

Blinkx to lead in video search engine

When it comes to video searching on the Net, blinkx is big. Deeming itself the smartest and largest video search engine on the Web, blinkx.tv delivers 4 million hours of searchable content -- audio, video, and TV via RSS -- and boast more content than Google Video and Yahoo.

"Basically, our goal is to find and collect video content from across the Web," said Suranga Chandratillake, founder and Chief Technology Officer of San Francisco- and London-based blinkx. "We don't care where it's from or what it's about."

And winning over acclaim -- the "Most Innovative Digital Business" at Revolutions Awards 2006, and named by BusinessWeek Online for "Best of The New Web" for 2005, among other accolades -- the company just might spring to the forefront of the market, already serving over 3.5 million video search queries a day, since taking a chance on the non-existent market when it was founded in 2004.

"When we started, the bulk of online content came from big media companies such as CNN, MTV, BBC, but within the last two years, user-generated content has grown," said Chandratillake, explaining that he and his team knew it was only a short time before video content would arrive on the scene. "It ended up being 2 and a half years."

Unlike other competitor video search engine sites, blinkx.tv uses advanced speech recognition technology to "automatically listen to and understand" audio and video content, moving past the current use of metadata-based keyword services that tags titles and descriptions -- and subsequently, rolling out a search engine that also moves past a text-based Web into a more television landscape.

The company, in addition, has struck more than 80 content partnerships that allow users to spider content from as well as free content from the Web, including the History Channel UK as of July 3, MTV Networks, Sky News, Times Online to bring FIFA Archive and the Times Smart Search, Discovery Channel, UNICEF, HBO, Sundance Channel, AtomFilms, CBS Television stations, and adult entertainment providers Playboy.com and Zango.

And in terms of user-generated content, which the company has named "garage" videos as part of its Garage Video Channel, makes up 1 million hours of its 4 million hours of content.

"We want to be the one place on the Web to find any video -- whatever it's about, wherever it's from," said Chandratillake, who predicts that by the end of the year, the site will double in content. "The more content there is, the more video there is, and the more important we become."

Moreover, the company has also launched: my blinkx.tv, which allows users to aggregate video content into a single customized stream to play on-demand; blinkx.tv To Go, a service that enables users to sync content to their iTunes or personal video player software; and signed an agreement with MIVA Inc. that will allow blinkx to deliver contextually targeted advertising to users via its Smart Ads Platform.

And being the largest video search engine isn't the only service it aims to be, it also provides the smallest search engine named Pico. The free 1MB download retrieves relevant information from the various sources including video, Wikipedia, and social networking sites' blogs based on context of your active screen, and appears as unobtrusive channels on the desktop, according to blinkx.

But as it shifts ahead in the video Internet realm -- beyond partnering with companies for their content archives, it will soon begin to license out their technology to partner companies -- taking a similar approach to Google.

These partnerships, set to be announced in a month or two, will have sites incorporate the video search technology powered by blinkx and will include advertisements with the service, said Chandratillake, adding that the revenue will be shared between those sites and blinkx.

"Google hasn't chosen itself to be the Google of video content, as it has stop being just a search engine portal," Chandratillake said. "What they're doing is -- content stays on Google and lives on Google."

And blinkx.tv is the opposite of that, Chandratillake said. Unlike Google which provides no way of searching other sites, blinkx wants to be the single destination place for video search users which includes content from its partners to other viral videos from sites like Google Video, Revver and YouTube, he noted.

Moreover, on the long term front, blinkx seeks availability of its content service on television and mobile, as IPTV and technology supporting it is being pushed.

As Chandratillake predicts that the remote control will be a more complex one in the future, he likens blinkx.tv to a remote control. "That's what blinkx.tv will be -- a remote control for Internet video," he said.

"This is only the beginning, and YouTube is only the tip of the iceberg," Chandratillake said. "More content is going to spill on the Internet ... it's going to be amazing."

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