

## Internet Media Business Report™

### CBS Interactive offering "Top Model" mobile game

CBS Interactive and Hong Kong-based Artificial Life, Inc. will launch the first avatar-based mobile game tied to a major TV show for The CW's "America's Next Top Model." The mobile game, which lets avatars -- or virtual characters -- live on user's cell phones, will be available in the U.S. immediately and shortly thereafter in Hong Kong and in many other countries as well. In the U.S., the game will be available to Cingular and Sprint users depending on their cell phone. These consumers can download the game by going to either [www.cwtv.com](http://www.cwtv.com), [www.botme.com](http://www.botme.com) or by sending a text message to a five-digit number advertised via commercials on The CW network. As part of the agreement with CBS Interactive, Artificial Life will develop several mobile games over a license period of two years. To play the "America's Next Top Model" game, players select a virtual representation of his/her favorite and least favorite contestants from the show. The main task is for users to interact with these selected virtual characters -- known as avatars -- as if they were real participants of the TV show. This means players must foster their avatar's modeling career through training and various challenges. The selection of the least favorable character allows players to play tricks on her. The game for the upcoming 2007 season will also have a viral, player-to-player component where users must send their avatar "on vacation" to a friend's cell phone, thus ceasing to take care of their own character for a while. When sent, the friend will see the character knocking on his/her cell phone screen with a suitcase in hand. If they welcome the avatar in, they will take on the responsibility of taking care of her for a set amount of time. This send-a-character-on-vacation-to-a-friend option is likely to serve as a teaser to bring new players into the game. In the U.S., the "America's Next Top Model" mobile Avatar game will be available for an initial price of 5.99 to download the game. The game will be compatible with most mobile phones though some features of the game, storylines and general functionality will vary among wireless devices.



### Will internet advertising eclipse radio?

That's what online market research firm eMarketer.com is saying. It predicts that internet use will continue its upward trajectory while overall advertising dollars remain relatively flat, making it only a matter of time before the category vaults over radio. It expects internet's total take to come in at 16.4B this year, which would amount to a 30.8% gain over 2005's 12.5B total and would represent a 5.8% stake in the total US advertising pie.

**RBR observation:** We've heard broadcast executives attributing current internet advertising as an example of experimentation, and that after advertisers realize its inherent weaknesses they'll be back. If broadcasters are going to make that a reality, they will have to saddle up their most reliable steed - one that the internet isn't particularly well suited for - and ride it until it's ready to drop, then ride it some more. The steed's name is Local.

12/08/06 RBR #238