

Veoh's Vexing Visitor Numbers

By BRAD STONE | July 15, 2007, 9:35 AM | Comments (3)

Here's a little puzzle about online video sharing site [Veoh.com](#), whose new video player, VeohTV, I wrote about in [today's Bright Ideas column](#). Traffic to the San Diego based company's Web site, which is backed by Time Warner and former Disney chairman Michael Eisner, significantly trails online rivals like [YouTube](#) and [MySpace TV](#). But the site is seeing some impressive, and slightly mysterious, growth. According to the company, the site now gets 14.3 million visitors a month, up from 4.4 million since February, a 223 percent rise in traffic.

So what are people finding at Veoh.com that they are not getting at YouTube and other sites?

Dmitry Shapiro, Veoh's chief executive, said he does not know the precise cause but credited good word of mouth, the high-quality of video on the service, and a six-month old program that takes the video that users upload to Veoh.com and copies it onto other video sharing sites, like YouTube and MySpace. So content creators can post to Veoh.com and be sure they are covering all their other bases as well.

But there may be a little more to it than that.

Representatives at several major media companies I talked to, including one from television network NBC, say that Veoh.com has been among the least aggressive video sharing sites in fighting copyrighted content. The site does two things that passively and perhaps unintentionally encourage piracy: it imposes no time limits on uploaded clips. And unlike sites such as YouTube and MySpace, it does not currently use digital fingerprinting technology that automatically examines the audio tracks of video files to identify copyrighted material. (Mr. Shapiro said the company was working with the MPAA to find an effective filtering technology.)

As a result, these media companies say, Veoh.com has become a haven for pirated content just as sites like YouTube.com have gotten tough on removing copyrighted clips. To demonstrate this claim, NBC pointed me toward [a page](#) for its sitcom "The Office" on [a German Web site](#) known for linking to other sites with pirated material. The page contains pointers to six episodes, with three being hosted on Veoh.com (the other three were on French video sharing site DailyMotion.com). The files on Veoh are given nonsensical names, but people in the know can find them by visiting this German link site.

Mr. Shapiro says that Veoh complies with the DMCA by taking down files when rights-holders complain. But understandably, given this linking scheme, many networks say they do not even know what to look for.

If Veoh is serious about striking deals with the networks to bring high quality versions of their programming onto VeohTV, it is probably going to have to tighten its piracy controls on Veoh.com. At the very least, then we will know its impressive visitor growth is legitimate.

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- July 17, 2007
4:20 pm

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Brad – you obviously understand this industry better than any other reporter/blogger. Veoh are “all in”, praying not to get sued too hard, while letting users share tons of copyrighted stuff. You didn't mention the “pom-factor” which is another great driver of traffic. Veoh has quite a bit of that (try to turn the family filter off). I'm not saying that R-Rated clips should be banned completely (like in youtube), but pure smut like i see in veoh is another thing..
— *John Bandel*
- September 8, 2007
11:49 am

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Excelent information. Best wishes from New York.
— *Rebekah*
- October 8, 2007
7:39 pm

[Link](#)

Yes Veho needs to do something with copyright material, But the format on the site can not be beaten by any one I have used over the past 8 years. and unlike other video site, my video talk shows can run for more then 5 or 10 min like other free video sites. Far easier to use and upload video. a Great site for any Video Makers.
— *casey*

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UMG Recordings, Inc. v. Shelter Capital Partners LLC, No. 09-55902 archived on December 22, 2011

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