Porn to spice up cell phones

By Sinead Carew
Wed Jan 30, 1:00 PM ET

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Size matters in pornography, except when it comes to tiny mobile phone screens, the next frontier for erotica.

If the adult entertainment industry has its way, Americans will soon get a choice of free porn on cell phones -- or at least some photographs of good-looking girls in bikinis.

Unlike in Europe, mobile porn has yet to take off in North America as carriers have been afraid of offending political and religious groups and parents concerned about children being exposed to adult content.

That may change this year as phone companies plan to loosen control on their networks to allow a wider variety of gadgets and services, while introducing new tools to shield minors. More advanced phones with better Web browsers like Apple Inc's iPhone also offer higher quality pictures and video.

"It will be impossible to stop the adult business exploitation of mobile entertainment," said Gregory Piccionelli, a lawyer specializing in adult entertainment at law firm Piccionelli & Sarno.

He predicted that U.S. consumers may soon be offered free porn on mobile phones alongside paid services like live video or "adult dates," a term for prearranged sex with strangers.

A conference being held in Miami this week is devoted to discussing mobile opportunities as the porn industry seeks to find a new driver of growth. A surfeit of free online porn sites has cut into profits that have so far come mainly from DVDs, videotapes and pay-per-view or subscription-based Web sites.

To survive, adult entertainers need to be on top of phone trends, said Jay Grdina, president of adult entertainment provider ClubJenna Inc, which he co-founded with his wife, world-famous porn star Jenna Jameson.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20080130/wr_nm/mobile_porn_dc_1;yLt=AqWA7a_kiP.1u1BoWtOE4wE1vAl
Porn to spice up cell phones - Yahoo! News

wife, world-famous porn star Jenna Jameson.

"If you don't evolve you're going to die. ... We need to make sure we're ready," Grdina said in an interview before his keynote speech at this week's Mobile Adult Content Congress, where adult entertainment and technology companies are brainstorming over how to make mobile porn a viable business.

Popular video-sharing site YouTube.com’s plan to expand to about 100 million advanced cell phones may help the cause, even if it means some ClubJenna content -- which includes everything from glamour photographs of scantily clad models to hardcore videos -- is seen for free on phones. ClubJenna was sold to Playboy Enterprises Inc in 2006.

"It's a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it's giving away content. ... On the other hand, it's expanding the brand," said Grdina, adding that ClubJenna needs a boost in the U.S. market, where it generates "pretty much zero" mobile revenue compared with "very healthy" revenue in Europe.

While he has had trouble winning deals with U.S. phone operators so far, Grdina hopes for a deal within 18 months to sell photographs of bikini-clad models without nudity.

TITILLATION TO GO

Pornography has made inroads on cell phones in Europe, where it was a $775 million industry in 2007 that will grow to $1.5 billion by 2012, with the global market reaching $3.5 billion in 2010, according to Britain-based Juniper Research.

In comparison, North America generated just $26 million last year as carriers shied away from porn sales. Canada's second-largest phone company Telus Corp, for example, withdrew a mobile porn service last year after complaints from hundreds of customers and criticism from the Catholic Church.

Gartner telecoms analyst Michael King said he expects mobile porn to be more prevalent around 2009, when there will be more phones that can show high-quality graphics.

Porn is "one of the bigger pieces of Web revenue. You would assume the natural extension would be on mobile," King said.

Piccionelli said the iPhone -- which Apple has forecast to sell 10 million units by the end of 2008 -- is ideal for viewing porn due to its graphics and Web browser that mimics computer browsers. Most phones have stripped-down browsers.

A new phone system being built by Google Inc may also boost consumer choice as the Internet company has pledged to support any type of mobile software.

But the key to development of mobile porn may be willingness by carriers to open their networks to more content. Even if they don't sell porn they would benefit from additional fees paid by consumers if mobile Web-surfing increases.

Verizon Wireless, the second-largest U.S. mobile service, has promised to let customers use any device or software that can work on its network this year.

Similarly, Sprint Nextel Corp said it will support a wide array of gadgets for a fast wireless Web service it kicks off in 2008.
Wireless Web service it kicks off in 2008.

Spokesman John Polivka said customers of the service would be able to view anything they like. Sprint will also provide Web filters to help keep minors from adult sites.

NeuStar sells an age-verification system for which it aims to have both a U.S. carrier client and a content customer within six months.

"Two thousand eight is when the first people are going to be sticking their toes in the water," said John Ticer, a NeuStar marketing executive.

Piccionelli said mobile porn will always face uncertainties, such as a possible privacy backlash against age-verification systems as consumers need to give personal details.

"However, that does not mean that uncertainty will prohibit enormous profits from being made in this business," he said.

(Editing by Brian Moss)