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By Creating Content, These Shops Are Creating a Legacy Beyond Ads

Our Picks of the Agencies Making Their Mark With Apps, Games and Much More

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NEW YORK (AdAge.com) -- We've written a fair amount about agencies that go from making ads to making products. In the past 12 months, there's been a not-so-subtle shift in that trend as we've seen the products go from offline to online -- books, candles and the like have given way to agencies increasingly devoting time to proprietary digital products.



Big Spaceship's Corpsify allows users to share drawings.

It's not just digital agencies that are creating these digital products, it's shops of all sorts. Why are they doing this? Turns out there's a lot of upside, and not a whole lot of down.

First, creating apps, digital games and web browsers actually prove to current and prospective clients that a shop is digitally savvy. Such projects often involve the whole agency, and work to get staffers' creative juices flowing. Of course, being an innovative place is a really easy way to attract top talent. And last, and important in a changing agency landscape, these digital products can help build a revenue stream that isn't dependent on clients.

While some of these projects do exist for novelty, many more of them in the digital space exist for utility. We believe the agency community will soon be considered a hub of digital-content creation, and it's only a matter of time before several shops are responsible for churning out mass-consumer hits.

Here we've listed some prominent examples of the trend. We're aware there are many more out there experimenting in this realm -- or have plans to be in the near future. If your agency has created a digital tool, online game or type of intellectual property that lives in the digital world, e-mail me at rparekh@adage.com. And if you haven't, you may want to consider it.

AGENCY: BIG SPACESHIP

Products: Corpsify, Perfect Monkey Tankpants

What: Big Spaceship has led the digital IP space for the agency community with projects like Pretty Loaded, a digital museum, and Twitter tool Qapture. Now it's launching two more. Corpsify is a simple social game that allows three different users to collectively create a drawing without knowing what the other users have drawn. When complete, the drawing can be shared. Another soon-to-be released digital game from the shop is dubbed Perfect Monkey Tankpants -- sort of Space Invaders meets Donkey Kong. The game was an agency-wide creative project to engage team members, and Big Spaceship employees wrote and recorded the game's theme song in-house.

AGENCY: FALLON

Product: Skimmer

What: Google may be getting all the buzz right now for its social-networking aggregation service, but Fallon released this slick Adobe AIR desktop tool in March 2009 to streamline the experience of day-to-day interaction with multiple social networks. The product, which is free for download on Macs and PCs, received numerous positive reviews from tech bloggers.

AGENCY: TAXI, NEW YORK

Product: Food Content Alerts

What: Food Content Alerts is a free online and mobile service that helps consumers with food allergies and diseases manage what they eat. The agency estimates 70 million people in North America suffer from some type of allergy or food-related problem, and this platform allows personalized data management and offers a user community to share recipes and tips. The application is free, and the company seeks brands to integrate into the actual service, as opposed to display advertising.

AGENCY: IMANO

Products: AcrossAir Browser, Virus Killer 360

What: London-based digital agency Imano's AcrossAir arm is a leader in the augmented-reality iPhone-app arena. It produces apps for clients, but has also done some of its own, such as the AcrossAir browser, which uses 3-D navigation and local data from companies, stores and restaurants and represents them in an

augmented reality view. Its Virus Killer 360 game is a breakthrough augmented-reality game that allows 360-degree immersion in which a player moves her phone around to seek and destroy viruses using in-game weapons.

AGENCY: BBH ZAG

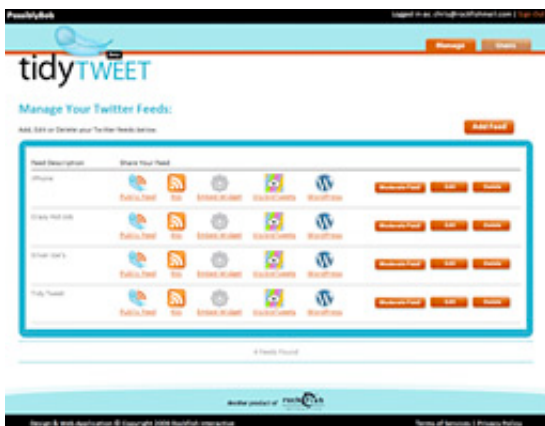
Product: Kidos

What: Kidos is a free software program that turns a parent's computer into a kid-friendly device for children's e-mail, photos, music, games and more. Zag -- BBH's IP arm that is staffed with former marketers from Unilever and Procter & Gamble -- launched Kidos in beta last month and will officially debut the product in the second half of 2010. The interface includes a customizable kids' operating system and parent-controlled iTunes-like store that has appropriate content from around the world in over 25 languages.

AGENCY: GIGANTIC MARKETING

Product: BrandFlux

What: BrandFlux is a brand-management platform that culls data from real-time sites such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube as well as legacy data from Forrester Research and other reports. A team of strategists curates the data and are on call for around-the-clock questions. The business model is monthly subscription per user.



Rockfish's TidyTweet.

AGENCY: COLLE MCVOY

Product: Squawq

What: Squawq.com is a user-friendly Twitter analytics tool that collects tweets and analyzes the data so a user or brand can follow the conversations to learn about its popularity, or that of competitors. Charts can be created out of the queries to track popular keywords, hashtags or URLs.

AGENCY: ROCKFISH INTERACTIVE

Products: CrazyHotJob, TidyTweet

What: CrazyHotJob.com is a free jobs listing portal created by Rogers, Ark.-based Rockfish's Labs (its business innovation arm) that posts a single "crazy hot job" a day. The reason behind just one? The shop says it helps differentiate this job board from crowded ones that contain repeat postings and are dominated by a small group of employers. Another digital product it created, TidyTweet, allows businesses to filter spam and other unwanted content from their Twitter feeds. The tool has been widely used by companies and took home the award for the best app at the Twitter 140 Conference in Los Angeles.

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