Raketu Tries Combining IPTV, Social Networking

A new application from Raketu Communications aims to integrate Internet Protocol television with social networking.

Fred O'Connor, IDG News Service
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A new application from Raketu Communications Inc. aims to integrate IPTV (Internet Protocol television) with social networking, two of the Internet's hip technologies.

Raketu.tv, which became available in beta mode on Tuesday, delivers IPTV and video on demand (VOD) programming. The social-networking component factors in when using the IPTV or VOD services with Raketu's other communication and entertainment application, which shares the company's name. Raketu, which debuted last September, aims to integrate separate communication and entertainment programs that should be combined into one client, said Raketu CEO Greg Parker. It includes VOIP (voice over IP), instant messaging and file-sharing.

While simultaneously using other applications and Web sites accomplishes the same tasks as Raketu, Parker said that his software eases communicating and information gathering by combining several services into one program. Users no longer have to use multiple programs and Web sites to accomplish the same task that one application provides, said Parker.

For example, friends could use Raketu to watch a video on surfing while discussing it via VOIP or instant messaging. The friends could then use a travel search feature in Raketu that locates airfares in an effort to plan a surfing vacation.

"We're a bit of YouTube, a bit of MySpace, a bit of Joost, a bit of different social-networking technologies," said Parker. "We feel that we do a better job of integrating these services."

Parker also noted that Raketu differs from other P-to-P (peer-to-peer) services, like Skype and Joost, by not using super nodes, which link multiple computers together to transfer data.

"This means you don't use your bandwidth to help other people get content, which means users get a more secure and faster service," said Parker.

Media Global Intertainment will provide the IPTV content. As of Tuesday, the service offered five stations, including Cartoon TV and BBC Parliament. VOD content will come from Klikvu.com, which offers shows in categories such as extreme wrestling, soccer and sports. VOD selections offered four categories as of Tuesday, including action sports and documentary.

The VOD offerings are pay-per-view, which is how the media service will generate revenue, according to Parker.

Social networking, which permits users to find friends and create and manipulate online content, has increased in popularity with the advent of Web sites such as MySpace.com, which News Corp. purchased for US$580 million in 2005, and Google Inc.'s YouTube video-sharing site.

While Internet video is seen as playing a major role in the Web's development, the availability of content is crucial to this service. YouTube has been sorting out charges of copyright violations from entertainment companies whose content users illegally uploaded to the site. Meanwhile, Joost, an IPTV company launched by Skype Ltd.'s founders, announced Tuesday that it entered a deal with Viacom International Inc. to offer its television shows and feature films

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