

## THE WEB BECOMES A MIRROR OF OURSELVES

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By RYAN E. SMITH  
BLADE STAFF WRITER

Each year seems to bring with it a new Internet darling.

Several years ago, it was the music swapping site, Napster.

2006 was the year of YouTube.

It's easy to see why: millions and millions of people want to see a clip of a cat flushing a toilet over and over again. Or of guys dressed up in Star Trek outfits making home videos.

Well, maybe not. But there's something for everyone on this video-sharing Web site whose popularity exploded this year. It now serves up more than 100 million videos a day to viewers looking for everything from original content to old Saturday Night Live sketches.

Locally, the result was a bit of fame for Bucyrus, Ohio native, Judson Laipply. His video, "The Evolution of Dance," in which he rocks out to 30 songs in six minutes, became the most watched video on the site this year.

Don't think people take notice of this kind of thing? YouTube announced in October it was being bought by Google for nearly \$1.7 billion. As for Mr. Laipply, he was asked to dance at the NBA Finals in Dallas and on NBC's *Today* show.

Another man with northwest Ohio ties managed to profit off an Internet video, although it was through YouTube rival, Metacafe. Corey Wisniewski, of Point Place, gets paid \$5 for every 1,000 people who click on a video of his cat using the toilet, making him an early beneficiary of what could be a growing trend in the video-sharing world.

Of course, too much sharing can get you in hot water. That's what police and many parents are worried about when it comes to social networking sites like MySpace, which continued its incredible popularity this year.

### YAHOO! TOP 10 OVERALL SEARCHES

1. Britney Spears
2. WWE
3. Shakira
4. Jessica Simpson
5. Paris Hilton
6. American Idol
7. Beyonce Knowles
8. Chris Brown
9. Pamela Anderson
10. Lindsay Lohan

Teens love Myspace, with its tools for messaging, sharing photos, and creating personal pages, but so do sexual predators posing as youths. A number of criminal cases across the country were made this year against predators who allegedly abused young people after making contact on MySpace.

All of this sharing — videos, music, and more — has made the Web more of a mirror of our world than ever. Don't look too closely, though; you might not like what you see.

For example, Yahoo! turned in its list of most searched items on the Web. Britney Spears — she of no underpants and no K-Fed — topped the list. Again.



Britney Spears

Think our bubble gum culture is a little obsessed with celebrities? Shakira was No. 3, followed by Jessica Simpson and Paris Hilton.

The top two news stories were the deaths of "Crocodile Hunter" Steve Irwin and former Playmate Anna Nicole Smith's son. The war in Iraq finished third.

Locally, people were interested in undergarments, as the saga of a red bra that caused an accident on I-75 captured the minds of readers. It snagged two of the top 10 positions among the most read stories on The Blade's Web site.

The sentencing of Tom Noe, the GOP fund-raiser at the heart of Ohio's biggest political scandal in a generation, finished 10th — well behind an item about Katie Holmes marrying Tom Cruise.

Even more troubling: a story about former Baywatch star David Hasselhoff beat both Tom Noe and TomKat.

Contact Ryan E. Smith at: [ryansmith@theblade.com](mailto:ryansmith@theblade.com) or 419-724-6103.

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