



LookSmart Signs with Softbank Interactive Marketing for Major Push to Attract Internet Advertising

San Francisco, CA, December 19, 1996 - LookSmart, a new breakthrough consumer-oriented navigation service announced today that it has chosen SOFTBANK Interactive Marketing, the leader in advertising and promotional services for emerging technologies, as its advertising sales partner.

"SOFTBANK Interactive Marketing is the premier advertising sales organization in the interactive industry. We are looking to them to help establish LookSmart as one of the top sites for advertisers," said Evan Thornley, president & CEO of LookSmart Limited, a majority owned subsidiary of The Reader's Digest Association, Inc.

"Today's more than 40 million Internet users are no longer the stereotypical young 'techies', but real people with kids, jobs, mortgages and busy lifestyles. The Internet has become part of everyday life and our site is designed with the consumer in mind," continued Thornley. "We chose SOFTBANK Interactive Marketing not only because they understand this basic shift in market dynamics, but also because they understand the character and power of online advertising better than anyone."

As the world's leader in interactive advertising sales representation, SOFTBANK Interactive Marketing has long been a pioneer in media sales for new and emerging technologies. The company brings together marketing innovation and the power of new media to develop targeted, interactive advertising, marketing and promotional programs for leading web sites.

"LookSmart is enjoying one of the Web's fastest growth rates," said Andy Batkin, CEO of SOFTBANK Interactive Marketing. "We believe that this growth will only accelerate given the demand for easy -to-understand consumer-focused web sites reinforced by the strong Reader's Digest brand."

With SOFTBANK Interactive Marketing, LookSmart will increase its strong advertising base which already includes such companies as AT&T, PC Financial Network, 20th Century Mutual Funds, iVillage (Parent's Soup), Warner Brothers, and Ziff Davis.

LookSmart's web directory offers a fundamentally different approach to accessing information on the Internet with its easy-to-use, highly-intuitive interface and editorial approach. LookSmart provides a unique Java-built directory with a point-and-click search method that delivers superior editorial quality—a hallmark of The Reader's Digest—thus enabling users to quickly arrive at relevant web sites that have context and value.

Designed with the consumer in mind and from an advertiser's viewpoint, LookSmart offers advertisers a unique opportunity with its Java-enabled timed ad exposures and quality editorial placement.

LookSmart is available for free on the Internet at www.looksmart.com.

LookSmart Limited, an Internet publishing company, is a majority-owned subsidiary of The Reader's Digest Association with operations in Melbourne, Australia, and San Francisco, California. 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.

SOFTBANK Interactive Marketing

SOFTBANK Interactive Marketing Inc. is the world's leader in interactive advertising sales representation. The company's mission is to maximize the results of its media clients and advertisers by bringing together marketing innovation and the power of new media to develop targeted, interactive advertising, marketing and promotional programs.

SOFTBANK Interactive Marketing's clients are a select, prestigious group of monthly of web sites that account for more than 500 million advertising impressions monthly and a leading share of total advertising revenue spent on the Web. Clients include: AT&T Business Network, The Commonwealth Network, iGuide, MSNBC Weather by Intellicast, NBC.com, NetRadio Network, Netscape, Playboy, The Site, WhoWhere?, Yahoo! and ZD Net.

Headquartered in El Segundo, California, SOFTBANK Interactive Marketing also maintains offices in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco.

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