

Online Auditions Create New Talent Networks

This past year marked the first time Canadian Idol accepted online auditions. The show is just one part of a growing trend of web-based auditions for actors, musicians, dancers and other performers. New talent networks have sprung up to take advantage of the emerging technology and increased demand. FindMeSignMe.com is one example of these new online audition venues, which use a combination of multimedia and Web 2.0 user generated content applications to collect and sort performances of all kinds.

Signs that online auditions would take their place beside the traditional variety as professional tools have grown over the years. Previous barriers were primarily technological. For example, online auditions rely on the ability to quickly upload and play rich content, including video and high quality audio. In 2002 only 12% of US households had a broadband connection. As of 2008 that number rose to about 50%.

The second major barrier was hardware. Prices on high quality webcams and digital camcorders have dropped to the point where basic consumer models can record clear images. On a related note, the rapid drop in memory media prices has allowed people with even low end computers to store full length videos on hard drives and blank DVDs.

The third barrier was software: namely, the fact that Web 2.0 applications have driven the popularity of online auditions. Web 2.0 first proved its value on Myspace, a network originally designed for bands to promote themselves. Ironically, Myspace gained so much general popularity on the strength of its features that according to many in the entertainment industry it is now a poor choice for new bands looking to spread the word.

Find Me Sign Me (findmesignme.com) is an example of a next-generation talent network. In addition to including support for user generated content, the site categorizes talent by field, keeping participants focused on the arts. The site also includes special services for casting agents, including the ability to post audition listings on the site or through a "button" of copied code. Support for casting agents and other talent seekers sets the talent network apart from predecessors, which included no special privileges for the people who actually wanted to hire talent. Considerations like this may prove to be the deciding factor that sets online audition services like Find Me Sign Me apart from general social networks and most importantly, entice the industry to effectively use online auditions.

About the Author

Find Me Sign Me is an online [talent network](#) that serves as a leader in connecting [casting agents](#) with online auditions for acting tryouts, venues looking for bands, dancers' jobs and more.

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