

## Deal gives CBS shows a dozen internet outlets

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CBS yesterday revealed agreements to distribute its programmes through a dozen internet partners in an effort to broaden its reach beyond television.

Dubbed the CBS Interactive Audience Network, the new CBS partners include AOL, Microsoft, CNET Networks, Comcast, Joost, Bebo, Brightcove, Netvibes, Sling Media and Veoh.

The partners will receive various popular CBS programmes such as *CSI: Crime Scene Investigators* and the *Late Show with David Letterman* after the shows are broadcast on the CBS television network. They will be free to internet viewers and supported by advertising.

"Today marks an important step in our strategy to distribute content broadly across the online interactive landscape on an open, non-exclusive basis," said Les Moonves, CBS chief executive.

The plan comes just before meetings take place between big advertisers and television networks called the "upfronts". Advertisers are looking for more integrated packages that allow them to reach the big audiences offered by television and also target viewers on the web.

The CBS agreement comes at a time when media companies are scrambling - and often competing - to find new ways to distribute their video on the internet in a way that prevents piracy and allows them to sell advertising around the content.

Last month, NBC Universal and News Corp joined to launch a video venture to serve as an alternative to Google's YouTube.

The new site, yet unnamed, will be distributed through Microsoft's MSN network, MySpace and other outlets, reaching a vast internet audience, and also include anti-piracy protections.

CBS has held discussions with NBC and News Corp but it has so far resisted them. CBS executives have suggested that they believe that approach could limit their flexibility to sell their content to other internet distributors.

NBC and News Corp understood to be talking to 45 to 50 content providers.