



LookSmart, New 'Next Generation' Web Directory Teams Up with Major Internet Players, Bbn Planet, Bigbook, and Whowhere

Reader's Digest subsidiary strengthens market position, pursues goal of improving web access for everyday users

San Francisco, CA, December 9, 1996 - LookSmart, the new Internet navigation service from LookSmart Limited, a new subsidiary of the Reader's Digest Association (NYSE: RDA, RDB), announced today that it had signed agreements with three of the most advanced organizations on the Web: BBN Planet (NYSE: BBN), a leading provider of managed Internet access and value-added services; BigBook, the nation's leading edge online yellow pages; and WhoWhere?, the preeminent email directory on the Web.

Evan Thornley, president and CEO of LookSmart Ltd, said, "Partnering with these three powerful companies is a strong first step in fulfilling our mission of truly making the Web accessible to everyone. We intend to build on this base and, in the months ahead, we will develop working relationships with the best companies on the Web."

"BBN Planet has been involved with the Internet for over 20 years," said Thornley, "and their high speed network provides quick access for visitors to our site, as well as speedy downloading of requested pages."

"BigBook meshes well with us," continued Thornley, "and makes it easier for our users to get information about businesses they are interested in. BigBook has a comprehensive list of U.S. businesses, and has demonstrated a commitment to building a strong consumer franchise. LookSmart provides the best of the Web in the easiest to use fashion, and BigBook is the best way to find local and national businesses."

"WhoWhere? is the largest and most respected email directory on the Web, with a superior interface," said the LookSmart CEO. "More important, they share our vision of improving Web accessibility for everyday consumers. We will be not only be promoting these three services on LookSmart but to the larger Reader's Digest community as well."

BBN Planet is providing high -availability web hosting for the LookSmart web site. BBN's high-speed network provides quick access for site visitors, as well as speedy downloading of requested pages. LookSmart's server will reside on BBN's national, state-of-the-art backbone network, offering fast, reliable access.

"LookSmart," said Paul Gudonis, president of BBN Planet, "did a thorough evaluation of Web hosting providers, and we're very pleased to be hosting this new Internet directory service. With the reach of Reader's Digest behind it we're confident that the LookSmart site will become a popular choice for people seeking quality sites through an Easy-To-Use manner. BBN specializes in this type of demanding, high-performance hosting situation."

Under its agreement with BigBook, LookSmart will be introducing a co-branded LookSmart and BigBook site, which will be located one click away from the LookSmart homepage under the "favorites" section. Kris Hagerman, president and CEO of BigBook said, "Teaming up with LookSmart makes strong business sense to us. Their approach for finding sites on the Web has already proven itself as very appealing to users."

WhoWhere?'s Chairman, Ashutosh Roy, said, "LookSmart offers the 'next generation' Web navigation interface. We're happy to offer our extensive, high quality directory services to help LookSmart users communicate and collaborate over the net. We are glad to be working with them."

LookSmart has been developing partnering opportunities with other leading providers of Internet service since its launch in late October. "We will continue to examine the full spectrum of offering on the Web," said Thornley, "enlarging the scope of our offering and providing the best-of-the-best to our users."

LookSmart is available for free on the Internet. Its URL is: www.looksmart.com.

LookSmart Limited, an Internet publishing company, is a majority owned subsidiary of Reader's Digest with operations in Melbourne, Australia and San Francisco. The company has developed LookSmart , a technically advanced navigation service for the World Wide Web that provides highly relevant information to users in an easy-to-use manner.

The Reader's Digest Association, Inc. is the preeminent global publisher and direct marketer of magazines, books, music,

videos and new media that inform, enrich, entertain and inspire. Total revenues were \$3.1 billion in fiscal 1996. International operations generate 60 percent of company revenues. Global headquarters is in Pleasantville, NY.

BBN is a leading provider of Internet services for business and organizations. BBN, through its BBN Planet division, provides companies of all sizes with reliable Internet access services, remote access services, network security, Web site development and hosting, international connectivity and electronic commerce and system integration services to effectively use the Internet for business. BBN Planet had revenues of \$73 million and BBN Corporation posted revenue of \$234 million for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1996. For more information, contact Vaughn Haring, BBN Planet (617) 8734659, or visit BBN's World Wide Web site at <http://www.bbn.com>.

WhoWhere BigBook, headquartered in San Francisco, CA, is the nation's leading online Yellow Pages, with more than 16 million business listings and over one million hits per day. Founded in 1995, BigBook is the first service to combine the comprehensiveness of the Yellow Pages with timely content and community features, giving consumers a dynamic information resource that is personalized and constantly up-to-date. BigBook provides businesses with free homepages and a wide variety of targeted advertising products available on a national, regional and local basis. Additional information is available by phone at (415) 284-9886. Press contact: David Kane, Niehaus Ryan Group (415) 827-7081, davidk@nrgpr.com.

WhoWhere? Inc., based in Mountain View, CA., is the leading online directory of people and business information from around the world, including email addresses, telephone listings, business URLs and personal homepages. The company continues to develop easy-to-use network-based services which facilitate global communication and collaboration. WhoWhere?'s strategic partners include Microsoft, Intel, Netscape, BigBook and ABI. For more information, contact Antenna Group, Jennifer Weissman (415) 977-1911, jennifer@antennagroup.com