

News from Acorn Computers

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Acorn Branches Out Into Interactive Multimedia With Launch Of Online Media

The Acorn Computer Group has announced its entry into the interactive multimedia market with the launch of Online Media, a new operation within the Acorn Computer Group. Online Media, based in Cambridge, aims to exploit the technical expertise of the Acorn Computer Group to bring affordable interactive multimedia products and services to the huge market emerging from the information superhighway. To achieve this aim, Online Media will be working with major players in this arena. Examples of current important partners include: Olivetti, Advanced RISC Machines Ltd, Advanced Telecommunications Modules Ltd, BNR/Northern Telecom, News International, MAI, Anglia Television, Oracle and Cambridge Cable.

Online Media's revenues will derive initially from the supply of set-top box equipment. Longer term, Online Media is looking to develop additional revenue streams in the areas of design license sales, authoring software sales, a range of online services and consultancy. Online Media will be headed by Malcolm Bird who has 16 years of IT and consultancy experience and is Technical Director of Acorn Computers Limited. Online Media has 20 staff at launch, several of whom have transferred from design, and sales and marketing roles within Acorn Computers Limited.

The first of Online Media's products, the Online Media set-top box, has already generated interest from large communications providers such as Northern Telecom and Alcatel. In the future, Online Media plans to develop products relevant to the broader multimedia market. These will include software for creating services running on set-top devices, services to support the creation of new applications for interactive use and personal multimedia devices. In addition, an interactive service to support education in the home and school is being planned which will draw upon Acorn's considerable expertise in the education sector.

Commenting on the launch of Online Media, Sam Wauchope, Managing Director of the Acorn Computer Group, said: "Interactive multimedia is set to have an even more profound long-term impact on society than the advent of popular microcomputing.

"Acorn's proven ability in delivering low-cost, RISC-based systems and our experience in multimedia equip us ideally for the move into the burgeoning information superhighway marketplace.



Acorn Computers Limited, Acorn House, Vision Park, Histon, Cambridge CB4 4AE



"I am very confident that the launch of Online Media will be a significant step towards us becoming a key player in this emerging market" he added:

Malcolm Bird, Chief Executive of Online Media, commented: "The launch of Online Media and its technologies is a major contribution to the European effort in this area: The different installed infrastructure and regulatory controls across Europe allow us to gain experience across a range of technologies and develop an early lead:

"We will be using the strengths of ARM processors and optimised systems design to create extremely cost effective products:

"To this end, we are in the process of identifying and developing new partnerships on a global scale: We already have established key supporters within the telecoms and cable markets such as BNR/Northern Telecom and News International: Online Media will give the Acorn Computer Group a solid stake in the global multimedia market," concluded Bird:

Founded in 1978, with 1993 revenues of £54.3m, Acorn Computers is the premier supplier of IT solutions to UK education and has been the leading provider of 32-bit RISC based personal computers since 1987: Acorn works closely with a strong community of industry partners, users and software developers to provide innovative technology solutions for the education, consumer, publishing and international markets:

The Acorn Computer Group is a holding company for Acorn Computers Limited, Acorn Australia, Acorn New Zealand, Acorn GmbH and Online Media: Acorn Computer Group owns 43% of Advanced RISC Machines Ltd:

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