Microsoft Unveils Silverlight to Power the Next Generation of Media Experiences on the Web; Leading media companies and solution providers announce support for new solution for video and interactivity on Mac- and Windows-based Web browsers.

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Body

LAS VEGAS, April 16 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Today at the 2007 National Association of Broadcasters conference (NAB2007), Microsoft Corp. unveiled Microsoft(R) Silverlight(TM), a new cross-browser, cross-platform plug-in for delivering the next generation of media experiences and rich interactive applications (RIAs) for the Web. Early supporters of the new platform include Akamai Technologies Inc., Brightcove Inc., Eyeblaster Inc., Limelight Networks, Major League Baseball and Netflix Inc.

(Logo: *http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20000822/MSFTLOGO*)

Microsoft Silverlight, previously called Windows(R) Presentation Foundation Everywhere (WPF/E), integrates with existing Web technologies and assets to provide higher-quality experiences with lower costs for media delivery. Delivered to end users through a seamless, fast installation, Silverlight offers consistent experiences to both Macintosh and Windows users on a variety of browsers including Internet Explorer(R), Firefox and Safari.

"Content providers are seeking a way to deliver rich interactive applications using the tools and skills they already have. They want an end- to-end solution that enables them to rapidly reach multiple platforms with reasonable deployment costs," said Bob Muglia, senior vice president of the Server and Tools Business at Microsoft. "Microsoft Silverlight delivers on this need and marks a real step forward for the industry. Silverlight is the only solution in the market today that enables content creators to tap into the broad ecosystem for Windows Media(R) technologies while taking the Web's rich interactive application experience to new levels."

Leading media companies and solution providers have announced support for Silverlight including Akamai Technologies, Brightcove, Eyeblaster, Limelight Networks, Major League Baseball, NaviSite Inc., Netflix, Pinnacle Systems Inc., Rhozet Corp., Skinkers, Sonic Solutions, Tarari Inc., Telestream Inc. and Winnov. All have indicated plans to deliver Silverlight-based experiences for their viewers and customers.

"We've consistently heard from the media companies that they want the ability to easily implement key technologies for Internet video and rich broadband experiences," said Bob Mason, chief technology officer at Brightcove. "With the release of Silverlight, Microsoft is bringing rich interactive experiences coupled with the VC-1 video standard into the browser, and we're excited to announce plans to support this technology and continue to give our customers access to the cutting-edge technologies that will drive the growth of Internet TV."

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Silverlight Scales From HD to Mobile, With Peace of Mind for Content
 Owners
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Silverlight uses Windows Media Video (WMV), Microsoft's implementation of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (SMPTE) VC-1 video standard, enabling immediate compatibility with the millions of hours of content already available on the Web, and adds support for interactive video experiences that scale from full-screen high-definition (HD) to mobile scenarios.

"Netflix is leading the way for people to rent movies for instant viewing over the Internet," said Netflix Chief Product Officer Neil Hunt. "With 6.3 million members now and millions more in the next few years, Netflix needs rapid and reliable scalability so all members can enjoy DVD-quality movies immediately on our instant-viewing feature. We depend on Microsoft Windows Media technologies, and we're excited about Microsoft Silverlight as a platform to enable instant watching of great content for all our members, on multiple platforms."

Silverlight customers will also enjoy compatibility with the broad ecosystem of Windows Media-enabled tools and solutions, and the proven scalability and reliability of the Emmy Award-winning Windows Media technologies. At the discretion of content providers, Silverlight will also deliver digital rights management support built on the recently announced Microsoft PlayReady(TM) content access technology - with feature parity on Windows and Mac.

Microsoft Expands Reach of .NET Framework

Based on the Microsoft .NET Framework, Silverlight enables developers and designers to easily use existing skills and tools to deliver media experiences and RIAs for the Web with role-specific tools: for designers, Microsoft Expression(R) Studio, and for developers, Visual Studio(R). New tool and server investments for media professionals include the following:

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-- Expression Media Encoder. Microsoft Expression Media Encoder, which

   will be a feature of Microsoft Expression Media, enables rapid import,

   compression and Web publishing of digital video imported from a variety
   of popular formats, including AVI and QuickTime, into WMV. Capable of

   running on the desktop or Windows Server(R), Expression Media Encoder
   is a template-driven system that integrates seamlessly into existing

   Web publishing workflows for both live and on-demand content delivery.

   Expression Media Encoder will be a free download for customers of

   Expression Media when it is shipped later this year.

-- Hardware-accelerated video publishing. When paired with a Tarari

   Encoder Accelerator, Expression Media Encoder reduces encode times by
   up to 15 times over software alone, a significant capabilities and cost

   advantage for publishing Web video today.
-- Even greater scalability with Windows Server, code-named "Longhorn."

   Building on the industry-leading streaming and Web server platform,

   Windows Server "Longhorn" will enable customers to experience up to
   twice the scalability on the same hardware when compared with Windows

   Server 2003. Also being announced today is the Internet Information

   Services 7 (IIS7) Media Pack, which adds new cost-saving features such
   as bit-rate throttling and other advanced features designed to help

   further reduce the cost of media distribution. The IIS7 Media Pack will
   be a free download for customers of Windows Server "Longhorn" when it
   ships.
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Microsoft Silverlight, Expression Media Encoder and Tarari Encoder Accelerator will be shown in Microsoft Booth SL3213, in the South Hall of the Las Vegas Convention Center. Microsoft's broader development platform and additional details about Silverlight will be shared in the keynote presentation at Microsoft's upcoming Mix07 conference, April 30 in Las Vegas. Microsoft will also release the beta for Silverlight during the Mix07 conference. More information about the Mix07 event can be found at *http://www.mix07.com/* .

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Partner Support for Silverlight

"Both Microsoft and Akamai believe in enabling lower-cost, highly available media delivery solutions that push rich user experiences to new heights. Silverlight represents a significant leap forward for customers looking for cost-effective rich media solutions with assured application delivery using Windows Media technologies. We agree that facilitating a standard way to distribute rich media is in the industry's best interest, and will be releasing tools in support of the Silverlight initiative to work hand in hand with our new Stream OS media management solution."

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- Paul Sagan
   President & CEO
   Akamai
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"Eyeblaster customers depend on us to simplify and translate technologies to deliver effective brand messages, regardless of how ads are distributed. Faced with increasing complexities associated with varying formats and development platforms, Silverlight provides an environment that is both familiar and flexible, enabling us to increase creative options for advertisers and develop truly immersive online campaigns."

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- Gal Trifon
   President and CEO
   Eyeblaster
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"High performance is integral to our success and ongoing leadership as a content delivery network. With Microsoft Silverlight, we're supporting a platform that will revolutionize the capabilities and experiences we can provide, using scalable and recognized technologies already deployed by our customers."

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- Nathan Raciborski
   Co-founder and Chief Technology Officer
   Limelight Networks
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"In an effort to continue providing the best content-delivery solutions available, our support for Silverlight will ensure that our customers have the next-generation capabilities to grow their business. Silverlight provides significant efficiencies by using familiar tools and technologies, all while enhancing the end-user experience by adding engaging graphics and interactivity."

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- Denis Martin
   Chief Technology Officer
   NaviSite
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"As a leading consumer video editing application, Pinnacle is constantly looking to provide our customers with new and creative ways to share their Pinnacle Studio projects with friends and family. We are very excited that our Studio customers can begin publishing Silverlight media today to enhance their Web-based social network experience - sharing media has never been so easy."

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- Jan Piros
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Director of Product Management, Video Editing
Pinnacle Systems

"Microsoft Silverlight provides a comprehensive environment for delivering rich media experiences online and beyond. With the support of Rhozet's suite of transcoding solutions, content providers will gain tremendous versatility and efficiencies for rich video distribution to Silverlight-based experiences."

- David Trescot
  CEO
  Rhozet

"Skinkers collaborated with Microsoft to introduce the co-developed peer- to-peer technology behind LiveStation, and now we're advancing this solution with support for Silverlight. The peer-to-peer approach in LiveStation enables Web experiences on par with live TV with limited infrastructure investments. Add the next-generation interactive and media playback capabilities in Silverlight, and LiveStation experiences become even more powerful."

- Matteo Berlucchi
  Co-Founder and CEO
  Skinkers

"Through our PC-based, Roxio-branded consumer software applications, Sonic has helped millions create, manage and consume personal digital media content and entertainment. Silverlight provides a unique opportunity for Sonic to not only enhance these applications, but also develop fresh Web- and mobile device-based products that will power a new generation of richly interactive digital media experiences."

- Dave Habiger
  President and CEO

  Sonic Solutions

"Our strong relationship with Microsoft over the years has produced industry-leading video acceleration products that significantly accelerate encoding capabilities for content distribution using the Windows Media platform. We're continuing this successful collaboration by optimizing our Encoder Accelerator platform for the Expression Media Encoder to achieve unprecedented video-publishing efficiencies for Silverlight-based environments."

- Jim Wilson
  CTO

  Microsoft Technologies
  Tarari

"As a leader in encoding-based media workflow solutions, Telestream is pushing the boundaries of this evolving industry. Silverlight has the potential to reset the bar for online media experiences, and through our support for it Telestream will be at the forefront of solutions that enhance and drive adoption of this next-generation media delivery platform."

- David Heppe
  President
  Telestream

"Winnov's CBOX3 presentation appliances are specifically designed to provide effective knowledge dissemination through rich-media capture and distribution. With Silverlight, Winnov is enabling its customers to deliver richer, truly compelling playback experiences to an even broader on-demand and live broadcast viewership."

- Olivier Garbe
  Founder and CEO
  Winnov

CONTACT: Lauren Mayer, +1-425-452-5400, lmayer@webershandwick.com , Jason

Wellcome, +1-425-452-5400, jwellcome@webershandwick.com , both of Weber Shandwick

Web site: http://www.microsoft.com/

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