

Scripps acquires leading digital-media humor brand Cracked to expand millennial reach

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CINCINNATI – The E.W. Scripps Company (NYSE: SSP) has acquired multi-platform satire brand Cracked, which informs and entertains millennial audiences through a high-traffic [website](#), mobile apps, original digital video, social media and a popular podcast.

Cracked’s award-winning editorial team has been known for decades for smart humor that blends comedy and satire with social criticism.

“Cracked is the expert in using clever humor to engage a younger audience that is very loyal to its brand,” said Rich Boehne, chairman, president and CEO of Scripps. “Its editorial vision brings a fresh perspective to the way the next generation creates and consumes news, information and entertainment.”

Cracked ranks in the top tier of digital humor-focused brands and has a strong following among younger consumers, especially affluent millennial males. Regularly ranking first or second among comedy sites according to comScore, Cracked’s audience is loyal and deeply engaged. A full 50 percent of Cracked.com’s audience comes directly to the site, and users spend an average of 8 minutes engaging with the text and video — attractive metrics that are rarely matched by digital publishers in today’s environment of hyper-fragmentation and reliance on social media.

Cracked is an advertising-supported business with the scale to deliver impact for brands seeking to reach millennial consumers.

Scripps and Cracked’s current owner, Demand Media (NYSE: DMD), have agreed to a \$39 million cash purchase price. Cracked had revenue in 2015 of approximately \$11 million and was profitable.

Cracked adds to the growing portfolio of Scripps digital and over-the-top brands. In 2015, Scripps purchased podcast industry leader Midroll Media, expanding its reach into over-the-top audio. Also in 2015, the company repositioned and accelerated the expansion of Newsy, its OTT video news brand. Today, Newsy has reached distribution agreements with the majority of the emerging OTT TV platforms, including Sling TV and Apple TV.

“Cracked is a natural extension of the Scripps strategy to take a leadership position in high-growth content marketplaces,” said Adam Symson, Scripps chief digital officer. “Scripps will help Cracked reach new and larger audiences as it continues to build its brand on the web, in over-the-top video and audio and on other emerging platforms.”

Headquartered in Santa Monica, California, Cracked launched in 1958 as a humor magazine. It was purchased in 2007 by Demand Media, which focused on growing the website Cracked.com.

The Cracked team will continue to operate out of its Santa Monica offices and will be led by Mandy Ng Rusin, general manager and vice president, and Jack O’Brien, vice president and editor-in-chief.

“Scripps is a natural partner for Cracked as we continue to invest in creating high-quality content focused on original journalism, social commentary and pop culture analysis, all through a comedic lens,” said Ng Rusin. “Our companies share a nimble approach to testing new digital platforms to reach and engage audiences and advertisers.”

Scripps will host an investor call at 5 p.m. Eastern today. Callers from the U.S. can dial (800) 230-1074 and international callers can dial (612) 288-0340 and ask to join “the Scripps call.” Media requests for interviews with Scripps leaders can be coordinated through Kari Wethington (kari.wethington@scripps.com or 513-977-3763).

About Scripps

[The E.W. Scripps Company](#) (NYSE: SSP) serves audiences and businesses through a growing portfolio of television, radio and digital media brands. Scripps is one of the nation’s largest independent TV station owners, with 33 television stations in 24 markets and a reach of nearly one in five U.S. households. It also owns 34 radio stations in eight markets. Scripps also runs an expanding collection of local and national digital journalism and information businesses, including podcast industry leader [Midroll Media](#) and over-the-top video news service [Newsy](#). Scripps also produces television shows including [“THE LIST”](#) and [“The Now,”](#) runs an award-winning investigative reporting newsroom in Washington, D.C., and serves as the long-time steward of the nation’s largest, most successful and longest-running educational program, the [Scripps National Spelling Bee](#). Founded in 1878, Scripps has held for decades to the motto, “Give light and the people will find their own way.”

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