

TimeWarner

KEYWORDS

SEPTEMBER 2007

NEW LINE TURNS 40!

BILL NELSON LOOKS AHEAD AT HBO
TIME WARNER CABLE ENHANCES TELEVISION
TYLER PERRY'S *HOUSE* FINDS A HOME AT TBS

Co-Chairmen and
Co-CEOs Bob Shaye, left,
and Michael Lynne

<https://infocenter.twi.com/go/keywords>

The newly designed AOL Sports site features links to *The FanHouse*, AOL's top sports blog, on the left. On the right side, consumers can scan headlines and find links to breaking news on sites outside the AOL network.

AOL ADJUSTS SITES; PUTS USERS IN CHARGE

Redesigned, bloglike websites give people lots of stuff to do. If they view or click on ads, so much the better / Justin Neely

The television never talks back. When dining-room pundits debate TV reporters, or couch-sitting quarterbacks jeer at referees, they get no response. And in spite of its great promise to be different, the Web often seems just as one-sided when it comes to mainstream information delivery. Not so with the newly launched versions of AOL News (*news.aol.com*) and AOL Sports (*sports.aol.com*).

The new AOL News site, unveiled at the end of June, reflects a commitment to offer an unprecedented level of user control and participation. A bloglike list of stories (with the most recent additions at the top) programmed by AOL's editorial team occupies the center column of the home page. Media assets are chosen for each story to provide the most compelling and engaging interactive experience. It's not unusual to find photo galleries, video clips and interactive polls one after another, all accessible without clicking to another location.

"Unlike any other home page on any other news site, on our home page you can consume multiple stories, in multiple ways, in a single-screen experience," says Lewis D'Vorkin, Senior Vice President, AOL News and Sports.

Both AOL News and AOL Sports feature a similar three-column design, with the center column devoted to AOL programming and two others focused on what D'Vorkin calls the "user behavior voice" and the "industry voice." On the left side of the page, story comments, rankings and even blog posts are organized to give consumers direct access to the choices and opinions of fellow users. For AOL Sports, the left side features links to AOL's top sports blog, *The FanHouse*. On the right side, consumers can scan headlines and find links to breaking news on sites outside the AOL network. The right side of AOL News also features links to posts from AOL's News Bloggers, while AOL Sports fans can find exclusive columns by top sportswriters.

The guiding principle of the ongoing redesign of all of AOL's main channels—news

and sports are just the beginning—is to listen to what consumers want from an online experience and provide it quickly. "We're trying to stay one step ahead of the consumers, which we think will put us two steps ahead of the competition," explains Bill Wilson, Executive Vice President, AOL Programming.

To that end, AOL incorporates user participation wherever possible, and turns it into a valuable (and free) source of research about consumer preferences—while scrupulously guarding user privacy. The information gathered informs editorial decisions and improves AOL's ability to market content and drive frequent, improved iterations of AOL's products.

For AOL consumers, the power of self-expression offers a sense of product ownership and keeps them coming back. And having more to do on each page means users spend more time on the site.

The redesign, D'Vorkin explains, is an integral part of AOL's ad-revenue-driven business model. "The more page views, the more time spent, the more ad impressions you serve up," he says, "the greater the likelihood that the user will either see those ad impressions or click on them." ■