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Posted date: 8/8/2009

Online Game Site Operator Targets Soccer Moms, Young Guys

TECHNOLOGY: Casual games grow as advertisers shift to Web

By MICHAEL VOLPE

ORANGE COUNTY BUSINESS JOURNAL STAFF

An Irvine company has launched a second Web site with simple, diversionary games as part of its bid to grab a slice of what's seen as a growing market.

Future Ads LLC's PlaySushi.com is geared toward young guys looking to take a break from e-mail or otherwise pass the time while on the computer.

PlaySushi.com offers free, simple video games, including an early, arcade version of "Donkey Kong" and "3 Foot Ninja," where players become a tiny ninja battling enemy fighters.

The site is the second from Future Ads. Its first, Gamevance.com, gets about 12 million visitors a month, many of them younger women and soccer moms.

"More people are going online and using casual gaming as entertainment," said Jared Pobre, cofounder and chief executive of Future Ads.

The company's sites are part of what's known as the online casual games market, where advertisers pay to get their messages before players drawn by free games.

The market is expected to grow from an estimated \$280 million in 2008 to about \$1 billion in 2011, according to San Diego-based DFC Intelligence, a video game market research company.



PlaySushi.com site: Sony, Lowes, Experian among advertisers



Future Ads' rivals include some of the biggest names in technology, including Microsoft Corp., RealNetworks Inc. and Electronic Arts Inc., which has amassed more than a million subscribers to Pogo.com, its online casual game service.

Online casual games are a counterpart to Internet games geared toward hardcore players. Those include "World of Warcraft" by Irvine's Blizzard Entertainment Inc., part of Vivendi SA's Activision Blizzard Inc.

"World of Warcraft" has about 12 million subscribers worldwide who each pay about \$15 a month to play.

The market for casual games is growing during the downturn, according to Pobre.

"Casual gaming is kind of countercyclical," he said. "More people are going online and using casual gaming as entertainment."

As more people play, casual games have helped create a captive audience for advertisers.

NEXT > story continues...

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June 8-15, 2009



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Commissions paid to the area's top brokers are piquing the interest of many, in the Real Estate column

WEEKLY EDITION

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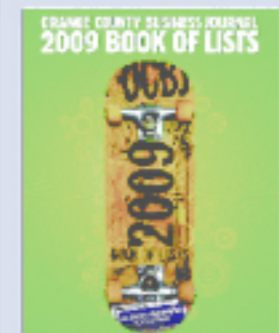
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