

Friends vie for bragging rights online at TopThat

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A woman uses free WiFi while sitting outside a cafe in California. A new website thinks friends are ready to swap online social network niceties for trash talk and competition in a virtual arena that challenges people to "TopThat."

Brandon Caruana thinks friends are ready to swap online social network niceties for trash talk and competition in a virtual arena that challenges people to "TopThat."

TopThat.com went public on Thursday with a website that taps into what friends are prone to do when they are together: see who is better at something.

"One thing missing from social networks right now is the competitive element," Caruana told AFP while providing an early look at his brainchild.

"In real life we have drinking games, billiards tables, dart boards...friends want to compete and it always turns into trash talk and [rivalry](#)."

The idea for a "competitive network" stemmed from a playful clash between Caruana and a friend regarding whose golfing technique was the best.

The golfing buddies took videos of their swings, posted the clips online and asked friends to judge.

The vote was split, so the rivals decided to let the public decide but they couldn't find an online venue for head-to-head combat. So, Caruana built one.

People can sign-up at TopThat.com for free and then post videos or pictures of anything from a strange sight on a subway to a Michael Jackson imitation or a sports feat and then throw down the gauntlet to the rest of the world.

"People are always asking for thumbs up or Likes, but no one is actually pitting friends against each other," he said.

"You may have 100 [friends](#) at [Facebook](#), but let us see who is best at doing what you all do. You can do anything you want; it's supposed to be fun."

Videos or images can be judged side by side, with website members voting on winners, or in "best of" contests in which winners are based on viewer rankings. Rating options are "Love it, neutral, or "Hate it."

TopThat boasts being synched with profiles at major social networks Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, [Google+](#) and Pinterest.

Revenue plans being considered at the website include letting companies sponsor competitions such as extreme sports or pay to run "American Idol" television show type contests crafted to promote products or brands.

Toronto native Caruana now lives in the Cayman Islands, where TopThat and its small team is based.

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