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Voxmedia embraces, builds community for "masses media"

HONOLULU, HAWAII (April 1, 2005) -- Focusing on the people behind the technology, a new site looks to fostering conversation and collaboratively building a resource for blogging, podcasting, and videoblogging - media that allow individuals to speak out and connect with the world.

Voxmedia.org is now available as a place where people who share a passion for expression can easily interact with each other, and together collect and share information on what they do and how they do it, in the hopes of helping others join them in the exploding universe of "masses media," or media by and for the masses.

"Text, audio and video are different media, and at first blush it might look like people are doing very different things with each of them," notes Voxmedia founder Ryan Ozawa. "How do you reconcile the grandma in Austin who blogs pictures of her cats with the pundit in D.C. who tracks scandals and takes on congress? Rather than looking at what divides, I'm really inspired by what's common to it all: using your voice, reaching out, and making connections."

Voxmedia.org spans the natural trio of narrative forms -- words, sounds, and moving pictures -- and has only three simple offerings directed at each: A message board, or forum, for discussion and debate, a wiki, or publicly and collaboratively edited information resource, and a newswire that tracks noteworthy articles or essays on what it all might mean.

"Voxmedia.org is certainly nothing revolutionary, and it's not like the world needs another discussion board," Ozawa concedes. "But I think online communities that span different arts and tools, but share fundamental and natural interests like personal expression, can do wonderful things -- or at the very least, have a hell of a great time."

He notes that while bloggers number in the millions and already obsessively interact, podcasters and videobloggers are relatively scarce and are often scattered among different sites. The latter two groups, Ozawa figured, might benefit from an open and unaffiliated venue.

"At least until there are enough of them to have the inevitable identity crisis and split off into factions," he says.

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The wiki, meanwhile, could grow into something great, Ozawa says.

"Like many others, I started off trying to create this great encyclopedia of podcasting... but I found early on that one person really couldn't do it," he explains. "A wiki lets anyone add their little piece of the puzzle, their specific expertise, to benefit the whole. If you know about bitrates and encoding, you can just fix the article yourself."

Voxmedia.org launched April 1, but is not an April Fool's prank. The forum can be accessed at voxmedia.org/forum, the wiki at voxmedia.org/wiki, and the news blog at voxmedia.org/wire. There are RSS feeds for the forum and blog -- for everything, as well as for each individual track: text, audio, and video.

Ozawa is a web developer and obsessive community builder in Honolulu who got his start in dial-up BBSes in the '80s and USENET in the '90s and hasn't stopped since. He's kept an online journal since 1996, and started podcasting earlier this year. He very much enjoyed writing this press release in the third person.

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