

# Sony to launch video-sharing network on Friday



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TOKYO (Reuters) - Sony Corp. (6758.T) said on Thursday it will launch a video-sharing site in Japan on Friday, marking the electronics and entertainment firm's first step towards challenging Google Inc.'s (Nasdaq:GOOG - news) YouTube service.

News Corp. (NYSE:NWSA - news) and NBC Universal said last month they would also launch a free online video site this year, as traditional media firms scramble to keep up with video sharing.

Sony also hopes to introduce its service, called eyeVio, abroad, but said it first wanted to gauge the reception at home before drawing up an overseas launch schedule.

"This is part of Sony's quiet software revolution," CEO Howard Stringer said at a news conference.

"It's an opportunity to transmit user-generated video anywhere you want to, anytime to anybody, in a protected environment," Stringer said.

Unlike YouTube, which has drawn criticism that it tolerates user piracy and faces a \$1 billion lawsuit from Viacom Inc. (NYSE:VIA - news) alleging copyright violation, Sony said it would closely monitor content on the service.

Such a model would appeal to companies looking to release content and to protect their image, said Sony spokesman Takeshi Honma.

"We believe there's a need for a clean and safe place where companies can place their advertisements," Honma said.

Earlier this year Google agreed to display warnings on YouTube in Japanese telling users not to upload copyright materials. Last year it removed nearly 30,000 video files from the site at the request of Japanese media firms.

Users will also be able to select who can view their content, and for how long.

The site will be free to users, but spokesman Honma said Sony hoped it would eventually generate revenue through advertisements and tie-ups with media companies.

Shares in Sony closed up 0.9 percent at 6,460 yen, compared with a 1.12 percent rise in the Nikkei average (^N225 - news).

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