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Company provides video streaming for short films

MotionFlicks hosts diverse services for filmmakers

By Sudheer Apte

BOSTON — Jay Tuli's interest in the arts is a hobby. When Tuli, a Boston native and resident, attended Georgetown University's business school, he majored in finance and management technology. After graduation he worked in J.P. Morgan in New York City.

But Tuli said he had "always been interested" in the performing arts. At Georgetown University, he acted in plays as part of the "Arth" theatre troupe. In early 2005, back in Boston, he launched "MotionFlicks," a web-based distributor of streaming video for short independent films, along with a partner, Bradley Wynn. Among other things, Wynn evaluates the best content for MotionFlicks.

Media pundits think that on-demand video will be the future of the World Wide Web, once everyone has unlimited communication capacity. But in the meantime, there are many Web sites that provide video streams. What makes MotionFlicks different from other sites like Atom Films and iFilm? Tuli says, "We offer many services for the independent filmmaker: digital post production, music score, production insurance, and DVD production."



Tuli

"These things are examples of tangential services to help keep the lights on. The online streaming videos we present will one day do well, but it takes time. Slowly, to build a quality library, distribute it correctly, and get advertisers. We have been doing all of that, but as I said it's a slow and steady process."

"We launched MotionFlicks in August 2005, with practically no marketing," Tuli says, "but we already have about 700 registered members. We are getting over 5,000 views at the Web site every month."

Tuli hosts the Web site using special software developed for him by a company in India. It allows him to upload video, add content, and manage the Web site. Besides independent films, he also hosts past programs of Aap Ka Manoranjan Television.

One of MotionFlicks's partners, Rob McLain, who performs video conversion and DVD encoding for filmmakers, said that quality of the video is a distinguishing characteristic of the Web site. Paying "premier account" customers get a higher quality version of the video than casual visitors.

For the filmmakers who post their videos, the "tangential services" are the main offering and help them get exposure and distribution for their independent films.

A popular service is online fulfillment, where people can order a DVD online, and the video is replicated and shipped to them. Comedian Dan Nainan, who regularly performs stand-up routines throughout the United States, is one of Tuli's satisfied customers. "When I was performing in Georgetown University's Gaston Hall in March, 2005," says Nainan, "Jay came up to me and asked if I would be interested in having my performance posted on his Web site."

Nainan put his video up on MotionFlicks, and he is appreciative of the results. "If you are trying to get your message out there, many Web sites can host your video. The issue with it is that if it becomes popular, its bandwidth can quickly exceed your allotment," Nainan says.

MotionFlicks, unlike a simple hosted Web site, streams the video to interested visitors regardless of the bandwidth. "I already have gotten over 430 hits for my video, and through them I have sold a few DVDs as well," he says. "The next step for me is to build advertising awareness in the desi community. It makes a big difference if I can get my video out there so people can watch it. It's really a wonderful service that Jay has made available," Nainan says.

For more information about Motion Flicks, please visit www.motionflicks.com.