

AtomFilms going mobile

April 7 2006

AtomFilms and Verizon Wireless announced Thursday plans of a multi-year exclusive agreement to bring AtomFilms original short films to Verizon's mobile content service V CAST.

The AtomFilms mobile video channel, which makes its debut as part of V CAST's basic entertainment programming, signals the coming of short Internet-style content as the new wave in mobile television for the consumer on-the-go.

According to the April 2006 forecast from eMarketer, there will be 100 million worldwide users of paid or sponsored mobile broadcast video services by the end of 2009.

The deal, a first for AtomFilms Entertainment Inc., is their first venture in providing their content to a wider range of audience -- mobile users -- via on-demand digital distribution.

"Atomfilms has a strong business online, bringing the top filmmakers and animators, and the timing is right to extend it to the mobile market," said Scott Roesch, Atom Films' vice president and general manager. "We believe Verizon is a market leader in video-on-demand mobile service and we are very thrilled."

The channel will be available under the Entertainment category and will include AtomFilms Studio Originals, the exclusive Atomfilms series Stainboy from Tim Burton, Animation, Comedy and videos from users on AtomFilm's user-generated content site, AddictingClips.com.

Customers have access to V CAST entertainment channels with V CAST-enabled phones and a V CAST VPak subscription for \$15 monthly access along with their Verizon Wireless calling plan.

The wireless network is a venture between Verizon Communications and Vodafone with 51.3 million voice and data customers.

"AtomFilms has unique experience at finding the type of digital content that consumers want -- quick, instantly gratifying entertainment experiences," said John Harrobin, vice president of marketing for Verizon Wireless. "We're excited to bring the AtomFilms 'entertainment snacking' experience exclusively to our V CAST customers."

Only last month, the Web site viewed by some 5 million users a month had introduced a multi-format download service to portable media devices including iPod and PSP called "AtomFilms To Go."

In an interview with Roesch in February he indicated that the company was interested in making the mobile jump, since both mediums give users similar viewing experiences.

"Digital entertainment gives consumer total control of their viewing experience," Roesch told UPI. "Their schedule is no longer two hours or 30 minutes shows, rather you can access wherever and however long you want it -- that's pretty revolutionary."

The success of streaming online video has been based not only on AtomFilms, but also such Webcasters as eBaum's World, You Tube and Google Videos. Now AtomFilms hopes its company's success will transcend into the mobile market.

A June 2005 report from comScore Media Metrix found that 56 percent of the U.S. online audience had watched streaming videos this year, and

over a three-month period the average video consumer viewed 73 minutes of streaming video content per month.

Moreover, according to Accustream Research in August 2005 video streams were forecast to grow by 48 percent in 2005 to over 21 billion served. The research group also estimated in a different study that the combined market for streaming advertising, subscription and download media was estimated at \$1.36 billion in 2005 alone.

Whether or not consumers will watch mobile content is still up in the air and will be determined by the number of people who are phone-enabled and who are eager to watch television on-the-go.

A February study from eMarketer showed that the number of Americans who will be able to access video content on their mobile phones will rise from 1 million users to 15 million by 2009.

But surprisingly enough, companies like AtomFilms and Verizon could see the payoff from the portable media revolution.

A November 2005 report from JupiterResearch predicted that the growing demand for mobile video content will increase from \$62 million in 2005 to \$501 million in revenue by 2010.

Still, Roesh is counting on consumers wanting mobile video-on-demand, since he sees short-form video content as "bite-sized entertainment" perfectly suited for customers on the go.

"Our biggest goal is to get consumers habituated to the channel," he said. "We want people to watch while they're commuting to school or work and have them check out our new, original, and entertaining content."

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Citation: AtomFilms going mobile (2006, April 7) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2006-04-atomfilms-mobile.html>

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