

Ongo seeking full NY Times, adding partners

March 23 2011, by Chris Lefkow



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Kazim, in an interview with AFP, said Ongo, which was launched two months ago with backing from [USA Today](#), The [New York Times](#) and The [Washington Post](#), will add Reuters to its list of news sources on Thursday.

The veteran of Skype, [PayPal](#) and Apple said he was pleased with the progress made by Ongo since its launch in late January, but he declined to say how many paying subscribers have signed up for the service.

"We haven't put out any targets and it's way too early to be talking about what the subscriber numbers are looking like," he said. "Stay tuned."

A basic subscription to Ongo costs \$6.99 a month and gives a user USA Today, The Washington Post, 20 articles a day from The New York Times, as well as stories from Britain's [Financial Times](#), the Associated Press, and now Reuters.

For an additional fee, other publications are available including Britain's Guardian, The [Boston Globe](#), The Miami Herald and Slate.

USA Today publisher Gannett, the Post and Times have each invested \$4 million in Cupertino, California-based Ongo, which is advertising-free to provide what the Ongo CEO said is a less-cluttered reading experience.

Kazim said Ongo is hoping to provide its users with the complete New York Times now that the newspaper plans to begin charging next week for NYTimes.com.

"We're working with the Times to get the full version of the Times now that the paywall is out and they have pricing established," Kazim said. "Hopefully we can have the full version of the Times available on Ongo as well."

"What the pricing is still remains to be seen," he said.

The Times announced last week it will allow online readers to view 20 free articles a month at NYTimes.com before they will be asked to sign on to one of three digital subscription plans that cost from \$15 to \$35 a month.

Kazim said Ongo, which offers a free iPad application to subscribers,

was also in discussions with Apple about their recently announced one-click subscription service.

"If it's a great experience then we'll do it," he said.

Other publishers have criticised Apple's decision to take a 30 percent cut of each subscription but Kazim appeared nonplussed.

To the extent Apple is providing a payment service, download bandwidth and free marketing for applications "then the 30 percent is certainly valuable and worth it," he said.

Kazim, a former president of eBay's [Skype](#) subsidiary and head of marketing and business operations for PayPal, said Ongo has received positive feedback from users so far.

"They love the fact that the news is in one place," he said. "They love the fact that it's the best brands and has this great curation.

"They love the fact that there are no ads and distractions," he said.

Ongo is one of a number of experiments by US publishers faced with a steady decline in print advertising revenue and circulation.

In February, Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. launched The Daily, a digital newspaper created for Apple's iPad.

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