

Yahoo! joins tablet craze with digital newsstand

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Livestand will launch by July with content from Yahoo! websites along with an undisclosed array of partners, chief product officer Blake Irving said on Thursday.

"The magazine knows what type of story you are reading; it privately knows where you are and where you've been," Irving said while briefing reporters on Yahoo!'s plans.

"What we are building is really device and operating system agnostic," he said. "Tablets allow beautiful execution, and we will bring it into smaller forms down to mobile phones and then port it to PCs (personal computers) and TV."

Livestand is intended as a platform for magazine or newspaper publishers big or small to deliver content matched with the interests of people who log into the Yahoo! online venue.

"It's a digital newsstand, your digital newsstand," Yahoo! vice president of mobile product management Irv Henderson said while demonstrating Livestand.

"The more you use this, the better it is at telling what you are interested in."

Livestand will focus on tablet computers at launch, with Yahoo! keen on the soon-to-be released Honeycomb operating system that Google is developing for those types of devices.

Digital magazines will be ad-supported, with Yahoo! sharing in the revenue with publishers, according to Henderson. The platform will eventually allow publishers other money-making options, including subscriptions, he said.

News Corp.'s Rupert Murdoch last week launched "The Daily," a digital newspaper created for Apple's iPad, in the latest move in his drive to get consumers to pay for news online.

Murdoch, an enthusiastic fan of the iPad, said there will be no print version of The Daily and it will only be available on Apple's touchscreen tablet computer for at least this year.

The publication will eventually be available on other tablets.

Murdoch is not the only publisher looking to the iPad for revenue, and most major US newspapers and magazines have created paid or free versions of their publications for the iPad.

Livestand will launch on iPad and Android Honeycomb tablets, according to Henderson.

"The PC is a great place to advertise, but you don't curl up with a PC," Irving said. "The tablet is something you curl up with."

People will be able to log into free Yahoo! accounts to view personalized publications in Livestand "libraries."

"This will be open to everyone," Henderson said. "We see a future where two people in a garage can publish a magazine with tools that we enable."

Yahoo! is hoping that newspapers suffering from declining real-world circulation will use Livestand to ramp-up digital distribution and online advertising opportunities.

Yahoo! said that while personalization is key to Livestand, it is being "savvy and super-sensitive" about letting people control their privacy.

Yahoo! chief executive Carol Bartz has been recreating the Sunnyvale, California-based company after being eclipsed by Google in the Internet search market.

Bartz has said that the goal is to be a digital media company that personalizes online content to each visitor.

Yahoo! made a deal to have Microsoft's Bing handle search queries at its websites, leaving Yahoo! to concentrate on tailoring content to the interests of its more than half billion users around the world.

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