

YouTube takes original programming venture abroad (Update)

October 8 2012, by Raphael Satter



This Dec.31, 2008 file photo taken through a magnifying glass shows a video of German Chancellor Angela Merkel delivering her New Year's speech beside the Youtube channel of the German government. YouTube announced Monday, Oct. 8, 2012, that it is extending its original programming initiative into Europe, with at least 60 new video channels from media companies including Britain's BBC, London-based FreemantleMedia and the Netherlands' Endemol. The Google Inc.-owned video site said Monday it is launching more than 60 new video channels with content from Britain, Germany, France, and the United States. (AP Photo/dapd, David Hecker, File)

(AP)—YouTube is extending its original programming initiative into Europe, with at least 60 new video channels from media companies including Britain's BBC, London-based FreemantleMedia and the Netherlands' Endemol.

The Google Inc.-owned video site said Monday the new channels, with content from Britain, Germany, France, and the United States, will be in

addition to the 100 channels launched in the U.S. last year. Like the pre-existing American offerings, the European channels will have a mix of celebrity-oriented, niche, and established programs.

"Some of the channels are personality-driven, others are from partners who are totally passionate about a subject," Ben McOwen Wilson, who manages YouTube's northern European partnerships, said in a telephone interview ahead of the announcement.

He said the goal was to let content producers come up with something they couldn't deliver on TV.

The expansion into Europe marks another step in YouTube's move into the territory normally occupied by traditional media companies.

McOwen Wilson said the new channels would include programming from BBC Worldwide, the British public broadcaster's commercial arm; Endemol, the Dutch company behind the "Big Brother" reality television franchise; and FreemantleMedia, an arm of German media giant Bertelsmann responsible for "American Idol."

Factual programming includes "Euronews Knowledge," from rolling news channel Euronews and "Truthloader," by ITN Productions.

The channels will also count content from more niche players: the British offerings include co-productions such as "Guinness World Records: OMG" and "The Jamie Oliver Food Channel". Other British channels range from programs on drum and bass (Mixmag TV) to childcare (Netmums) and makeup tips, fashion, royalty, and more.

McOwen Wilson declined to say how much YouTube was investing in the European expansion. The Associated Press has previously reported that the company paid out \$100 million (€77 million) to producers when

it launched its U.S. channels in 2011, with advances reaching up to \$5 million per channel.

Google hopes that advertising revenue will cover the money in advance it paid the media companies to set up the channels. Any surplus money generated on top of the advance will be split between Google and the producers.

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