

Sling Media's SlingCatcher Puts Your PC, DVR and TV on One Screen

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(Source: San Jose Mercury News)By Troy Wolverton, San Jose Mercury News, Calif.

Sep. 22--Device makers have long been trying to link computers and TVs only to find little interest from consumers for their products.

But an upcoming device from **Sling Media** may get a better reception.

Early next month, the Foster City company will release the SlingCatcher, a \$300 gadget that, among other things, will allow consumers to watch just about any video they can find on the Web on their living room TV. So a user could watch a home video on YouTube, an episode of "Fringe" from Hollywood studio-backed Hulu or even a video report from the Mercury News Web site.

Few living room devices available today have access to that range of content, and those that do typically cost far more than the SlingCatcher.

"There's a tidal wave of content available on the Internet" that consumers want to get on their TVs, said Blake Krikorian, Sling's chief executive. "It can't be (just) one site or two. You don't know what people are going to want to watch tomorrow."

Analysts who have long been awaiting a breakthrough device to connect the PC and living room TV are excited about the SlingCatcher's prospects.

"This is one of those transformational devices that hones a market, if not an industry," said Josh Martin, an analyst with Yankee Group, a technology research and consulting firm.

The SlingCatcher will do more than just relay Web video. Consumers can use it to play or display much of the digital content they have stored on their

computers: including MP3 music files, digital photos and home videos. Using the same screencapture feature that the device uses to stream Web videos to a TV, consumers can also send over a Word document, a PowerPoint presentation or snippets of a Web page, such as a list of stock quotes.

As its name implies, the device also "catches" video sent from a SlingBox. A SlingBox allows users to watch live or recorded video from their set-top box or DVR on a laptop or mobile phone. With a SlingCatcher, consumers can also watch video sent out from a SlingBox on a second TV.

Consumers with a SlingBox connected to a DVR in their living room and a SlingCatcher in their bedroom wouldn't need to have a second set-top box or DVR in their bedroom. They could use the SlingCatcher to watch whatever they might be able to see on their living room TV.

The SlingCatcher has been a long time coming. Sling first announced the device nearly two years ago at the 2007 Consumer Electronics Show. It showed off a prototype at this year's CES.

Krikorian said the company, which is owned by Dish Network spinoff EchoStar Technologies, delayed the device until it thought the gadget was ready.