

YouTube boosts full-length movies, TV show lineup (Update)

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In this image provided by YouTube, full episodes of the sitcom "Alf" are shown listed on the YouTube Web site. YouTube on Thursday said it is partnering with major studios to stream full-length movies and TV shows on its site for free. (AP Photo/YouTube)

(AP) -- Google Inc.'s YouTube said Thursday it is vastly expanding its library of full-length movies and TV shows it offers online, while also launching a new advertising service and adding about a dozen new content partners.

The long-form videos will be housed on a unique page at <http://www.youtube.com/shows> and get a "Shows" tab on the main YouTube site.

The offering, which went live late Thursday, marks a further departure from the fuzzy homemade clips that made the Web site popular and is the latest move in YouTube's attempt to boost sales and profits. Last week, YouTube announced it was teaming up with Universal Music Group to create an online music video venture.

"It's a first step in a long commitment," said Shiva Rajaraman, a YouTube senior product manager, in a conference call with reporters.

The company hopes to add to its movie and show content over time. The titles available at launch are mostly older fare that are already available elsewhere on the Web. It will offer for free hundreds of TV show titles including "Beverly Hillbillies" and "Married With Children," and hundreds of movies, including "Casino Royale" and "Cliffhanger."

The service expands on YouTube's existing partnership with several studios, whose parents include [Sony](#) Corp., Lions Gate Entertainment Corp., CBS Corp., Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Inc. and Liberty Media Corp.

On Thursday it also announced new partnerships with 13 smaller companies such as Discovery Communications Inc., National Geographic and SnagFilms LLC.

[Advertising revenue](#) will be shared with the content providers.

The news came on the same day Mountain View-based [Google](#) said it earned \$1.42 billion, or \$4.49 per share, in the first quarter, up 9 percent from a year ago.

Google bought YouTube for \$1.76 billion in late 2006 but it hasn't emerged as a major marketing vehicle and the company does not disclose its revenue figures. Analysts have estimated its revenue in 2008 at around \$200 million.

On Thursday, YouTube spokesman Chris Dale simply said a recent analyst estimate that said the site lost \$500 million a year was "factually incorrect" and said its performance was better.

As a way to bolster its ad revenue, YouTube also announced it is launching Google TV Ads Online, which will help advertisers target viewers of online content with video ads.

Single video ads are planned to be inserted in scheduled breaks in shows and movies, Rajaraman said. Sometimes the ads will be sold by Google and sometimes by the content providers.

Certain content providers also provide their own video players, such as Sony's Crackle.com player, which will be embedded in the [YouTube](#) site.

Crackle.com has 60 movies on its site, but will be offering only 15 at time through the partnership. For example, "Groundhog Day," initially will not be shared, as Sony managers intend to use YouTube's large audience to help drive traffic to Crackle.com.

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