

on their performances. But Vinciguerra said he was "encouraged" about the markets where the morning newscasts improved or held even with previous sweeps and lead-in rating averages. In Philadelphia, Vinciguerra attributed KYW's early success to "heavy" advance promotion and the transfer of popular evening news sports anchor Ukee Washington to host the expanded 6-8 a.m. local newscast.

In Baltimore, WJZ news director Gail Bending attributed the positive returns to several factors, including the faster pace of the station's 5:30-7 a.m. newscasts and the addition of two new "interactive" segments. One of these has remote crews stationed in places such as donut shops and bus depots, where they interview passersby. The other, "Just the Fax," has the

anchors responding to letters from viewers. "We could just do the standard news, weather, traffic and cooking segments, but getting everyday people more involved in the newscasts is what localism is all about," said Bending.

In Los Angeles, a market where five of the seven stations compete with morning newscasts, KCBS is getting back into local news from 5:30-8 a.m. for the first time in two years. Steve Blue, assistant news director at KCBS, says the TV station is utilizing editorial resources from the CBS group's highly-rated news radio station, KNX-AM. KCBS is using KNX's recognized on-air talents, such as business reporter Jerry Laird and traffic reporter Jim Thornton. "Our plan is to utilize the synergies we have between radio and TV," Blue said. ■

## NEW MEDIA

**Since we're not sure why** the thing was called LineRunner in the first place, it's just as well that Time Warner has renamed its high-speed, online cable service to reflect more closely its corporate heritage. The new name of the service is Road Runner—for the Looney Tunes character from the entertainment giant's Warner Bros. unit, the company said last week. The service, which offers "proprietary national and local content at unparalleled speeds," so far has been available only to residents of Elmira, N.Y. The new identity, which includes the cartoon character in the logo, goes live Sept. 10 with the service's rollout in Akron, Ohio. The high-speed modem product should not be confused with the Time Warner Full Service Network, the interactive television trial in Orlando, Fla. No immediate word on whether problem-plagued FSN will be renamed, um, Bugs Bunny.

**A new player is making its way** into the increasingly crowded Internet gaming market. Total Entertainment Network says it has bought the online rights to more than 25 games, which can be downloaded from the company's sites at [www.ten.net](http://www.ten.net). But that doesn't mean that players then go off to their computer terminals to play the games by themselves. Though each game is loaded onto the individual user's hard drive, TEN has engineered the game so that the competition can take place over the Internet with other players, even those with a lowly 14.4 modem. The San Francisco-based company seems to have some pretty high-powered backers, including Ameritech, Goldman Sachs and Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers. TEN's new director of advertising sales and Internet marketing is Erik Lundberg, the former director of advertising for Songline Studios. He said he was looking forward to working with a service that has a variety of revenue streams, ranging from game and game accessory sales to content sponsorships. Like others in the field, Lundberg sounds less enamored of the advertising banners that are still the bread and butter of online marketing. "You have to offer standard banners, but that's pretty boring," he said.—By Cathy Taylor

# 'Omni' Back From the Grave

*Magazine of the future is reborn as futurist magazine on the Web*

**NEW MEDIA/** By Cathy Taylor

**T**he word cyberspace was coined in a 1982 short story by William Gibson published in the defunct *Omni* magazine. Now the monthly is about to come back to life in cyberspace, as a new magazine formatted exclusively for the World Wide Web. *Omni* is one of several new electronic publishing projects planned by General Media, publishers of *Penthouse*, as it strives to recover from a difficult 1995. A web version of *Longevity*, another General Media title that recently ceased publication, may be next.

The *Omni* site, slated to launch Sept. 15, could prove—or disprove—the Internet axiom that the savings in printing costs in publishing electronically will permit many niche publications, which may have failed at newsstands, to survive. In fact, with paper costs skyrocketing,

*Omni* Interactive president Kathy Keeton last week sounded decidedly pessimistic about the future of the magazine business. "Magazines themselves continue to decline," she said.

In that context, Keeton expects the *Omni* Webzine could surpass the subscriber base of its print predecessor, which according to its pub-

lishers statement on file with the Audit Bureau of Circulations, had a total average paid circulation of 703,018 as of June 30, 1995, a few months before it folded.

For *Omni*, a bullish outlook probably makes some sense, since the magazine's demographic—males 18-34, with high levels of education—is an excellent fit for the Web. General Media also seems intent on adding elements such as real-time video, as soon as technologically possible, as part of an effort to ensure that the *Omni* Internet product is perfectly up-to-date. Those who access the site at [www.omnimag.com](http://www.omnimag.com) won't find an electronic reincarnation of the print product, officials claim. "What a lot of publications are doing out on the Internet is taking things that were created for print and putting them online," said Pamela Weintraub, the site's editor, who had been editor-at-large of the print version of *Omni*.

Keeton said an online version of *Longevity* and an online book store, as yet unnamed, were both on the boards. The book store, which will begin "to start up in dribs and drabs in September," will be connected to the *Omni* site. ■



**Editor Pamela Weintraub is bringing back *Omni* to where it belongs**

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