

Hulu jumps into original programming with Spurlock

August 3 2011, By RYAN NAKASHIMA , AP Business Writer

(AP) -- Hulu, the online video service that primarily shows reruns from major broadcasters, is getting into the business of original programming.

In the first of several projects, the company teamed up with Morgan Spurlock, the documentary maker who criticized McDonald's and fast-food lifestyles in "Super Size Me." They are creating "A Day in the Life" - six half-hour episodes where filmmakers follow around famous people such as billionaire Richard Branson.

Hulu's first foray into actual production follows a decision in March by another online [video service](#), Netflix, to buy rights to "House of Cards." [Netflix Inc.](#) ordered 26 hour-long episodes and plans to start showing them late next year.

Since its debut in 2008, [Hulu](#) has primarily shown reruns of TV programs provided by ABC, Fox and NBC, the broadcasters owned by Hulu's media company parents - The [Walt Disney Co.](#), News Corp. and [Comcast Corp.](#) Providence Equity Partners is also a minority owner. The current owners have put Hulu up for sale.

Andy Forssell, Hulu's senior vice president of content acquisition, said that Hulu isn't turning into a competitor of its network-owning parents. Shows will have a smaller budget and will be tailored to Hulu's online audience, he said.

"In most cases, it's going to be something that came from the traditional

network or studio partner, but ... for whatever reason is not getting made," Forssell said. "We can be the difference maker and get it done."

Forssell distinguished Hulu's strategy from Netflix's. He said "House of Cards" would have been made anyway and probably would have found a home on TV even if Netflix hadn't bought it. By contrast, Hulu is looking for things that don't compete with traditional video distributors.

Financial terms of the Spurlock deal weren't disclosed.

Forssell declined to comment on whether Hulu's decision to move into original programming was related to why it is now up for sale, but he said the discussion about making its own shows began about a year ago.

It was only last month that Hulu began a process to sell itself after an unsolicited takeover offer from an undisclosed bidder prompted its board to consider seeking other offers. Since then, companies including Google Inc., Apple Inc. and Yahoo Inc. have had discussions with Hulu.

Hulu has become one of the biggest purveyors of television shows and movies on the Internet through its free site and via an \$8-per-month subscription plan that gives users a deeper library of back episodes. The free site is available on computers. The subscription plan allows for viewing over a wide array of Internet-connected devices such as TVs, game consoles and mobile phones.

In February, CEO Jason Kilar said Hulu will have 1 million paying customers by the end of the year and generate nearly \$500 million in revenue, up from \$263 million in 2010. He has said the company is profitable.

©2011 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: Hulu jumps into original programming with Spurlock (2011, August 3) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-08-hulu-spurlock.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.