



MEDIA Business

THE MAGAZINE FOR BUSINESS PUBLISHING EXECUTIVES

Special Report

**VIRTUAL
EVENTS,
REAL
REVENUE**

Page 12

M&A UPTICK

Reports show
strong growth

Page 4

**BUDGETING
FOR 2011**

Publishers focus
on digital, events

Page 15

**PAPER PRICES
ON THE RISE**

Mills take steps
to reverse slide

Page 20

A supplement to BtoB



10

GREAT MEDIA SITES

PAGE 7



10 GREAT MEDIA SITES

Online products show commitment to digital future

By Marie Griffin

The 10 business media websites profiled here this year stand out within the categories *Media Business* has chosen, but the competition was tougher than it has ever been in the four years of this annual special report. In almost every category, one or more additional websites were very close contenders. ¶ The 60 nominees submitted to *Media Business* as potential Great Media Websites reflect the state of electronic media in the business media world today—and it's an incredibly positive picture. In spite of the long recession and slow recovery, most business media companies are seriously investing in the future, which is, without doubt, digital.

Contrary to reports that traditional media are destined for extinction in a digital media world, business publishers continue to crack the code for making money online. Even without counting website launches that one would expect to bring in new revenue, almost 20% of the remaining nominations referenced successful new advertising products and opportunities.

For example, the three sites nominated by Advantage Business Media—ECNmag.com, PharmPro.com and RDmag.com—have added new cost-per-lead advertising opportunities. SupplyFrame.com (SupplyFrame Media) totally changed its advertising model to what Jeff Curie, VP-marketing, described as “dry as bone, without pretty graphics

or flashy animations that performs exceptionally well for our advertisers.”

As they see signs that digital media advertising is becoming a solid, sustainable business, business media companies are investing in their websites.

More than one-third of the nominated websites were refreshed, redesigned or relaunched in 2009 or 2010. In addition to the site recognized in the relaunch category, Greener World Media's Greenbiz.com, other recent relaunches included 1105 Media's THE Journal (thejournal.com) and WindowsITPro.com; the American Bar Association's ABAJournal.com; IDG Communications' CIO.com; and M2Media 360's Specialty-Coffee.com.

In addition to Focus.com, recognized in the launch category, nine other websites were submitted as launches, including Canon Communications' www.mddionline.com (for Medical Device and Diagnostic Industry), Jobson Medical Information's SightNation.com social networking community, Junta42's ContentMarketingInstitute.com, and Northstar Travel Media's OfficialCruiseGuide.com. Other sites were launched as sub-brands, including IDG Computerworld extensions IT Health Care, IT Finance and IT Government, and Ziff Davis Enterprise's labs.eweek.com, an offshoot of eweek.com.

The business media evolution from print to digital is also clearly reflected in the fact that half the sites profiled in this feature were born on the Internet, never having had print counterparts. These include Lawnsite.com from Moose River Media and Light Reading from United Business Media's TechWeb—two companies with strong print portfolios—as well as Focus Inc.'s Focus.com, Greener World Media's Greenbiz.com and FireRescue1.com from the Praetorian Group, all of which come from companies that have never published print magazines.

The fact that one in six of the Great Sites nominees made recent investments in video platforms, equipment and people—often by making video production a new responsibility for editors—indicates that business publishers are optimistic about the economy. That's because the business media's video investment has historically matched the economy in upward or downward motion.

Finally, editors are learning how to leverage the power of social networks,

particularly Facebook and Twitter, not only to engage audiences but also to drive traffic to their websites. The *Financial Times*, for example, now has more than 20,000 fans on Facebook and 150,000 Twitter followers; FireRescue1 boasts more than 67,000 Facebook fans.

To further take advantage of conversa-

tions and connections their staffs are facilitating on the Facebook and Twitter platforms, several nominated sites have Twitter feeds or Facebook modules on their own websites, including 1105's ohsonline.com (Occupational Health & Safety), CIO.com, Jobson's VisionMonday.com and UBM's EE Times Group. □

METHODOLOGY

To put together the 10 Great Media Websites special report, *Media Business* issued a call for nominations in our weekly e-newsletter and sent e-mail messages directly to contacts at business media companies. For the first time this year, entries were taken exclusively via an online nomination form.

Business media companies put forward a record number of 60 websites for review in the following categories: technology, trade, general business, portal, launch, relaunch, paid subscription, video/multimedia and Web 2.0, which was divided into tech and trade categories.

A screener went through each site to evaluate its appearance, organization and navigation; search functionality; video and other multimedia content; and community/social media (Web 2.0) features. One litmus test for Web 2.0 elements was recent and regular participation by users.

The final selection of websites was made by a committee of *Media Business* editors. Within each category, sites were compared with one another according to criteria appropriate to the given category. Sites that were selected in the 2008 and 2009 Great Websites reports were eliminated from consideration in the category in which they were recognized previously.



TECH

LIGHT READING

URL: www.lightreading.com

Company: United Business Media's TechWeb

Average monthly unique visitors: 300,000

Source: Omniture

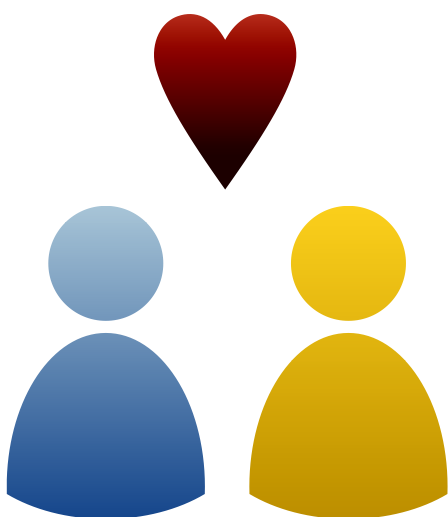
A redesign of the Light Reading website in February brought two former sub-brands under the Light Reading umbrella with the renaming of Digital Cable News as Light Reading Cable and Unstrung as Light Reading Mobile.

Light Reading, a unit of United Business Media's TechWeb, serves the \$3 trillion worldwide telecommunications market, and the industry's global character is reflected at the top of the site's home page, where links to the home pages for LR Europe and LR Asia appear alongside those for LR Cable and LR Mobile. "Many of the developing markets are skyrocketing, and there is great interest in them here," said Joseph Braue, senior VP of the Light Reading Communications Network.

Another differentiator for Light Reading, he said, is the integration of content from Light Reading's two research units: Heavy Reading and Pyramid Research. Analyst bloggers from both units are featured on the site's home page, as are summaries of research reports that can be purchased.

Video, known as LR TV, is another signature. "Our editors have been very successful in integrating video production into our everyday work process through interviews, documentaries and video blogs, as well as covering our live events before, during and after," Braue said. □

Love Connection.



Advertiser

Reader

Easily turn your magazine into a digital experience and connect with your readers and advertisers in a whole new way. You'll discover where your readers are spending their time, what matters most to them, and how to give them more of exactly what they are looking for.

Mozaic's unique tracking of editorial, video and advertising engagement provides you with the information you need to take your relationships with readers and advertisers to the next level.



Schedule a demo today at www.hallmarkmozaic.com or contact Joel Besner at 323-782-6959.

Five-year-old FireRescue1 has made great strides in the past year. Registered users are up more than 27% year-over-year; since November, when the site began to use Omniture metrics, unique visitors have increased 21% and page views, 9%.

Meanwhile, FireRescue1 has amassed 71,000 fans on Facebook. "We really got serious about Facebook around a year ago, adding depth to our fan page, posting with greater frequency and pushing sign-ups on FireRescue1 and in our e-newsletters," said Jon Hughes, editorial director for the site's parent, the Praetorian Group.

"We're now adding an average of 6,000 new fans a month, and we've seen a clear impact on traffic. In June, Facebook was our third largest external referral site, at



9%." On May 31, FireRescue1 added a Facebook "like" button to the top of all articles, which automatically adds a link to the user's Facebook wall.

"FireRescue1's success reflects the

TRADE

FIRE RESCUE1

URL: www.firerescue1.com

Company: Praetorian Group

Average monthly unique visitors: 272,000

Source: Omniture

growing interest among firefighters in sharing information and finding a community online that captures the spirit of the firehouse," said Alex Ford, Praetorian Group CEO. Community features are prevalent on the site, including a blog called the Kitchen Table that emulates get-togethers where firefighters share stories in their firehouses. □

With a brand that dates back 112 years, the U.K.-based *Financial Times* continues to break new ground in the digital realm. As of March, FT.com had more than 126,000 paid subscribers, an increase of 15% year-over-year. By



May, the steadily growing registered user base had reached 2.3 million, up a whopping 138% year-over-year.

The brand is executing a twofold strategy that FT.com Managing Director Rob Grimshaw termed "a direct relationship with the audience." The brand is striving to generate more money from its content, with the goal across all platforms and geographic regions of having content revenue overtake total advertising by 2012. FT.com has also begun testing a micropayment option in which users can pay to view unlimited content for one day. Users who want to view a limited amount of content for

free—currently 10 articles per month—must register.

"Registered users are incredibly valuable, and the information we gain from them has turbocharged other areas of our business," Grimshaw said. "It drives the advertising side because we have a fundamentally different offering [from free and non-registration sites], and we reoriented our marketing to focus on using the knowledge we have about our registered users to power marketing." □

GENERAL BUSINESS

FINANCIAL TIMES

URL: www.ft.com

Company: Financial Times Ltd.

Paid digital subscribers:

126,281 (March 2010)

Registered users: 2.3 million

(May 2010)

Source: Self-reported

Steve Reiss, VP-publishing director of Vance Publishing's Salon and Wood Interiors divisions, joined Vance 16 months ago. Since then, he has presided over a complete redesign of the Modern Salon website as a portal that provides online communities for each step of a beauty professional's career, including BeautySchoolAdvisor.com for consumers looking to enter the industry. On the b-to-b side, ModernSalon.com is geared to professional stylists; SalonToday.com, to owners and managers; and FirstChair.com, to beauty school students.

First Chair is now on the Modern Salon platform; Salon Today is due to be integrated this summer. The single platform will give all the brands a consistent look, feel and navigation.

ModernSalon.com was relaunched last fall with a night-and-day change in look and features. "Our audience is artistic and creative," Reiss said. "We need to be a bit more eclectic and visual than traditional business sites and feature what our users have identified as most critical—inspiration, education and collaboration."

With a black background and hot-pink accents, ModernSalon.com prominently showcases bold fashion images from world-renowned stylists. Modern Salon TV, which debuted in January, provides regular video updates from the editorial staff and industry contributors. Interactive features include blogs, feedback mechanisms for all content, and Facebook and Twitter conversations. □



PORTAL

MODERN SALON

URL: www.modernsalon.com

Company: Vance Publishing

Average monthly unique

visitors: 50,000 b-to-b

Source: Google Analytics