

Examiner.com expands local news with NowPublic buy

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(AP) -- Two Web sites that rely on a mix of experts and amateur reporters to cover community news are joining forces in a deal announced Tuesday.

Examiner.com, a rapidly growing site that relies on contractors to dissect a wide variety of topics, paid an undisclosed amount for NowPublic, which depends on volunteers to cover what's happening in more than 6,000 cities around the world.

The combination brings together two of the Web's leading specialists in covering local topics that may be glossed over or ignored entirely by traditional media. This so-called "hyperlocal" concept typically depends on contributions from people willing to share their knowledge and information for a pittance or no money at all.

"We tell our people not to quit their day jobs," said Rick Blair, chief executive of Examiner.com, which is owned by Clarity Digital Group. The Denver-based company is part of billionaire Phil Anschutz's empire.

The low pay hasn't deterred Examiner.com from building up a network covering 110 metropolitan areas with a team of 16,000 experts focusing on everything from local schools to the best strategies for playing blackjack.

About 1,500 people apply to write for Examiner.com each week, and 600 to 700 are accepted after a review of their credentials, Blair said.

NowPublic will continue to operate separately, although Examiner.com will adopt some of its technology and may hire some of NowPublic's unpaid contributors.

Examiner.com started last year as an offshoot of two free newspapers that operate under the Examiner name in San Francisco and Washington D.C. With NowPublic in the fold, Examiner.com expects to have more than 30,000 experts contributing to its Web site by the end of the year.

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