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Time Inc. Internet/Online Service



**A proposal for a Time Inc. Electronic
Network and World Wide Web site**

GOALS

The goal of Time Inc.'s Service (codename Calliope, probably branded Pathfinder) will be to provide:

- Online access to the content of Time Inc.'s publications and databanks, to new products and services based on Time Inc.'s titles and journalism, and to relevant material licensed or acquired by Time Inc.
- A place to communicate, interact and form "virtual communities."
- An environment for interactive advertising, shopping and transactional services.
- An easy way for average consumers to get onto the Internet.
- A front-end for cable systems that want to sell to computer users a high-bandwidth link to online networks, the Internet, shopping venues, e-mail and other electronic services.

STRATEGY

The foundation of the system will probably be a set of Time Inc. servers connected to the World Wide Web, an organizing element of the Internet. Web sites use a navigational software known as Mosaic, which offers easy links and flexible graphics. New versions of Mosaic will have transactional capabilities that permit charging users for services.

Our plan is to begin putting up some services and content on a Web Site this Fall. This would probably initially include *Time* magazine, a "Virtual Garden" service coordinated by Time-Life Digital (a division of Time-Life Books), and *Vibe* magazine.

These and other Time Inc. products will, for the time being and perhaps indefinitely, also be made available on commercial services such as America Online and CompuServe.

We will then evolve this web site into an online service through the following steps:

>> Licensing one of the forthcoming proprietary versions of Mosaic that permit secure transactions and user charges.

>> Getting specifications and producing an RFP for the integration of the search engines, databases, communications tools, bulletin boards and server systems necessary for a full service.

>> Negotiating with existing online services, software and communications companies to become our partners or suppliers.

>> Exploring a relationship with a telecommunications company whose nationwide network could supplement the Internet and provide local "points of presence" that would permit consumers to dial in using a local access number.

>> Hiring a consultant to develop a front end for cable delivery and license it to local cable systems.

>> Gradually expanding the Time Inc. and outside content available on the service.

ACCESS

Users could access the service in these ways:

- Directly from the Internet for those consumers who are already connected to it.
- By direct telephone dial-up. A relationship with a telephone company could provide local access numbers. This would allow us to offer our own service plus easy Internet access all in one package, thus making Time Inc. one of the first companies to open the Internet to a mass market.
- Through existing online services that provide a gateway to the Internet. We would make arrangements with existing online

services to include a compatible Mosaic browser and, perhaps, to mirror our website on their own servers for easy access.

- Through a cable system connection. The Time Inc. service could be made available to computer users if and when cable modems become popular. In addition, the service could be configured to provide a front-end for cable systems that wanted to package access to a variety of services and online networks.

DISTINCTIONS

Two things would distinguish the new Time Inc. service from current networks such as America Online, Prodigy and CompuServe:

- It would be designed for higher-speed users who have cable modems, SLIP connections to the Internet, or phone modems supporting 14.4 baud or higher. The higher speeds and bandwidth will allow the use of Mosaic and other hypertext navigation tools as well as graphics and pictures. We will not be saddled with serving low-end users, though we'd still accommodate 9600 baud.
- It would be fully integrated into the Internet as a Web site. It would thus be available through any online service that allowed Internet access. In addition, it would provide subscribers seamless access to all of the other resources on the Internet.

In targeting an audience, we will follow Russell Long's advice about shooting a duck: aim ahead of the duck. We would aim for a mass market audience of people who have not been early adapters to the online world: ordinary folks rather than 17-year-old get-a-life geeks who want to download software.

STRUCTURE

All subscribers, at least initially, will have access to all content.

However, the service will appear to have various "areas," such as sports, gardening, personal finance, etc. These areas will make it easier for a user to navigate the mass of content (and for the Time

Inc. editors to organize their responsibilities). The same material may be accessed from different areas. For example, a Time movie review may be featured in the Time area and the Entertainment area; related stories or discussions in different areas would be linked.

Some of these areas will carry the brands of Time Inc. titles. For example, the personal finance area would feature the *Money* brand, the sports area would feature the *Sport Illustrated* brand, and the parenting area would feature the *Parenting* brand. Others would be generic or unbranded new products. Among them would be the Virtual Garden being coordinated by Time-Life Digital as well as subjects such as travel, cooking and history. We will assess as we go along the value of branded versus generic service areas.

The service may be marketed to different interest groups in different ways, and the initial screens may be tailored for them. For example, a *Sports Illustrated* reader may be offered "SI's SportsWeb, along with the rest of the services of Calliope/Pathfinder (or whatever we call the umbrella service). That subscriber's initial screen might feature sports offerings more prominently.

NAVIGATION SCREENS

There are two possible strategies:

- Fixed-sized graphical user interfaces (GUIs). These fit onto a computer screen and feature icons and graphical displays, such as a town square.
- Scrolling Mosaic-style home pages. These can be longer than one screen in length, and the user scrolls down them. They tend to be more textual and use hypertext more than graphics to make links, but graphics, sounds and pictures can be imbedded in the format.

These strategies can be combined: GUIs can contain hypertext style links, and Mosaic pages can support a rich graphic overlay.

Initially, the Time Inc. service main initial screen will tend to favor the scrolling home page approach. This will give greater flexibility and allow frequent changes.

Graphics can be imbedded in the Mosaic design. Higher-bandwidth users would get them automatically; for lower-bandwidth users they would appear as icons that could be downloaded to show the graphics.

However, some of the initial screens for specific subject areas might have snazzier graphics and animation. For example, the Sports initial screen might have bats swinging, balls bouncing and the sound of crowds cheering. This could be supplied by a CD-ROM front end, by a large software front end, or by a high-bandwidth connectivity to the service.

THE HOME PAGE

The opening screen for the entire service could be, as noted above, either a graphical interface along the model of a town square or a scrollable Mosaic home page with imbedded icons, graphics and hypertext links. Either way, it will offer access to the following:

Your mail box. Provides access to e-mail and any material that has been delivered to the user electronically. Also offers an interface for sending mail, including voice and video files.

Today's bulletin. Combination of a daily newsletter, briefing paper, and tout sheet of what's hot on the service, with advertising. Can be tailored to the user's interests. Mosaic design will permit hypertext or hot-button access from any item to in-depth stories, information, bulletin boards or services in the system.

Subjects and Services. Provides access to a list of the different subject areas, such as: news, sports, your finances, entertainment personalities, health, music, how-to, cooking, travel, computers, kids, science, weather, legal aid, photography, software downloads, game arcade, reference library, etc. These subject areas

would offer access to Time Inc. content, outside content such as stock quotes and sports scores, bulletin boards, tools, activities and related Internet content. (*See section below on "Content."*)

Your Affinity Group. If the service has been marketed to a consumer as featuring a specific subject area, such as sports or the Civil War or personal finance, that subject area would be featured prominently on the user's home page or initial screen.

Newsstand. Provides access directly to the current or back issues of any magazine in the system. This area could also include clipping services and customizable wire services, such as the Dow Jones personal news grid. Users can subscribe to material and have it automatically downloaded when each new issue becomes available, or they can browse through the material while online. (Of course, most of these magazines could also be accessed through the relevant subject area.)

Search. Would allow a user to search through the entire service, including bulletin boards as well as content, for words or topics that interested him at that moment.

Your News Agent. Would permit the user to program in his specific interests. Each time he logged on, this area would display the stories, bulletin boards and other content that matched his profile. Eventually, intelligent agent technology would permit the system to refine his interest profile automatically.

Shopping Mall. Includes ads, transactional services, classifieds and catalogues. Broken into categories, such as: restaurants, banking, autos, personal ads, classifieds, clothing, toys, music, videos, etc. The mall would also be linked to appropriate subject areas (i.e., the travel service in the mall would be linked to the travel subject area). In addition, there would be links to advertisers in the mall from some of the content pages; for example, a sports page could offer a link to the Nike store, and a gardening story could offer links to the seed catalogues in the mall.

Online service onramp. Access to other networks, such as America Online, CompuServe, Prodigy, Delphi, Genie, Lexis Counsel Connect, WealthBuilder, etc. A user selecting one of these would be asked if he wanted to subscribe. Time Inc. would negotiate a bounty system and billing arrangement with other services that agree to be offered in this fashion. Once a person has subscribed, he could get directly from the Time Inc. network to the other network through this gateway.

Internet onramp. Some parts of the Internet will be "packaged" and offered within the subject categories of the Time Inc. service. However, this button would offer the user direct access to the Internet as a whole with an integrated package of software and tools, such as: TurboGopher, Mosaic, ftp, Telnet, Veronica and Archie and Jughead search screens, Nuntius or Newsreader, etc.

CABLE HOME PAGE

The home page and packaging of the Time Inc. system could be modified for licensing as a front-end for cable systems. Time Inc. would provide the local cable system with a package of basic services as well as a method to access premium services and commercial online networks, including Time Inc.'s own service.

Basic services. The opening screen would offer access to the following material and tools, identical to those offered on the Time Inc. Internet/Online Service opening screen: Your Mail Box; Today's Bulletin; Newsstand (offering content pages, with full magazines costing extra); reference library; shopping and classified; local listings; and the Internet.

Premium services. The opening screen will also allow access to the following premium services that would cost extra: an online network gateway (to Prodigy, AOL, CompuServe, Time Inc.'s Internet/Online Service, Delphi, Counsel Connect, Wealth Builder, etc.); a game arcade; a software library.

Time Inc.'s revenues will come from:

- 1.) licensing fees paid by cable operators for the opening screens, software and package of basic services;
- 2.) selling advertising and transaction services that are featured on the initial screens;
- 3.) creating a broad market for its own premium Time Inc. service, which will have a competitive advantage over existing services in a high-bandwidth environment.

The cable operators' revenues will come from user fees for the basic service, selling subscriptions to commercial online services, and advertising local avails.

CONTENT*

The "Subjects and Services" button on the main home page of the Time Inc. Service will give the user access to 20 or so subject areas of content. Each will feature its own home page that the user can get to directly or from the main home page. Depending on the nature of each area, the home page could be serious or snazzy.

Each subject area would contain the relevant magazines, new material created by the system's editors, information licensed or acquired from outside vendors, public domain information, tools, activities, bulletin boards, games, and software.

The content committee suggests that the subject areas be broken into two categories: eight or so news topics that would carry the brands of our core magazines (such as a sports area branded by SD); and, a group of unbranded "lifestyle and pastime" areas, such as cooking and gardening. As the service evolves, we can see whether it makes sense to make this distinction.

* This is based on an excellent content committee report produced by Dick Duncan, Pat Berry, Ty Burr, Sean Callahan, Roy Johnson, Jim Kinsella, Tyler Mathisen, Kevin McKean, Isolde Motley, Peter Petre, and Maria Wilhelm. Their full report is available either from Walter Isaacson or Dick Duncan. In addition, a committee consisting of Oliver Knowlton, Chan Suh, Thorne Sparkman, Phil Elmer-DeWitt and Michael Rose looked into navigation and software options.

Here are some likely topics along with examples of the content that might be in them.

News, branded and managed by *Time* Magazine. The home page for this area would offer access to:

- >> A digest of the important news of the day with links to the relevant content and bulletin boards in the *Time* area or elsewhere in the system.

- >> Current and back issues of *Time*, in Mosaic format with hypertext links to other relevant content, archives or bulletin boards.

- >> Current event bulletin boards managed by Time editors, with links to relevant stories and other content.

- >> Eventually, a wire service such as AP or Reuters, with search, tailoring and agenting tools.

- >> An index of subjects in the news.

- >> Links to public domain material such as the Congressional Record, the CIA factbook, the White House press releases, Statistical Abstract, Census data, Commerce Department, speech transcripts, etc.

- >> Vetted files from correspondents on major stories.

- >> Full transcripts of interviews done by Time correspondents.

- >> Transcripts of Time News on Demand discussions.

- >> News quizzes and games.

Sports, branded and managed by *Sports Illustrated*. Would offer access to:

- >> Content and back issues of SI, with links to discussion boards.

- >> A sports ticker and statistical databank.

- >> A summary of the latest sports news, with links to bulletin boards, statistics, SI stories.

- >> Rotisserie league sports games.

- >> Bill James's baseball almanac.

- >> Discussion boards for each sport, team, star, etc.

- >> Files and interviews by SI correspondents.

- >> Fan club discussion boards and notices.

- >> Sale of sports-related merchandise.
- >> Morning line and betting information.
- >> Product reviews.
- >> Ticketmaster service.
- >> Schedules.
- >> Links to each league's databanks and press releases.
- >> Link to the SI for Kids area.

Entertainment, branded and managed by *Entertainment Weekly*.

- >> A daily news page and hot sheet, with links to content.
- >> Current and back issues of Entertainment Weekly, People, Vibe, Mouth2Mouth, InStyle, with links to bulletin boards.
- >> Current offerings from other Time Warner divisions.
- >> An Entertainment Guide broken into subject areas: Movies, TV, Books, Music, Video, and Multimedia. This would lead to reviews, previews, features, numbers, statistics, product info, sales, offers, etc. relevant to each subject area.
- >> Critics' scoreboards
- >> Special editions of Jim Mullen, Mitchell Fink, etc.
- >> Ticketmaster services.
- >> Direct sales.
- >> Trivia games and contests.
- >> Press releases from companies.
- >> Tour schedules.
- >> An online TV guide.
- >> Discussion boards for each new movie, TV show, book, album.
- >> Excerpts and clips from new releases

Music, branded and managed by *Vibe*. This home screen could lead to Vibe Magazine and to all of the music offerings that are part of the larger entertainment category described above.

Personal Finance, branded and managed by *Money*.

- >> Current and back issues of Money, with links to bulletin boards.

- >> Money lists and databases.
- >> A stock ticker and customizable portfolio.
- >> Wealth Builder.
- >> Money, credit card, mortgage and other rates by locality.
- >> Tax software.
- >> Mutual Fund data.
- >> Investment games.
- >> Fortune 500 data.
- >> A daily briefing, with links.
- >> Bulletin boards for investments, with links to articles.

Business, branded and sponsored by *Fortune* .

- >> Current and back issues of *Fortune* , with links to bulletin boards.
- >> Marshall Loeb's and other reference works.
- >> Links to most items in the *Money* Magazine area.
- >> Business daily news briefing, with links to other content.
- >> Links to other corporate databanks and Internet sites.
- >> Commerce department and other financial data.
- >> Forecasts.
- >> Fortune 500 and other databases.
- >> Links to relevant *Money* and *Time* articles.
- >> A manager's forum.
- >> Business software library.

Personalities, branded and managed by *People* .

- >> Current and back issues of *People* , with links to bulletin groups.
- >> An index of personalities with links to articles in *People* , *Time*, *EW*, *InStyle* and all other publications contained in the service.
- >> Subjects and categories index, which would sort articles in people and other publications into groups such as: "Inspiring people," "royals," "Powerful people," "Winners and losers," etc.
- >> A daily hotline, with links to articles and discussion groups in the People area, Entertainment area or other relevant areas.
- >> Links to Mitchell Fink, Jim Mullen, etc.

- >> Passages.
- >> Lists.
- >> Trivia games and contests.
- >> Celebrity directory, giving the agent or address of celebrities.
- >> Discussion boards.
- >> Biofile service.

Health and Fitness , branded and managed by *Health* magazine.

- >> Current and back issues, with links to bulletin boards.
- >> Bulletin boards and info for diseases, support groups and associations, such as the muscular dystrophy association.
- >> Bulletins from the Surgeon General, Centers for Disease Control, National Institutes for Health, etc.
- >> Latest news in health.
- >> Diet and nutrition information and discussion groups.
- >> Fitness information and discussion groups.
- >> Medical stories from *Time* and elsewhere.
- >> Reference materials, with search tools.
- >> National Library of Medicine/MEDLARS service.
- >> Calorie, fat, and vitamin counting software.

Interior Design , featuring *Southern Accents*, *Sunset*, *Southern Living* and *Martha Stewart*.

- >> Sourcebook of all items for the home, ranging from furniture to appliances to paint to patio stones. Cross-referenced with buttons to push for ordering and more info.
- >> Floral service.
- >> Antique reference sources and bulletin board.

Parenting , branded and managed by Parenting and baby Talk. Stories, reference material, information and bulletin boards on the following topics:

- >> Discipline
- >> Temper tantrums
- >> Toilet training

- >> Sleeping
- >> Baby-sitters and caregivers
- >> Schools
- >> Eating
- >> Television for kids
- >> Books

Reference Library. Access to archives or each magazine, a dictionary, encyclopedia, thesaurus, Bartlett's, atlas, phone books, e-mail listings, almanac, Who's Who, CIA fact book, Federal Register, Internet directory and index, etc.

Weather. Information from Earthwatch or WSI, as provided to the News on Demand team. Links to the National Weather Service and the various weather web sites run by universities.

The Virtual Garden, managed by Time-Life Books. Sean Callahan has a memo describing that service. Would include information from Time-Life Books, Southern Living, Martha Stewart. Also, would acquire material from the New York Botanical Garden and elsewhere.

Books, managed by Little Brown, Warner Books and BOMC.

Legal Aid, managed by Counsel Connect and Court TV.

Steven Brill has developed a concept for a wide variety of legal aid services, discussion groups and tools. He has said that his division would be eager to develop this aspect of the service. Ideas include:

>> Court TV game series, where players act as the defense or prosecution in famous cases.

>> The Legal Survival Guide, an almanac and reference book being developed by Court TV for Little Brown.

>> Law dictionary.

>> Directory of lawyers and legal services.

>> Templates for common contracts, wills, and other legal documents.

>> Link to Lexis Counsel Connect.

>> Bulletin boards on legal issues moderated by experts.

Game Arcade. Access to the latest computer games on a subscription, purchase or pay-per-use basis.

Software library. Access to computer software and shareware for purchase, downloading or use.

SECOND PHASE CONTENT

The following are other areas that are being developed. They could be launched as soon as the first phase nears completion.

Kids. This is an important area we should start to develop as soon as we get the basic website up.

Civil War, branded and managed by Time-Life books. Would include material from Time-Life books and discussion groups. Other history groups would follow.

CNN. We have discussed with CNN using their video and scripts on our website or helping them set up a compatible website of their own that would be linked to our service.

Computers, to be acquired from an outside vendor.

Genealogy. Research material and bulletin boards.

Cooking, branded and managed by Cooking Light and/or Time-Life Books.

Home Repair, branded and managed by Time-Life Books.

Science.

Photography, branded and managed by Life.

Travel, branded and managed by Travel & Leisure.

Extra! Integrating the video and promotional opportunities arising from the syndicated daily TV show produced by Time Telepictures and Warner Brothers.

Other Time Warner divisions Integrating services from the Warner Music group, Warner Brothers studios, HBO, TWIG and other Time Warner divisions as they choose.

TOOLS

The service should contain the following tools: Mosaic interfaces and hypertext documents; graphical user interfaces; hot button and icon links; pages that combine graphics and text; bulletin boards with links to relevant content; full text and keyword search engines; agenting technology; personalized databases and portfolios; e-mail; graphical user interfaces; and an integrated set of software for navigating the Internet.