

## Focus on content as AOL marks 25th birthday

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AOL marked its 25th birthday Monday with chief executive Tim Armstrong, pictured in 2009, saying the once high-flying Web company would focus on creating quality content and advertising as it maps out its future.

AOL marked its 25th birthday Monday with chief executive Tim Armstrong saying the once high-flying Web company would focus on creating quality content and advertising as it maps out its future.

Armstrong, in an interview with the CNBC television channel, said the first phase of the Internet was about "access" -- an area where [AOL](#) was a Web pioneer with its dial-up connection business.

"The second phase has really been about the platforms -- the Googles, the Facebooks," he said.

"And the next wave is really going to be about content," said Armstrong, a former senior [Google](#) executive who took over the reins at AOL a little over a year ago.

"We have sort of pivoted the company to really focus on what we think is going to be the next decade of growth on the Internet which is really about high-scale quality content and great [advertising](#) online," Armstrong said.

"We see the Internet as a big open pipe that could be filled with a lot better and more high-quality content," he told [CNBC](#). "And that's really our plan, to put technology and journalism together."

With Patch.com, Armstrong said AOL had dispatched full-time journalists to about 50 towns across the United States to provide local news coverage and "we're going to go to hundreds of towns this year."

"We have probably hired more journalists on a global basis than any other organization has," Armstrong said.

AOL has also launched Seed.com to recruit freelance writing talent to crank out stories for its array of websites on topics ranging from pets and sports to politics and technology.

In what is considered one of the most disastrous mergers ever, Time Warner combined with America Online in 2001 at the height of the dot-com boom with AOL using its inflated stock as currency for the transaction.

Time Warner was forced in 2002 to massively write down the value of AOL and the AOL name was removed from the group's corporate title in 2003.

AOL, whose properties include online map service Mapquest, technology blog Engadget, social network Bebo and other sites, was spun off by Time Warner in December into an independent company.

AOL is currently the number four gateway to the Web after Google, Microsoft and Yahoo! and its dial-up Web access business has been gradually supplanted by high-speed broadband services.

Since taking over at AOL in March of last year, Armstrong, has embarked on an aggressive round of cost-cutting and the company will have around 4,400 employees after restructuring compared with 19,000 in 2006.

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