

Miniweb merges Internet and TV with Blinkx

May 13 2009, by Glenn Chapman



File photo shows a man using a wireless internet access at a Starbucks Coffee shop in San Francisco, California. Blinkx said it is putting its online video search skills to work for Britain-based Miniweb Interactive, a firm specializing in merging television with the Internet.

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Blinkx founder and chief executive Suranga Chandratillake billed the alliance as a strategic step for the California firm and significant proof that Internet [television](#) is going mainstream.

"The highest level trend is basically the mass market adoption of online video," Chandratillake said.

"We've seen our audience swing in the last couple of months from tech-savvy young males to people of every socio-economic background; the

thing that links them is they have broadband connections."

Blinkx will enhance Internet video search capabilities of a Miniweb [software platform](#) used to route online and traditional television content through set-top boxes, according to Chandratillake.

Miniweb is reportedly used in more than 9 million homes in Britain and supports more than 600 interactive television sites.

"Combining two best of breed technologies into a single TV services platform is definitely a case of the total consumer benefit being more than just the sum of the parts," said Miniweb founder Ian Valentine.

"We are very excited about being able to offer broadcasters, for example, the ability to recommend specific catch-up TV content based directly on the viewing context of their audience."

Miniweb's current offering is "incredibly simplistic" and comparable to trivia, bios, or other "extras" one might get access to while watching films in DVD format, according to Chandratillake.

"Plug in blinkx and the universe of information you can access becomes essentially unlimited," Chandratillake said. "The volume of stuff suddenly explodes."

Blinkx's main business continues to be its ad-supported website, which indexes video available online for aspiring online viewers. Blinkx offers content from varied sources including [YouTube](#) and Paris-based DailyMotion.

The San Francisco-based firm has deals with hundreds of media companies to distribute copyrighted content and boasts an index of more than 35 million hours of video and audio.

The deal with Miniweb could make it possible for blinkx to begin selling television viewers subscriptions to premium programming in manners similar to those of cable companies.

"Almost nobody will pay for content online," Chandratillake said. "But, people are used to paying for content they watch on their TVs."

Blinkx plans to infuse Miniweb with profiling technology that lets viewers customize personal channels to their tastes or preferences.

"Combining broadcast and broadband TV will provide audiences with access to an incredibly rich and diverse universe of video content," Chandratillake said.

"As the leader in video search, blinkx is ideally suited to help viewers navigate this universe, both through search and through recommendations."

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