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Singapore firms tap social, 3D video as differentiators

By Jamie Yap, ZDNet Asia on November 17, 2011 (2 weeks ago)

Summary

Fashion social network and video technology services provider find their respective niches to differentiate themselves in market, earning industry recognition on Red Herring Asia Top 100 list.

Topics

roger yuen, industries, technology sector, singapore, asia, roberto mariani, social software and tagging, technology, science and technology, internet

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SINGAPORE--A fashion-focused social networking site and an entertainment media company specializing in 2D and 3D imaging and video technologies have found success in their respective niches, distinguishing their services in a highly competitive high-tech marketplace.

Their efforts have also earned them a spot on this year's Red Herring Asia Top 100 list, which recognizes the most innovative tech companies worldwide.

While there are plenty of fashion sites in the market today, "few are truly social" as Clozette, said Roger Yuen, founder and CEO of the local startup.

Launched in August 2010, the fashion social networking site allows users to create, curate and share their own online closet of fashion items and styles with like-minded friends. It currently has 80,000 unique visitors and generates 750,000 pageviews per month, Yuen told ZDNet Asia.

The fashion social network and e-commerce site aims to be a vibrant regional "social destination" and community for women that transcends age, language, cultural and geographical barriers, he said.

At the same time, the Clozette platform allows for the mining of social behaviors and user patterns to better connect them to like-minded individuals and receive information on similar interests and offers from brands and retailers, he said.

That means companies can get a "better sense of users' social behavior beyond just 'Likes'", apart from having a platform to engage and build digital communities, he added.

"Analytics can be simple or complex but most importantly, it must help brand owners and advertisers better manage their business," Yuen said. For example, he said Clozette ran a four-week contest with a jeweler to launch a new collection of over 60 charms in Southeast Asia, where users can create their own styles with the designs. Some 4,000 users voted or commented on 400 entries, providing valuable data that could then pinpoint the most popular charms by various factors such as country or age group.

The possibilities from applying analytics on data gathered via Clozette are "endless", he noted. In the case of the jeweler, the data helped the brand decide which charms to showcase in its window displays, which to use in print or other visual advertising, and how it should target certain age groups across different countries, Yuen explained.

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The company is currently focused on international expansion with regional partnerships beyond Singapore, as well as on accelerating acquisition of users, he revealed. In November, it collaborated with Glam Media as a technology partner and content publisher for the latter's expansion into Southeast Asia, called Glam Asia. The U.S.-based women-focused online media company also operates other Asian versions such as Glam Japan and Glam Korea.

Tapping video's ubiquity

While Clozette focuses on fashion, Skydoor works on another type of visuals--video. Founded in October 2008, the imaging and video technology company provides online tools that businesses and consumers can use to create, personalize and edit multimedia content in 2D and 3D styles.

According to its CEO and founder Roberto Mariani, Skydoor was formed because he realized that it was "very difficult [for users] to search for relevant information and learn the how-to of creating imaging applications".

Looking to plug this gap, the Singapore company aims to provide imaging knowledge, software and tools to all developers, designers and consumers alike, Mariani said. Through Skydoor, consumers will be able to insert their own content into 3D videos to share with their friends, while brands and advertisers can insert adverts into videos that are viewed among their consumers' networks, he noted.

He pointed out that this marks a new and innovative way to monetize user-generated content as well as drive viral video marketing, considering the ubiquity of devices armed with cameras and the rise of multimedia content such as video.

Mariani said: "As technologists, we believe that most technological innovation comes from interconnecting different fields. For Skydoor, we interconnect vision and graphics to develop great tools...that allow users to rapidly create personalized content and broadcast it everywhere."

He stressed that 3D imaging technology was "just one facet" of the company's specialization. Skydoor also provides imaging and video technologies for projects of various kinds including image recognition for biometrics, he added.


Moving forward, the company will be working with B2B (business-to-business) organizations to license its video production and personalization engine, he revealed.

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