



## With 'Rate My Room,' Scripps Merges User Content with Interior Design

By [Fred Aun](#)

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"Rate My Room," a new interactive feature on Scripps Networks' HGTV.com Web site, relies on social networking to collect images of viewers' home projects and allow others to discuss and rate them. The site, launched today, relies on technology from Neighborhood America to gather and manage images as well as feedback from viewers.

The network expects the "easy-to-use hub" will be popular among people adept at decorating and those who have the desire "but need some help pulling it together." HGTV is encouraging people who submit pictures to add their thoughts about the room and to ask for assistance solving their design or decorating problems.

Scripps considers Rate My Room to be a user-generated "companion" to HGTV.com's "Designers' Portfolio," a gallery of more than 1,000 images uploaded by more than 100 professional designers featured on HGTV.

The most popular home design projects, as picked by Rate My Room participants, might be featured on a Rate My Room television program being considered by Scripps Networks, HGTV spokeswoman Jerilyn Bliss told ClickZ on Monday.

Rate My Room will launch with run-of-site advertisers, said Bliss. "Opportunities exist for two banner sizes and local entitlement," she added. "As it gets populated with rooms, we anticipate this to be one of the most popular areas on the site both for users and advertisers."

Bliss said Scripps does "anticipate that more than one television opportunity will grow out from" the new site. Bliss, who said she submitted some pictures of her kitchen to the site, also noted Rate My Room should be fertile hunting ground for the network's TV producers who are probably going to "mine some great ideas."

Bliss said user discussions on HGTV.com are often perused by those on the TV side of the operation when they're looking for program concepts. "We've had success in the past with online content," she said. "It creates a good amount of enthusiasm and we can quickly see if an audience is excited about a topic." However, she said a Rate My Room TV show is not a certainty. If Rate My Room does become a TV program, it will not be the first HGTV.com feature to spawn such an offshoot. The HGTV program "Bad Bad Bath" began as an online discussion by someone who claimed she had "the worst bathroom in America," said Bliss.

The goal of Rate My Room, according to Scripps, is to "create community around the common interest of interior design."

Neighborhood America has provided social networking features to a number television programs, including "CBS Evening News with Katie Couric" and the "Be Seen, Be Heard" campaign on ABC.

Its software was used to allow viewer interaction with George Stephanopolous during his interview of President Bush.

In announcing the launch of Rate My Room, Scripps Networks Interactive Senior Vice President Jim Sexton said the new feature will use "cutting-edge technology to enable good old-fashioned conversations and connections."

Neighborhood America's software systems allow enterprises -- Scripps in this case -- to structure and control participant input and interaction, said Neighborhood America spokeswoman Kristi Grigsby in an interview with ClickZ. "They capture the content and our system enables them to integrate it into their programming," she said. "A social network can form" and viewers can then offer thoughts, tips and tricks about the projects and home design in general.

If the idea is a success, users of the new site will "rate the rooms and comment on them and the end result is that HGTV will send a film crew out for the highest-rated rooms... It will be a complete social network around a common interest," said Grigsby.

Neighborhood America suggested Scripps is taking enterprise social networking "to the next level" by relying on user-generated content as the basis for a potential TV show.

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