

July 27 | News breaks. We analyze. You invest.

## Aetna on Road to Rehabilitation

Shares are down after the managed care company lowered its outlook for the ... [More](#) ▶

BARRON'S

Dow Jones Reprints: This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers, use the Order Reprints tool at the bottom of any article or visit [www.djreprints.com](http://www.djreprints.com)

[See a sample reprint in PDF format.](#)[Order a reprint of this article now](#)**THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.**

WSJ.com

TECHNOLOGY | JULY 28, 2009

# Google, Ally to Target TV Spots

*Deal With Visible World Aims to Tailor Commercials With Set-Top Data*By [SUZANNE VRANICA](#)

Google Inc. is teaming up with Visible World Inc., a well-known New York technology company that uses software to create multiple versions of a given ad, in its push to offer TV advertisers more targeting options.

Google will combine the technology with its Google TV Ads, an automated auction-based system for buying TV ads by choosing which shows best fit the advertised product or service. The idea of such "addressable advertising" is to send a TV ad promoting a sale on minivans to a household with children, for example, and the same basic ad with a promo for a sports sedan to a childless household.

"Audiences are more and more fragmented," said Mike Steib, director of Google TV Ads. "One ad with one message for one audience is not the right thing for everyone."

The Internet company will pay Visible World to use its software, which allows advertisers and ad firms to tweak an ad by changing features such as graphics, music and the script. Visible World's software also allows advertisers to switch out ads on the fly based on results of how an ad is performing. Among the nine-year-old New York firm's investors are [Viacom Inc.](#), [Time Warner Inc.](#) and ad conglomerate [WPP PLC](#).

Specific terms of the deal weren't disclosed.

Google is part of a growing crowd of companies trying to reinvent TV advertising by using data from cable set-top boxes to better target commercials to the right consumers. [Cablevision Systems Corp.](#) is currently sending targeted ads to households in Brooklyn and the Bronx based on data about income, gender, even the presence of pets in a household. [DirecTV Group Inc.](#) is using software from start-up [Invidi Technologies Corp.](#) to roll out addressable advertising beginning in 2011.

In the recession, marketers are clamoring for better results from their TV ads, and cable operators are scrambling for new sources of revenue. But while lucrative results from targeted TV ads have long been promised, analysts and some marketers so far find the reality lacking.

"Addressable advertising on cable has been two years away from reality for, oh ... about 10 years," wrote Craig Moffet, an analyst with [Bernstein Research](#), in a note to investors earlier this year.

One of the biggest problems is scale. As they target ads to subgroups, advertisers still need to reach large swaths of consumers with a single campaign, a challenge given the competing technologies currently available. Cable operators, for example, have to be able to offer advertisers the ability to buy across different platforms so they can get the reach they need.

The growth of targeted advertising has also sparked privacy worries among regulators. Companies involved in addressable TV ads maintain that the household data used are anonymous.

Google's deal with Visible World came about after some advertisers, such as [Lenovo Group Ltd.](#), asked the two

companies to work together.

Lenovo had used Visible World's technology to serve up 50 different ads across hundreds of cable programs it had purchased using Google TV last year. Each ad had a different offer, to appeal to a different demographic group. The ads also included a Web address, which allowed Visible World to change the media buy based on response rates.

Write to Suzanne Vranica at [suzanne.vranica@wsj.com](mailto:suzanne.vranica@wsj.com)

Copyright 2009 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. Distribution and use of this material are governed by our [Subscriber Agreement](#) and by copyright law.

For non-personal use or to order multiple copies, please contact Dow Jones Reprints at 1-800-843-0008 or visit [www.djreprints.com](http://www.djreprints.com)