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Glam Media vs. iVillage: Who's #1?

by Les Luchter, Tuesday, Jun 19, 2007 6:00 AM ET

IT'S LIKE COMPARING "APPLES TO cauliflower," said iVillage President Deborah Fine, as Glam Media launched a media campaign telling advertisers that it "has just overtaken iVillage to become #1 for women in the U.S."

Yes, acknowledged Glam Media Chairman and CEO Samir Arora, the two companies have different business models, but it's apples versus apples as "comScore characterizes us in the same space."

And so Glam Media yesterday was touting its lead over iVillage in comScore MediaMetrix's May rankings of "Women's Web Properties"--#1 with 17.3 million unique visitors, followed closely by the NBC Universal property with 17.1 million uniques. No other women's property had even half of those numbers, according to the research.

And, three days after comScore reported Glam Media as the ninth fastest-growing Web property, with a 42% increase from April to May, Glam released year-over-year growth figures, showing it as the largest gainer among comScore's top 100 Web properties--a staggering 3,638% jump from May, 2006, when it had only 463,000 unique visitors. No other top 100 site had even a tenth as much growth. Glam was the #42 property overall in May--followed right behind, of course, by iVillage.

"We're very flattered by the attention to us by these guys," said iVillage's Fine, but "we position them as a synthetic network of over 300 different sites. She noted that Glam.com itself has only about 1 million unique visitors, and "the true comparison of their numbers should be against [other] ad networks."

Fine said that iVillage is a trusted community destination, featuring original content, and that its own unique visitors are up 2 million year-over-year. And indeed, while the fledgling Glam Media placed both full-page and quarter-page ads in yesterday's *New York Times*, the 12-year-old iVillage ran its own full-page ad there, declaring itself "THE largest destination of interested and interesting women."

The timing of iVillage's ad campaign was "ironic," Fine said, having been scheduled to celebrate last week's [news](#) that display ad revenues in the first quarter rose 46% year-over-year.

For his part, Arora reported "100% growth sequentially quarter after quarter" in ad revenues. He pointed out that unlike other Web properties that have seen exponential traffic growth, such as YouTube and My Space, "our business model since day one has been to encourage brand advertisers to embrace the Web."

One of the reasons for the current media blitz, however, is to start spreading the word publicly. "Glam has been under the radar," Arora said. "We've been very focused on building the business. We haven't come up for air."

As for iVillage--"we respect them...At the same time, as of today, Glam does have a wider reach for the audience of women than iVillage." He added that it was "quite a task to overtake a property that has been number one for nine years." (Glam launched less than two years ago.)

"Congratulations," offered Fine. "We're proud to have held the #1 position for a very long time." But, she added, iVillage has "no direct competitors."



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