

Google buys SayNow, fflick

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SayNow, a California startup that connects celebrities with their fans with voice products, has been purchased by Google.

Google ramped up its investment in online entertainment Wednesday with the purchases of a startup devoted to movie talk and another that connects celebrities with fans.

A blog post at Google-owned video-sharing website YouTube announced the acquisition of fflick, a service that mines Twitter messages for positive or negative reactions to films.

"There are great conversations happening all the time off of YouTube.com, and that commentary has the potential to enrich your experience when watching and discovering video on YouTube," said group product manager Shiva Rajaraman.

"As part of YouTube, the fflick team will help us build features to connect you with the great videos talked about all over the Web, and surface the best of those conversations for you to participate in."

California-based fflick was launched about six months ago by four former Digg employees. Google did not disclose the purchase price, which has been rumored to be about \$10 million.

SayNow, a startup founded in 2005 and based in the Silicon Valley city of Palo Alto, said it was "thrilled to announce that we have been acquired by Google."

"Through the Web, smartphones and even land lines, our products brought communities together through the power of voice," it added in a blog post Tuesday.

"And as Google has some of the best voice products in the world, we believe combining forces with the Google Voice team will let us innovate in new and unexplored areas."

SayNow claims more than 15 million users and thousands of celebrities for its products and platforms.

One application, SayNow Broadcast, lets brands and celebrities send and receive voice messages and chat one-on-one or in groups with fans.

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