



COMPUTERWORLD HONORS

A Search for New Heroes

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<p>GENERAL INFORMATION</p>	<p>Entertainment Drive Forum</p> <p>Musicom Corporation New York, NY USA</p> <p>Year: 1995 Status: Laureate Category: Media Arts & Entertainment Nominating Company: CompuServe</p>
<p>SUMMARY</p>	<p>Compression of contemporary video entertainment content, such as movie previews and Academy Award broadcasts, provides the basis for a new entertainment medium delivered over computer networks and providing first-ever interactive options.</p>
<p>LONG SUMMARY</p>	<p>Just as consumer demand for financial spreadsheets drove the growth of personal computers, entertainment is proving to be the engine of online and multimedia growth. Duncan Kennedy, product line manager of Apple's QuickTime Products Group, said, "Entertainment Drive will bring multimedia and online services into the mainstream of pop culture." Musicom innovated the creation, packaging, and transmission of American entertainment in a live, interactive environment. In the process, Musicom engineered remarkable leaps forward in technology, ease of access, and coordination between industries.</p> <p>Before Entertainment Drive was created in February 1994, online access to entertainment material was difficult and selection was limited; technologies were disparate, and the entertainment industry was not acclimated to the form. Musicom developed a three-track strategy: fully integrate the entertainment industry with online services; provide consumers with an easy, fun and coordinated interface; and promote first-ever events to broaden public awareness and use of the technology.</p> <p>For example, online multimedia had been a fringe area because many found it too complicated and with little compelling content. Musicom created the GO EDRIVE Movie Viewer, a "click-and-play" software program that brought the world of multimedia to consumers in a one-step application. Motion picture history was made when Walt Disney Pictures, Warner Bros. and Universal Pictures began previewing multimedia highlights from their upcoming movies on Entertainment Drive. Musicom's coordination included</p>

conversion of huge (60+ megabyte) files into high quality, easy-to-download (less than 4 megabyte) files.

For studios and consumers the integration was seamless; and seeing actual scenes from "The Lion King" and dozens of other films and events proved a powerful motivation to learn about multimedia for hundreds of thousands worldwide.

Marshall McLuhan observed that new media will at first mimic established forms before creating what is uniquely inherent. Through the efforts of hundreds of dedicated individuals, Musicom has unified popular culture and information technology to create a truly unique media form: a global, live interactive entertainment magazine.

BENEFITS

By integrating information technology with entertainment content, Musicom provides consumers, industry professionals, high technology companies, and media organizations with an online resource for entertainment promotion and product; a gathering place for creative expression; and a laboratory for new technologies. Consumers in over 150 countries can now make more informed entertainment selections, and media companies have a unique new venue for marketing and feedback.

By exceeding customer expectations and providing top quality products and services, Entertainment Drive motivated many consumers and entertainment professionals to embrace the interactive age. As a result, Musicom has helped to change the overall relationship between media companies and their audiences by making producers more responsive and consumers more informed.

By bringing entertainment leaders online, Musicom creates greater human proximity through interactive technology. Celebrities and high achievers can now be direct mentors for the young and aspiring everywhere. People from all walks of life participate, learn, create relationships, work, and make deals across thousands of miles: A schoolteacher in North Carolina gave a live conference quote from Tom Hanks to a class for an essay assignment; a producer signed a new composer; writers and journalists are accessing new media.

With Entertainment Drive, Musicom has encouraged and guided a worldwide community toward greater learning and use of online technologies.

IMPORTANCE

Entertainment Drive is Musicom's vision of how to realize the potential of entertainment online. It is the first organized system dedicated to translating entertainment content into online formats through a confluence of traditional and cutting-edge technologies. Musicom has deconstructed the magazine model to create a choice driven, live, interactive family of services that rely on design, construction and administration of coordinated information technologies.

CompuServe's excellence as an industry leader has been invaluable in making this application possible. Musicom's relationship with CompuServe has contributed to the ease and simplification of complex, integrated systems for online users. Musicom's role as an entertainment consultant to CompuServe as well as information provider has created a unique vantage point to examine short and long term opportunities.

Musicom's technological innovations have included live cellular online conferences; CompuServe's first forum-based iconized menu; the broad-based distribution of multimedia software and content; development of navigational systems to provide easier access to material; advances in conversion of materials to digital format; and new programming that

	creates original online experiences.
ORIGINALITY	<p>Entertainment Drive developed because Musicom and CompuServe recognized the limitless potential of combining entertainment product with information technologies. Because there were no precedents, Musicom virtually "invented the wheel;" identifying areas of potential synergy, defining its role, and creating the blueprint for an entirely new medium.</p> <p>For example, Entertainment Drive brought the Academy Awards; the Tony Awards; the Daytime, Primetime and Sports Emmy Awards; and the Muscular Dystrophy Telethon to an interactive audience for the first time. Instead of passively watching the awards, Entertainment Drive members communicate directly with the winners.</p> <p>Musicom has inspired the imaginations of movie studios, television networks, software and hardware developers, graphic designers, consumers, and the media to challenge the definition of entertainment and to create revolutionary new modes of expression and impact.</p>
SUCCESS	<p>Compute Magazine named Entertainment Drive "One of the 12 Great Online Areas," and PC Magazine featured Entertainment Drive on the cover of its issue entitled "The Changing Face of Online." Entertainment Drive's growth has exceeded all expectations, even requiring special coordination with CompuServe on technical enhancements. With a current membership over 150,000 and millions of downloads from its libraries, Entertainment Drive has become one of the largest online forums in the world in less than one year.</p> <p>Because of this growth, Entertainment Drive has evolved into a family of services. "Youth Drive," for example, is administrated in large part by kids, and empowers young people to make a difference in the world; starting with the entertainment they choose. Through direct interaction with creators and producers, young people now have an unprecedented voice in shaping the entertainment they enjoy.</p> <p>Over 100 media companies participate on Entertainment Drive, including Walt Disney Pictures and Television, Warner Bros., CBS, Turner Entertainment Group, Court TV, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Musicom has developed relationships with IBM, NYNEX, Hewlett Packard, Compaq, Microsoft, Apple Computer Inc. and many others to create innovative and highly promotable applications.</p> <p>Musicom continues to pioneer the creation, packaging, and distribution of entertainment online. Specific plans include the launches of Entertainment Drive Europe and Asia; continued integration of technology and entertainment with QuickTime VR and CD-ROM; creating value for members through sponsorship; developing forum management services; expanding the role of focus groups to better define consumer interest; and providing operational support as online technology matures.</p>

DIFFICULTY

Musicom has met the demands of content acquisition, technical capacity, consumers, industry coordination, and the online format to deliver new information technologies to homes and offices in a unique and highly desirable way.

The most challenging aspect of Musicom's achievements has been integrating communication resources of both a technical and human nature. Creating a seamless coordination of information technologies was as daunting as marrying the Hollywood Player and the Computer Programmer.

The success of Entertainment Drive is based on meeting these challenges and creating new standards of communication.

Ongoing challenges include constant reevaluation and customization of interactive, multimedia systems; perpetual formatting and delivery of new content; creating, initiating and coordinating activities between many of the worlds largest media companies and the worlds largest information service; and aggressive administration of a fast-growing enterprise to maintain quality, service, and innovation.