

Black web site promotes diversity

NEW YORK (AP) — An Internet site devoted to the lifestyles and culture of black Americans debuts this week as part of an effort to make the online experience less of a World White Web.

BET.com, launching on Monday, joins several sites aimed at encouraging ethnic and minority populations to connect to the Internet and narrow the "digital divide" between the technological haves and have-nots.

Robert Johnson, chairman and founder of BET Holdings, believes content is the key. He says technology and cost are less of a challenge than "creating the lure and the hook that there is a destination site."

"Once we market and promote it that way," he said, "I think the digital divide issue will go away."

In a report last summer, the Commerce Department found that whites are more likely to have Internet access than black and Hispanic Americans. President Clinton proposed a \$2 billion package last week to expand access to computers and the Internet.

Although policy-makers blame income disparities for the digital divide, Johnson faults attitude, citing the declining prices of computers.

He hopes to offer compelling features relevant to black Americans in order to encourage them to connect to the Net.

BET.com will be affiliated with cable TV's Black Entertainment Television and three magazines.

BET Holdings is getting \$35 million from Microsoft Corp. and three major media companies, as well as cooperation from two major black organizations.

Complaints of white bias in the media are not new. Minorities have long accused newsrooms of failing to reflect the diversity of the communities they serve.

This season, TV networks were accused of featuring too few minority characters on shows.

"Until recently, it's mostly white males who have shaped the Internet, and they decided what the people will see and hear online," said Barry

Cooper, founder and chief executive of BlackVoices.com. "Racism and racists have nothing to do with it."

While there are other sites that target black communities, Hispanics, Asians, American Indians, Jews and gays, many of them have limited offerings. One site, for example, focuses on Hispanic real estate, offering services in Spanish and information on low-interest loans for minorities.

BET.com will offer features on black celebrities and trends, along with tailored information on health, food and finances. Later this year, it plans to expand into online shopping for products such as books and music by black artists.

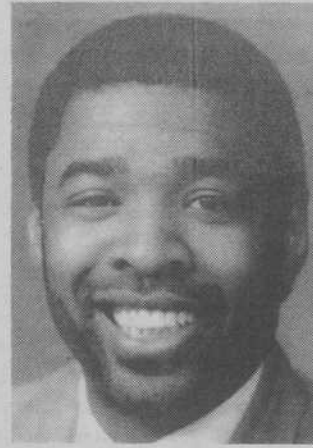
Content and access are linked in the eyes of Darien Dash, whose company provides technology services for minority communities.

"I don't know that by providing content minorities will just get on the Internet, but I do agree content is a big impetus for motivating them," he said.

Recycling of black dollars to be highlighted

John T. Stephens III
Sentinel-Voice

Thursday, February 17, 12pm-2pm at the Seven Seas Restaurant at 808 W. Lake Mead the Recycling Black Dollars Communications will host its "Third Thursday Networking Mixer". The event is being hosted by Seven Seas owner Louis Connors and sponsored by Ernest Fountain and New Ventures Capital.



ERNEST FOUNTAIN

Black Dollars is a business and consumer membership organization that was founded by Muhammad Nassardeen from southern California in 1988. The group's purpose is to motivate and push African-Americans to invest, support, and do business with Black businesses.

Education of the consumers of the

importance of spending money in their own communities is highly stressed along with business excellence and professionalism. Members of the economic aggregate meet here in Vegas every third Thursday of the month.

Next month, Black Dollars' local and California chapters will launch an economic campaign to support Black owned cleaners.

A scavenger hunt, networking, good food, and a special presentation by the students of Fitzgerald Elementary are included in this community event to boost Black businesses and celebrate Black History Month.

For more information please call 392-5303.

Rapper

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here," said jazz and blues songstress Ruth Brown of her 50 year friendship with Gibson. "I think he has required of me the hardest request I'll ever do in my life," she added before performing her rendition of "Precious Lord."

Gibson's first wife, Sadye Gibson, to whom he was married 47 years, preceded Gibson in death 12 years ago. He is survived by his

second wife, Elsie Harris Gibson of Las Vegas; daughter, Jamilla Gibson-Bell of Atlanta; son, Joseph Gibson III of Orlando, Florida; sister Ann Wright of Las Vegas; sister-in-law, Lovie Henry-Gibson of New York; grandchildren, Louis Bell, Laryn Kendrick, Aiesha Walker, Nakea Gibson, Einn Gibson and Jarvis Gibson; eight great-grandchildren, and a host of nephews, nieces and other relatives and friends.

Strohmeyer

(Continued from Page 6)

"(Leroy Iverson) thought it was him (Cash) when he saw him on TV," said Clifton Tatum, who said he was with Sherrice's father that night. "He thinks he talked to Cash — asking him had he seen his daughter."

Prosecutors dispute this. The evidence, which includes video surveillance, child pornography found on Strohmeyer's computer and his DNA on a cigarette butt found in the restroom, points to Strohmeyer alone, they say. The videotape shows 30

minutes elapsed between the time Sherrice entered the restroom and Strohmeyer left. Cash was in the restroom for about two minutes, according to the videotape.

Leroy Iverson, a diabetes, lung cancer and recovering heart attack victim, testified

from his Los Angeles home that he didn't know Cash or bump into him at Primm Casino. Iverson thinks Strohmeyer's tactics are a smokescreen.

But Bobby Troutman, who is close to Sherrice's mother Yolanda Manuel, said any new issues must be considered and if the facts prove Cash's guilt that he must be brought to trial.

Sources close to the Iverson family said Strohmeyer's request for a new trial has upset the family.

If Strohmeyer is allowed to withdraw his guilty plea and go to trial, he risks getting the death penalty.

Strohmeyer said Abramson's flat legal fee — upwards of \$300,000 — contributed to his initial plea.

District Attorney Stewart

Bell is submitting as evidence the Strohmeyers parents are suing Los Angeles County because they said information about their son's birth mother was withheld. Strohmeyer's biological mother suffered from a mental illness, possibly schizophrenia.

Said Tatum: "He needs to go on and do his time or ask them (the prosecution) to give him the death penalty."



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Conference chairs, Jon A. White, left, E. Louis Overstreet, center, and Robert Bell discuss the dynamics of the three day gaming conference.

Urban

(Continued from Page 1)

The Chamber plans on honoring individuals locally and nationally for their contributions in business, civil rights, entertainment, literature/print media, politics and sports.

The awards presentation will be taped for a three-hour television production.

"This type of awards program is needed at this time," Executive Producer Jon Astor White said. "We're attempting to do this every year...going back a 100 years to award

those who deserve it."

"We would like the award show to be the signature event for the Urban Chamber," Overstreet said. "(We're) Hoping to capitalize on the uniqueness of Las Vegas."

The Chamber was formed in 1980 when it went by its former name Nevada Black Chamber of Commerce. Today, it has more than 140 business and organization members with the sole purpose of the chamber being to promote and create business opportunities.

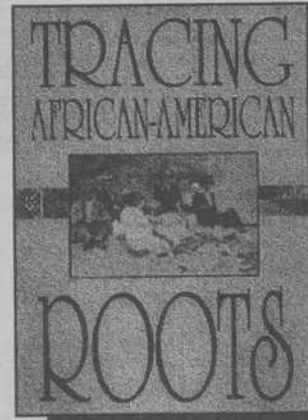
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