

IN BRIEF

Operative acquires Lemon Traffic

Ad operations software company Operative has acquired Lemon Traffic, the London-based trafficking division of Lemon Foundation, which was set up earlier this year by Joni Mallett and Matthew O'Riordan, owner of Lemon Foundation, Lemon Studios and e-Consultancy. The company will cease operating as Lemon Traffic and be folded into US-based Operative, which recently launched in the UK market. Lemon Traffic manages ad operations for UK publishers such as sports betting company Bet Internet. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

operative.com

Imano launches technology division

Digital agency and ecommerce specialist Imano has launched a technology division to offer businesses advice on using new Microsoft software. Imano Labs will help business make the most of new and emerging software, including the Windows Vista system, Office 2007, Exchange Server 2007 and Sharepoint 2007. Imano achieved its Microsoft Gold Certified Partner status last month.

imano.com

Linksys offers iPhone ahead of Apple rollout

Linksys, the network technology specialist and a division of Cisco Systems, has launched its wireless voice-over-IP handset, the iPhone. The announcement comes just weeks before Apple is expected to launch its own VoIP technology, which many analysts believed would use the iPhone name. Linksys handsets cost \$180 (£92) for a Skype phone and \$200 (£102) for one that can also be used for landline calls.

linksys.com

Ebuddy sets up office in London to drive push into UK IM market

BY ANDREW MCCORMICK

Web-based instant messaging service Ebuddy is making a major push into the UK by opening a London office and launching a mobile application.

The Amsterdam-based company, which claims almost 5m unique users a month, has hired a UK sales director, is looking for a London office and intends to employ a UK sales team in addition to its 25 HQ staff.

Ebuddy (formerly E-messenger) is a web-based instant messaging service that allows users to sign in to their MSN Hotmail, Yahoo! Messenger and AOL Messenger accounts online.

Ebuddy co-founder Jan-Joost Rueb said the interface is based on MSN



Messenger. The functionality is similar and advertisers can run campaigns in a similar format to MSN's service, such as branded emoticons.

He said that despite being based on MSN's service, Ebuddy's relationship with MSN is co-operative. Rueb has visited MSN's Seattle headquarters in order to hold talks with directors "at a strategic level", he said.

Ebuddy is also launching a mobile

application and has conducted advertising trials with mobile marketing agency Enpocket. It's also working with Screen Tonic and Ad Mob.

The company aims to offer an ad-funded mobile service in the UK but Rueb said it's more likely that the initial launch in February will be paid for by monthly subscription.

The service will be based off-portal and is currently in private beta testing with 500 users.

The UK is Ebuddy's second biggest market after Brazil, according to Rueb. He said it has hired a sales director from a major UK portal but wouldn't disclose further details.

ebuddy.com

TV owner Sparrowhawk Media offers mobile video messaging

By Andrew McCormick

Sparrowhawk Media, the owner of TV channels Hallmark, Movies 24 and Kidsco, has made a move into the mobile market by launching a video messaging service.

TxtBig! is a web- and mobile-based service that allows users to buy video messages to send to friends.

Messages, which include bespoke mobile content and footage from Sparrowhawk Media's archive, are available for 50p each.

The bespoke content includes football-themed messages aimed at people wanting to taunt friends who support rival teams.

Birthday and Christmas messages

are available to send, as well as clips spoofing celebrities. There are six categories available covering football banter, love and flirting, chat, occasions, insults and celebrities.

Recipients are sent a text message with a prompt to visit Sparrowhawk Media's WAP site where they can then view the video.

The service is available online and via TxtBig!'s WAP site. Sparrowhawk Media said it plans to market TxtBig! via online and mobile, but wouldn't reveal further details apart from that it plans to target 18-34-year-olds through its marketing.

wap.txtbig.com
txtbig.com

WebTrends tool automates search

By Will Cooper

Web analytics specialist WebTrends has launched an automated paid-search tool, called WebTrends Dynamic Search, following its acquisition of online ad company ClickShift earlier this month.

WebTrends Dynamic Search manages and tests search campaign variables, such as keyword bidding and landing page quality, across all search engines, automatically updating budgets accordingly.

"WebTrends Dynamic Search intends to aid marketers when allocating the right budgets by showing them results almost immediately," said WebTrends CEO Greg Drew.

webtrends.com

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