

CBS to buy Web video guide Clicker, elevate exec

March 4 2011

(AP) -- CBS Corp. said Friday that it is buying the online video watching guide Clicker.com and making its co-founder the new president of CBS Interactive.

Jim Lanzone, who is CEO of Clicker Media Inc., will replace Neil Ashe, who announced a desire to leave the company in December. Ashe has served as president of CBS Interactive since CBS acquired CNET Networks Inc. in June 2008 for \$1.8 billion.

Prior to founding Clicker with \$8 million in capital in October 2008, Lanzone was the chief executive of Ask.com, where he is credited with turning around the search engine before its sale to IAC/InterActiveCorp in 2005.

Clicker said it has about 2.5 million users per month and indexes more than 1 million TV shows online. Some of those shows are free. In other cases, users are directed to other sites such as Amazon.com or Comcast Corp.'s XfinityTV service and prompted to rent or purchase shows or prove they are pay TV subscribers.

Terms of the Clicker purchase were not disclosed.

Lanzone said in an interview that Clicker aimed to boost its users to 30 million per month. He also said Clicker's technology in Web search, targeted ads and personalization would help CBS Interactive properties, which include TV.com, CBS.com, CBSSports.com, CBSNews.com,

Gamespot.com and CNET.com.

He noted that Clicker is a prominent application on Google Inc.'s Google TV online video platform. But he declined to wade into the debate between the search giant and broadcasters including CBS, which have prevented Google TV from accessing their online programs in a way that seamlessly puts online video onto TV sets in the living room.

Broadcasters have opposed such integration mainly because online video revenue is currently far less than what they receive from traditional business models, and the shift could jeopardize their existing revenue base.

Lanzone declined to say whether the number of ads online should be increased to match levels that are on TV.

Tracking firm comScore Inc. said CBS Interactive properties had 226 million unique visitors worldwide in January, up from 212 million a year earlier.

CBS shares were down 39 cents, or 1.6 percent, at close Friday at \$23.96.

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Citation: CBS to buy Web video guide Clicker, elevate exec (2011, March 4) retrieved 5 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-03-cbs-web-video-clicker-elevate.html>

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