adopters, making the service an attractive customer acquisition vehicle for restaurants, hotels and car rental companies.

With a hard launch expected in late Q3, GeePS.com introduced its beta version in New York and San Francisco in April.
Starting this month, the test market expands to New Jersey. Under an agreement with Advance Internet, a network of community-based Web sites, GeePS.com will provide wireless delivery of content and advertising from New Jersey Online (NJO) to Garden State residents with Internet-enabled handheld devices. “GeePS marks Advance.net’s first steps in bringing our services, both local and national, to the new world of mobile,” says Jeff Jarvis, president and creative director of Jersey City, N.J.-based Advance Internet. The mobile version of NJO will offer local news headlines, weather forecasts, sports scores and stock quotes, as well as location-based shopping information. Eventually, the GeePS-powered services could be rolled out by the nine other affiliates of Advance Internet, a subsidiary of Advance Publications, owner of 22 daily city newspapers.

GeePS.com marks yet another contender in the wireless space, as more and more tech companies anticipate the demand by retailers, content providers and advertisers for mobile commerce, content and promotions. In response to this boom, other tech companies like New York-based Vindigo offer similar applications. Developed for the Palm OS, Vindigo’s free personal navigation download allows users to get updates and information on their handheld devices.

For advertisers, the wireless explosion represents a new way to reach a growing audience. According to Dataquest/Gartner Group, a San Jose, Calif.-based research firm, the North American mobile wireless data market will grow to 70 million subscribers by 2004. And a recent report by the Kelsey Group, a Princeton, N.J.-based research company, predicts that wireless advertising revenues will reach $17 billion in 2005, with local advertisers accounting for $6 billion of that total. “M-commerce solutions have a promising future due to the convenience they offer customers, as well as the capability to do price comparison between different e-tailers and traditional retailers,” reports Tole Hart, an analyst for Gartner Group.

GeePS.com will give advertisers or merchants the ability to create a wireless Web site for free. The service plans to earn money by charging $50 to $80 CPM for coupons and promotions served. GeePS also expects to collect a 5- to 15-percent share of revenue generated from purchases originating from the wireless incentives.

Should merchants worry about consumer backlash over ads served via their personal devices? With GeePS.com, they shouldn’t be, says a company rep. GeePS is an opt-in technology, so users only receive personalized messages by registering at the GeePS.com Web site.

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The pawning of extra bandwidth by broadcasters to Net startups is the latest controversy in the HDTV expansion. By Stephen A. Booth

Biblical Esau, son of Isaac, sold his patrimony for a bit of soup. In a plan that seems equally hairy to some, several broadcast groups are pawning parcels of their government-given digital television (DTV) bandwidth to startups that plan to use the air-space to beam Internet data to PCs instead of couch-potato fare to boob-tubes.

The plan has generated increasing controversy, all the way from network executive suites to Capitol Hill, and is the latest teapot-tempest in the so-far stumbling DTV build-out. Network poobahs don't want their affiliates to mortgage out bandwidth until their own DTV deployment strategies are firmly in place. Meanwhile, solons in Congress have become increasingly alarmed that station owners won't use the free boon of publically-owned spectrum to transmit ad-supported digital eye candy, but instead will flip their broadband land grant to make a buck on datacasting services—possibly subscription-based.

QUICK REVENUE COULDN'T HERTZ
In the effort to launch high-definition digital TV (HDTV) in the United States, each station was given an additional 6 megahertz (MHz) channel of public spectrum to supplement its analog broadcast slot. The prospectus sold to Congress by the various engineering committees was for film-like HDTV broadcasts with cinematic digital surround-sound—a movie theater in every home delivered free, over the air, to advanced DTV sets. Meanwhile, the business side of broadcasting had been trying to find a financial model in DTV entertainment, but so far has only seen cash flowing out for infrastructure expenses. Whence came the interest in devoting part of the bandwidth to something that could generate some quick revenue, such as datacasting.

Although Congress didn't intend to dole out precious slices of publically-owned spectrum so broadcasters could pull a lend-lease deal, it's debatable whether legislators can do anything to prevent stations from renting out some of their bandwidth for ad-supported or fee-paid datacasting—including streaming video from the Web. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), empowered with rule-making for DTV, does not require stations to use all of their free bandwidth to broadcast HDTV.

The FCC mandates only that stations use some of the DTV channel to transmit high-resolution digital pictures over the air. These may be in a format described as "standard definition" TV (SDTV). To put the tech-talk quickly in context, an HDTV signal is considered to be a broadcast with 1,080 interlaced lines (1080i) or 720 progressively-scanned lines (720p). Subjectively, each delivers about quadruple the resolution of 480i analog TV. At 480 progressively-scanned lines, SDTV doubles the resolution of analog TV. The foregoing descriptions are simplifications, as DTV offers additional visual enhancements owing to the lack of distortion and other artifacts that affect analog TV.

Bottom line? As far as the FCC is concerned, a broadcaster needs only to transmit a single SDTV program within its DTV channel to fulfill its commitment. More to the point: Each 6 MHz channel can transmit digital data at a rate of 19.2 megabits per second (19.2 Mbps)—which is full HDTV resolution. SDTV requires much less bandwidth: about 5 Mbps. Therefore, a station might "multicast" four SDTV programs simultaneously within its signal (and designate them as channels A/B/C/D). Or, it may fulfill its obligation to the FCC by transmitting a single SDTV program, and use the leftover bandwidth for whatever it likes. If that means using the balance of the bandwidth for datacasting, the FCC could not care less.
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CABLE CRIES FOUL

But some, mainly cable TV operators, plan to make a stink over what they perceive as a violation of the spirit, if not the letter, of the law. As cable sees it, terrestrial broadcasters would be using the free bandwidth to enter new business—to cable's disadvantage. Moreover, since broadcasters are demanding that the government force cable operators to carry their DTV signals (as they're required to do with analog broadcast channels), cable operators fear they'll be compelled to become delivery boys for the broadcasters' new products. Robert Sachs, president of the National Cable Television Association, summed up his constituency's position on the DTV must-carry policy during April's convention of the National Association of Broadcasters. "It's about an attempt to misuse a government rule to give broadcasters an economic advantage in a competitive new commercial business," Sachs said. Broadcasters, he said, want government to "mandate free access over cable systems to them so they can launch new competitive data services and channels." Sachs turned up the flamethrower at last month's meeting of the N.Y. Cable Club, Internet content that isn't available on the service.

The ad-supported Geocast data will be free to consumers and the $300 RCA-made peripheral will be heavily subsidized by Geocast. The company also will pay its broadcast partners for their spectrum and share revenues with them. Tests of the system are underway, and the service is to launch late next year. Geocast claims the quality of streaming media will be better than what's currently available, delivering 30 frames per second for full motion. This means ads on the service could be full-motion, accessed by clicking on banners. A sponsor's full-motion catalog could add uplinks for direct sales.

HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

Geocast's novel approach to DTV has spawned imitators, often comprising independent TV stations looking for ways to underwrite their transition to DTV. These groups include Broadcasters Digital Co-op, iBlast and Data Management. But while Geocast's arrangements with its broadcast partners call for leasing 4 Mbps of capacity for four years, the other services are said to be seeking commitments for up to 7 Mbps. This has raised questions about the ability of those stations to transmit the finest resolution levels of HDTV.

There are many flavors of HDTV, and the bandwidth needed depends on how demanding the content is. While a movie that originated on film can be transmitted at 8 to 12 Mbps, live sports with fast-moving action might require more. Concerns that their affiliates might rent out too much bandwidth and leave themselves short to transmit network-supplied DTV programming has prompted top executives of all the networks to urge affiliates to delay datacasting arrangements until the networks can present road maps for DTV migration.

Those concerns have not gone unnoticed in Washington. During the NAB convention, House Telecommunications Subcommittee chairman Billy Tauzin (R-La.) said Congress gave broadcasters a second 6 MHz channel on the condition that "consumers would get to see some true HDTV and make a decision" regarding whether it was worth the cost of upgrading their TV sets. Any failure to provide HDTV and let viewers vote with their wallets "would violate the spirit of that unwritten agreement," Tauzin said.

Broadcasters would be "making a mistake and walking into a minefield" if they fully replaced HDTV with datacasting, Tauzin said. "We never intended to micromanage this, but they have got to do it." He conceded that if broadcasters can deliver "good quality" HDTV in less than the 6 MHz allotted, "then so be it."

Evolving technology seems to be capable of accomplishing that. During NAB, Cox TV executive vp Andrew Fisher said new technology is enabling broadcasters to shoehorn more information in the 6 MHz channel, thereby permitting datacasting without jeopardizing HDTV. As for the emergence of new datacasting combines causing a rift between networks and their affiliates, NBC TV Stations president Jay Ireland had a perceptive view. Datacasting isn't "driving a wedge" between networks and affiliates, he said. "What is being created is a different network." ■
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Travelocity Takes Off with New Tools

BY ANN M. MACK—Celebrating the successful integration of Travelocity.com and Preview Travel, the newly combined Fort Worth, Texas-based company unveiled several new technology-driven features at a launch party June 28. Transforming New York’s Hudson Theatre from a performance venue to someone’s living room or office, Travelocity.com equipped the hall with computers, arm chairs, end tables, sofas and desks.

Guests at the event were treated to a sneak preview of the site’s new offerings, which included group shopping tools, a value program, wireless travel services and a redesigned home page. At the party, friends logged on to check out Team Up Travel, a feature that gives multiple people the ability to plan, shop and buy travel together online. After spending a night surfing the site and talking travel, several guests craved a little getaway. Lucky ones were granted their wish. Travelocity raffled off plane tickets and travel packages, plus Palm Pilots to plan trips.

Travelocity pres. and CEO Terry Jones (center) talks travel with John Guttenberg of Gorp and Catherine Levene of New York Times Digital.

America Online’s Abby Horrigan, Mayura Kumar and Betsy Adelstein, with Travelocity’s Mike Altomari, ham it up with “Travel Man” Jayson Simpson.

A taxi take-off: Travelocity Magazine’s Randy Kazmierski, ad director, Rick Morrison, publisher, and Mike Stacy, Travelocity sr. vp of mktg.

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Interested candidates should send their resume with salary history attention HRVA, to MC Direct 12650 Danielson Court, Poway, CA 92064. Fax: 858-748-2291. Email: davek@mcdirect.com. Please indicate the appropriate job code with your resume.

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Cardholder’s Name ____________________________
Card # ______________________ Expires ________

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NAME ___________________________ ADDRESS
PHONE ___________________________ FAX

* * * USE ADWEEK MAGAZINE TO GET NATIONAL EXPOSURE * * *
MTV's BUZZWORTHY

Buzzworthy songs are usually by new, up-and-coming artists who MTV believes have special potential. Of the videos designated as Buzzworthy, the vast majority have been certified gold or platinum.

Week of 7/10/00

Artist/Group: Pink
Song/Video: "There U Go"
Director: David Myers

This fuchsia bombshell is about to blow the spot up. Sending the warning that she is not one to be messed with in her debut video "There U Go", Pink is LaFaces latest rising star. Her self-titled album, due out in March, contains a medley of musical influences - from Mary J. Blige to Fleetwood, as witnessed on the possible second single, "Players".

Artist/Group: Incubus
Song/Video: "Pardon Me"
Director: Steven Murashige

This five-member band from Calabasas, California has finally made a mark with this video off their recently released album, Make Yourself. Not new to the music scene, Incubus started out as a garage band back in 1991, and moved up through the ranks to eventually release their first full-length record, S.C.I.E.N.C.E., in 1997. Their newest offering blends funk and alternative metal, with a little rap/rock thrown in for good measure.

The Hollywood Reporter's Box Office

For weekend ending July 5, 2000

<table>
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<tr>
<th>This Week</th>
<th>Last Week</th>
<th>Picture</th>
<th>3-Day Weekend Gross</th>
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<td>80</td>
<td>3,343,159</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Dan Rank, who heads up the national buying division of Omnicom's newly formed Optimum Media Direction (OMD), has the responsibility for placing over $3 billion per year, and representing 87 national advertisers. Prior to this appointment, Dan was Executive Vice President of the National Buying Group for DDB, one of the Omnicom-owned agencies. Prior to joining DDB in 1985, Dan held media management positions at Stroh Brewery Company and Lever Brothers, and was Media Group Head for Lowe & Partners.

Dan's unique background of client experience and agency planning & buying allows him to understand the media function from a variety of viewpoints. His philosophy of cross-training for better understanding of the total media function has been an asset for those working with him.

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Out Wants Back In

Under new owner, gay monthly tries to reclaim readers with redesign

Nearly five months after getting snapped up by its West Coast rival, The Advocate, New York-based gay culture and lifestyle monthly Out remains deep in retooling mode, aiming to redefine itself—yet again—and reclaim readers and advertisers following years of shifting editorial direction, jolting design changes and ongoing staff upheaval.

Launched a decade ago as the activist-oriented Outweek, the more mainstream Out, after a succession of editors and redesigns, finally devolved into what many considered an inaccessible mishmash of fashion spreads and slight journalism seemingly targeting a few upscale gay men. Readers clearly were unimpressed: Circulation slipped from a peak of 140,000 to 115,800 last December, according to the Audit Bureau of Circulations.

Advertisers also didn’t know quite what to make of the all-too-mercurial title. While year-to-date ad pages through May declined just 2.4 percent over last year, the May issue’s pages plummeted 19.8 percent, according to the Publishers Information Bureau. Meanwhile, The Advocate’s biweekly circ grew from 78,700 to 86,000 between 1998 and 1999, and year-to-date ad pages are running 7.3 percent ahead of last year.

Out’s editorial makeup may see more significant changes. Lemon admits the magazine “needed to strengthen its relationship to gay and lesbian subject matter and gay and lesbian lives. It had slightly lost its connection to the market.”

Wieder said Out will continue to concentrate on the lighter side of gay life—fashion, travel, arts and entertainment—while the 33-year-old Advocate will maintain its hard-news slant. Out has to “continue to be very strong in the fashion world,” she said. Despite the fashion spreads that have become a defining element, apparel ads remain elusive. Out’s most visible advertisers: alcoholic beverages and pharmaceuticals.

Wieder acknowledged making Out in again is an uphill endeavor. “It’s going to take a lot of time to bring back the trust of the readership,” she said. “It can’t happen in one shot.” —Tony Case (continued on page 56)
Most magazine launches ask advertisers to take a risk...
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For more information contact James G. Elliott Co. at 212 588.9200 ext. 26 or visit us at www.guidepostsm.com.

*ABC Audited Paid Circulation, 1999

Guideposts
America's Source for Inspiration
Magazines

Wholesalers Toughen Up

Set higher sell-through rates

Magazine wholesalers—tired of having magazines collect dust on the racks—are forcing publishers to take a hard look at the number of copies they put into the market. "Publishers have been dumping massive quantities into the system over the last few years," says Joel Anderson, chairman of leading magazine wholesaler Anderson News. "Almost half are being returned."

Effective June 26, Anderson will limit the number of copies it will accept from publishers. The company is looking to increase its current average sell-through rate by devoting more shelf space to better-selling titles. Cooke says it's no secret that publishers need to clean up their acts. "Most publishers know how well their products sell."

"Most of the publishers have embraced [the changes] and agree that what we're doing out there now is horrible and wasteful and is very costly to publishers, to wholesalers [and] to retailers," says Anderson. "It actually degrades sales."

David Aligre, vp of single-copy sales for Primedia, says he won't fight the changes. "From an overall standpoint, we're supporting it because we've suffered over the years with a lot of our magazines because the knock-off brands have come into the marketplace where there were no barriers," he says. "It will force publishers, including Primedia, to take a hard look at some of those magazines that we have on a newsstand where the sell-through rate is poor and the category doesn't support that proper volume." —Lori Lefevre

60 SECONDS WITH...

James Spanfeller
President, Ziff Davis consumer magazine group

Q. What's been the biggest transformation of the company since James Dunning Jr. became president/CEO in December?
A. Culturally, we've unlocked the talents of people here, so that every idea is considered. We don't do them all, but we try and do as many of the good ones as we possibly can. Q. What are some of Ziff's projects now under way? A. First, the renaming of PC Computing to Smart Business, PC Week to eWeek and Smart Reseller to Smart Partner. Second, we just launched the Net Economy, which is an inside-the-beltway, technology-based book. And, of course, Expedia Travels, which will kick off in the fall. We're also talking to a lot of people about the replication of the Yahoo! Internet Life and Expedia Travels concept. Q. Given the shaky foundations of so many dot-com ventures, any concern now about heavily banking on launches and spinoffs based on the Web economy? A. Are we concerned that the Web won't be the single biggest thing to happen to business since the steam engine? No. There is no doubt in our minds the Web economy is here and is going to accelerate. Q. Dunning is a charismatic, gun-\-\-\-ho kind of guy. What was the biggest adjustment to his work style? A. The company as a whole has been used to a very formal relationship with senior management. Jim is professional, but not formal. He walks the halls and out of the clear blue he can pop into your office, and you can be working on something significant, and he'll say, "Just do it." Q. Does Jim really walk the halls? A. [laughs] No. He joggs.

Mediaweek Magazine Monitor

Weeklies

July 10, 2000

The Sporting News hit a home run with its July 10 issue, thanks to Major League Baseball, up 27.04 percent over last year, the "Baseball's 50 Best Players" issue was packed with MLB sponsors, including Franklin Batting Gloves, the U.S. Postal Service, Claritin and Mastercard. MLB "has done a lot of heavy lifting," says Frank Farrell, senior vp/publisher. "It has hyped up overall interest in baseball." But the Times Mirror title is still lagging year-to-date, down 10.52 percent, to 414.55 pages, according to Mediaweek Magazine Monitor.

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COMPAQ
The New Potter is Upon Us, and the rumors were wrong. It is not titled *Harry Potter and the Cup of Enchanted Mucus*, as the front page of the *National Enquirer* inaccurately reported two weeks ago beneath its top story, “Oprah’s Shocking Secret: I’ve Never Actually Read a Book in My Life.” Nor is it titled *Harry Potter and the Hairy Porker*, as Hog Farmer Monthly erroneously stated in its June issue. It’s called *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, and Media Person, like you, is eagerly awaiting the door buzz signaling the arrival of the FedEx owl with his magical package from Amazon.com. History will definitely recall the turn of the century as that time when we all watched *The Sopranos* and *Survivor*, read J. K. Rowling, the Margaret Mitchell of her era, and broke down in tears every time we thought about having to vote in November.

This is a big book in every sense of the word: 752 pages long, a first printing of 3.8 million in the U.S. alone (almost as many books as can be found on Media Person’s coffee table) and the first Potter adventure in which one of the main characters does The Permanent Disappearing Act. (Media Person’s money is on Professor Dumbledore, the beloved head of the Hogwarts Academy of Magic, Filimflam and Halloween-Costume Design, alma mater of Siegfried and Roy, since he’s 863 years old and his magic wand is noticeably drooping.) This sort of melancholy plot turn, along with all the Satan worship and graphic depictions of exotic sex rituals, has made some parents quite angry with the Potter series. After a series of emergency meetings, the U.S. Surgeon General announced that a force of 10,000 grief counselors, stationed in strategic locations around the nation, will be on call so that any traumatized child has only to dial 1-800-GET-HELP and a helicopter will soon be on its way with therapy and chocolate cookies.

So powerful has been the Potter magic that the editors of *The New York Times Book Review* had to revamp their sacred best-seller list after the three previous Potter fantasies had permanently encamped upon it, causing numerous suicides among literati trained in Ivy League English-lit postgraduate programs who could find no room for their efforts. From now on there will be a special list for “children’s books,” even though polls reveal that 73 percent of all Potter novels sold to children have now been stolen by their parents, who refuse to return them.

*Newsweek*, by the mystical legerdeman of paying somebody a gigantic amount of money, this week is excerpting *Goblet of Fire* and last week procured a rare interview with the elusive J. K. Rowling herself. Unlike Darva Conger, the other celebrity blond in the news this month, Ms. Rowling removed no clothing, for which she is to be commended, though *Playboy* is hard at work on the case and MP wishes them every success. (Ms. Conger, whom Media Person has now seen more of than her ex-husband, Rick Rockwell, ever did, has an admirably low body-fat ratio, MP can authoritatively report.)

In her interview, the author states that the idea for the Potter fantasies came to her as she rode a train. This news immediately increased Amtrak profits by 27 percent, as thousands of aspiring authors leaped aboard passenger trains throughout the country, annoying fellow riders with the frenzied clacking of their laptops and the high volume of their cell-phone pitches to literary agents. One would-be writer was hurled off a moving train south of Poughkeepsie by an enraged mob of commuters.

Media Person was happy to learn that Ms. Rowling, who once was a welfare mother living in an unheated flat in Edinburgh and subsisting on an all-haggis diet, has not given in to any outlandish arististe shopping-spurge impulses with her new wealth. Instead, she sensibly converted it all into gold coins that she deposited in a locked chest secreted in a stone tower guarded by a tiny but vicious accountant named Rumpleschwartzkin.

Meanwhile, *The New York Times* reported that in the fall Warner Brothers starts production on the film version of Rowling’s first fantasy, *Harry Potter and the Secret Water Closet*, for which it paid $500,000 and the blood of three studio executives. This high-budget epic, starring Jim Carrey as Harry, Julia Roberts as his love interest and Sir Anthony Hopkins as Winston Churchill, will be filmed on the French Riviera and in the jungles of Malaysia, features a sound track by *NSync, and will be completely faithful to the spirit of the book, studio insiders report.

Plans are also under way for the biggest merchandising and licensing campaign in world history. Unlike such bogus movie tie-ins of the past as the so-called *Star Wars* “light sabers,” the Harry Potter magic wands will really work, a marketing executive told Media Person. “Spend a few years studying sorcery and you can actually kill people with these babies,” he said. “Or at least make them a little sick.”

All in all, this looks like a good millenium for Harry Potter.
Her father tells her to grow up.

Her mother says to act her age.

Her grandmother still calls her "baby."

But she only listens to Doug Banks.

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