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Media Networks bringing ads to hand-held devices

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The next time you use your iPhone or BlackBerry to see a weather forecast, you also might be enticed by an advertisement for raincoats, courtesy of a Stamford-based business that specializes in targeted advertising.

Stamford-based **Media Networks Inc.**, a division of Time Inc., has launched a new geo-targeted mobile advertising service, allowing marketers to transmit ads to consumers' cell phones, e-mail devices and personal digital assistants.

Media Networks Digital is developing partnerships with mobile Web sites that require user-initiated ZIP code entry forms. **By requiring ZIP codes to deliver advertising, the company ensures ads reach their targeted geography** with greater

consistency than those relying on cell phone area codes or remote servers, President Rob Reif said.

"We believe the future of advertising is ultimately linked to emerging platforms, such as mobile," Reif said. "Our advertising partners want to target consumers across multiple channels and geographies."

Media Networks tested the mobile offering last fall in Dallas, and more than 150,000 advertising messages were delivered to mobile users in that market, with a 0.6 percent click-through rate, nearly twice that of a simultaneous online campaign.

The company plans to work with mobile Web sites, including AccuWeather, Fandango and MovieFone, said Matthew Fanelli, director of digital media. It also will focus on prospective clients in telecommunications, travel and tourism, finance,

and consumer packaged goods.

Media Networks' new service is an electronic version of the traditional direct mail method — using mailing lists to target prospective customers, said Kevin McEvoy, marketing professor at the Stamford branch of the University of Connecticut. And it will happen despite whether people like it.

"There have been attempts to use technology to work around barriers to reach people trying to avoid advertising," he said.

Media Networks, which has been involved in target market advertising for 40 years, partners with online content providers, such as iVillage and About.com, to connect with consumers demographically and geographically. It also partners with publishers, such as Hearst, Hachette Filipacchi and Meredith Publishing Group.

