

Microsoft redesigns MSN, adds Twitter, Facebook

November 4 2009, By JESSICA MINTZ , AP Technology Writer

(AP) -- Microsoft Corp. is giving its MSN Web portal a long-overdue makeover and says it hopes the new site will funnel more people to Bing, the software maker's search engine.

Microsoft is ditching the heavy blue background and stack of tiny text and menus across the top of the page that have defined msn.com for a decade.

The new site is cleaner, with a white background and simple, colorful links for "news," "entertainment," "sports," "money," "lifestyle" and "more" lined up across the top.

But it's still clearly a portal, filled with blocks of headlines. The most prominent real estate on the page is dominated by a slide show of the top five stories with big headlines and photos.

Some of what appears on the MSN home page will be picked by editors looking for top stories. They'll get an assist from new software that uses Bing to find hot topics just as they begin to simmer.

Other stories on the home page will appear based on a Web surfer's location or other details gleaned from his or her browsing behavior.

Microsoft's online services business is a money-losing venture, as advertising revenue has failed to make up for the money the software maker has poured into competing with [Google](#) Inc. in search.

Scott Moore, the executive producer for MSN in the U.S., said the site's main goal is to drive up Bing's search share. Bing, which launched in June, remains a distant third in search, after Google and Yahoo Inc.

In July, Web search became a two-team race when Microsoft and Yahoo announced that the Bing technology would be used behind the scenes on Yahoo's sites as well. That deal is awaiting regulatory approval.

The MSN redesign also shows Microsoft's growing interest in collaborating with operators of other popular sites, rather than simply trying to compete.

In a slim column on the right-hand side of the page, Microsoft displays Hotmail e-mails and status updates on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and Microsoft's own "Windows Live" service. People who have accounts on those services can log in to each to see a list of friends' updates and to post their own.

This refreshed msn.com is rolling out to a small percentage of U.S. users on Wednesday but won't appear for everyone until early 2010.

On the Net:

<http://preview.msn.com>

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