

Adult Content Producers Eye PSP, iPod

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The recent addition of video playback to the iPod's features and the launch of the video-capable PlayStation Portable have several major producers of adult content eyeing the platforms as a new way to reach consumers, but opinion is divided as to whether they represent a novelty or a serious business opportunity.

There's no doubt that demand for adult material is huge -- the well-attended Adult Video News Expo in Las Vegas last week proved the industry is vibrant. The new platforms offer a more personal way to consume that content however, just as with television or movie producers, a viable business model has yet to emerge, according to industry insiders interviewed at the exhibition.

Some adult film production companies, like Digital Playground, are offering a range of material for iPod and PSP users and early indications are that there seems to be demand, at least for free content.

"Downloading images for the iPod is small now, but I'm sure it's going to get bigger, said Ali Joone, founder and director at Digital Playground, adding that "it's great advertising."

The company is offering a podcast feed of trailers for its movies and has already signed up 60,000 subscribers for the service, he said. Scenes from movies are also available for download to iPods for US\$2.99 each, although it's too early to measure their success as the service has only been live for a few weeks, Joone said.

How big the market becomes might depend a lot on how much time and energy is spent producing content specifically for the devices, said Avi Bitton, chief technology officer at Wicked Pictures.com.

"The important thing is production," Bitton said. It will be difficult to shoehorn existing content into small packages for the handheld players and so companies serious about the market will have to consider custom content. Wicked will launch a new Web site in the coming weeks and plans to offer iPod-targeted content, he said.

"The difference in whether it will be a fad or something useful will be in production," said Bitton. "I wouldn't want to see a feature film on [an iPod.]"

One issue that the sites might have to contend with is how to keep the material out of the hands of minors. Usually all that is required is a small lie, a click on the 'Enter' button that assures the site that 'I am an adult' over the age of 18, to access a site and get the podcast address. Once loaded into iTunes or some other podcasting software the adult content is automatically delivered.

Parents seeking to keep their kids away from Internet pornography can obtain software, such as Net Nanny, at <http://www.netnanny.com/> or Safe Eyes at <http://www.safeeyes.com/>, to block such Web sites from home computers.

Adultrental.com, a movies on-demand-service, is planning a free podcast of trailers but requires users to input a credit card number to prevent casual access by minors.

"It's not going to be a large market but we want to offer content in every format the customer wants," said Dan Kosmayer, founder of Adultrental.com. "But you're not going to watch a clip on the way to work. ...It might be a novelty," he said.

At present, it's difficult to forecast the size of the potential market. Some Japanese content producers have already begun offering complete adult movies on the PSP's proprietary UMD (Universal Media Disc) format in an attempt to stimulate the market.

Sales to date haven't been bad, but volumes aren't near those of DVD or VHS copies of the same movies, said Yumiko Okazaki, a spokeswoman for Tokyo-based HMP KK, which is one of three companies to have released adult content on UMD. The company plans to continue releasing UMD format titles this year, she said.



The discs are also being offered for export overseas by JList.com, a Japan-based Web site that specializes in Japan-only products. It's founder, Peter Payne, said the company is selling around 500 of the UMD-based movies to customers worldwide each month at a price of between US\$30 and US\$55 per movie.

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