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DIGITAL L.A.

Budding filmmakers going
'O-to-O' — online to offlineBy David Bloom
Staff Writer

The fall semesters of colleges around the country are starting about now, so to be joined this week by an interesting new Web site targeting young filmmakers and animators from some of those schools.

Nibblebox (at www.nibblebox.com) debuts with 10 shows it developed with college-age creative types, said co-CEO David Bartis. The company cut affiliation deals with radio stations (more than 50 of them can be heard through the site) and other creative-minded organizations at each of dozens of U.S. colleges. Through those organizations, student filmmakers will submit ideas for episodic live-action or animated series. The first 10 shows were the result of more than 400 submissions earlier this year.

Nibblebox's young producers were each given a digital video-camera and computer-based editing system and paired with Hollywood directors and actors such as Amy Heckerling ("Fast Times at Ridgemont High," "Clueless," "Loser") as mentors. Twenty of them were brought into the company's Santa Monica and New York offices for a production "boot camp" this summer.

"These kids had all the intellectual skills but didn't have the access" to tools and mentors, said Bartis. "We give them the access."

That kind of access is vital when starting out. Bartis and co-CEO Elizabeth L. Hamburg don't, however, guarantee access to loads of Net start-up cash.

"If you're looking to make a lot of money online, we're not the right place for you," Bartis said.

"You're not going to buy a big house in Bel-Air (with the money you make on these deals), but if people are going to pay you \$3,000 or \$6,000 or \$7,000 an episode and will commit to 10 episodes, you can start to make money," said Hamburg, who spent 12 years at NBC. "And there will be another show like 'South Park' that will appear online and will be a success."

Bartis and Hamburg offer what other high-profile Web entertainment sites are beginning to offer, access to eyeballs, not only of audiences but of Old Hollywood agents and studios looking for new talent.

It's the latest mantra, which I'll call "O-to-O," going from

SITE OF THE WEEK



Good Housekeeping Buysmart guides: The consumer affairs pag of the online site for the magazine that brought us the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval.

Where: www.goodhousekeeping.women.com/gh/buysmart/guides/00buys21.htm

What's cool: The women-oriented magazine is celebrating its 100th year with a wide-ranging site that's part of, natch, Women.com. Best of all is a collection of dozens of women-centered consumer articles from the magazine's Good Housekeeping institute on subjects like "cars that women love," the best bras, how to buy electronics and sofas, and "the truth behind shampoos." Even better news: The institute is now evaluating other Web sites, giving out its seal of approval based on how the sites deal with customers and visitors. More than 20 have passed muster so far.

Features: The magazine's site includes much else of interest, including wide-ranging discussion and chat areas on all kinds of subjects of interest to women, from "elementary school" to infidelity (both hers and his). You can get free newsletters from Women.com, read articles on health, beauty, relationships and much else. I also appreciate that they clearly mark any advertisements, so there's no confusion on the part of visitors. Nice that they expect of themselves what they expect of the sites that would receive their seal.

You'll like this if: You like the comforts of a familiar and trusted women's publication transmuted through the possibilities of a not-necessarily-familiar medium.

Think your Web luv is good enough for Site of the Week? Send your suggestions to davidbloom@earthlink.net

"online to offline" in Hollywood. That's the route Web entertainment sites are now promising makers of the best of their products, whether it's a hot short film such as "405: The Movie" or a popular animated episodic series such as "L'il Pimp."

Nibblebox's 10 initial offerings include "Virtual Rob," a goofy interactive video series from University of Southern California students; the sweetly feminist animations of a UCLA student's "Muffinfilms"; and "Pop Vox," a remix-it-yourself music video site by an MIT student.

Will any of it work? Hamburg and Bartis are sanguine about their prospects, and those of their young producers.

"This is low-cost content," Bartis said. "If this is something that doesn't work, we can afford

to take it off, because we don't have too much into it."

Reading list

Two handy books from O'Reilly, the big technology publisher, just crossed my desk.

One is the new edition of David Fogue's "PalmPilot: The Ultimate Guide." It comes with a nifty CD-ROM (for Mac, Windows and Linux users) filled with 3,100 Palm programs (and an absolutely necessary searchable database), which will save you the hassle and time of downloading the programs from www.palmcentral.com, a big site for Palm goodies.

The other title, "Word 2000 in a Nutshell," by Walter Glenn, is designed for quick information about the latest version of the word-processing workhorse from our favorite Redmond-based corporate monolith.