

Cable cos. shut down interactive ad venture

February 22 2012, By PETER SVENSSON , AP Technology Writer

(AP) -- The country's largest cable TV companies are shutting down the bulk of a venture that let viewers interact with TV ads, laying off 120 employees.

Four-year-old Canoe Ventures made it possible for viewers of eight cable networks, including AMC, Bravo and Discovery, to request information by mail from TV advertisers by pressing a button on the remote. It was accessible in 25 million households.

However, the technology didn't catch on with advertisers, prompting the shutdown.

The firm said Wednesday that it will close its New York headquarters and lay off most of its staff over the new few months.

Canoe will keep 30 to 35 employees in Denver to work on advertising systems for video-on-demand services. That includes services that cable companies are rolling out for viewing on tablet computers, phones and personal computers.

CEO Kathy Timko is among those laid off. She was replaced by former [Chief Technology Officer](#) Joel Hassell.

Canoe was set up by Comcast Corp., Cox Communications Inc., [Time Warner Cable](#) Inc., Charter Communications Inc., [Cablevision Systems Corp.](#) and Bright House Networks.

The shutdown of Canoe's interactive advertising system doesn't mean that type of ad will go away completely. Cable companies have their own interactive ad systems they use for small, local campaigns.

Early on, Canoe had a second mission: to make it possible to target cable-TV advertising down to the neighborhood level. That plan was scrapped in 2009 due to technical difficulties.

Wednesday's shutdown was reported earlier on the website of Multichannel News, a pay-TV trade magazine.

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