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Press Release – <u>For Immediate Release</u> – November 25, 2010

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ThanksgivingBlackFridayAds.com Upgrades Technology, Ready to Dominate Holiday Online Shopping Niche

Being number one in a niche market on the Web was the priority for Thanksgiving Black Friday Ads (TBFA) so they turned to pros at the Orion Group to upgrade their website and offer a more consumer-friendly, powerhouse solution. TBFA offers exclusive information about the biggest shopping day of the year for Black Friday shoppers preparing for the pre-dawn rush long before other resources are in the know. Prior to the upgrade, https://www.thanksgivingblackfridayads.com/ had endured its share of startup challenges.

"Our first challenge was bandwidth," says Scott Offord, owner of Thanksgiving Black Friday Ads (TBFA*). "Last year, our website crashed on the most important day of the year. At midnight on the eve of Black Friday 2009 the only thing you would have seen upon visiting our website was 'error connecting to database'. We simply had too much traffic and too little bandwidth",* Offord says. *"The server just couldn't handle the influx of traffic for the big Black Friday shopping event. I imagine it could have been the 364 page, 75MB PDF we were offering as a free download to those who wanted to see the Black Friday ads all in one place. And, hosting the website on a shared server through Godaddy was definitely a mistake for the size and demand of this website"* Offord said.

According to Offord, this year will be different. TBFA has decided to go with a higher quality hosting solution in 2010*. "With dozens of multi-megabyte PDF files, and even while being hosted on a beefier dedicated server, this year we quickly exceeded the amount of bandwidth we subscribed to through Red Anvil, a Milwaukee-based website hosting provider. We were even consistently maxing out our overflow 'burst' bandwidth day-to-day in mid-November",* says Joel Clermont, partner and senior programmer at Orion Group, who leases the bandwidth and dedicated server from Red Anvil. Clermont stated, *"To solve this problem, we moved all of the large assets to Amazon's S3 storage network. We then placed some simple redirect statements on our web site to permanently redirect visitors to Amazon's server when requesting those PDFs and images."*

"That obstacle having been solved, we quickly started running into another issue: raw CPU power. We were getting so many visitors per minute that the server couldn't keep up, even with all the Wordpress optimizations in place. Thankfully, we were about to roll out a new virtual machine hosting platform through Red Anvil anyway. This would be a perfect test and it passed with flying colors! We migrated from a single core physical server running both Apache and mySQL, to a multiple node VM, with dedicated nodes for both web and database, running over double the RAM of our previous server. Page loads dropped from 30 seconds to under 3 seconds", says Clermont.

Within the first week that Amazon S3 was implemented for the images and Black Friday ad scan files, the TBFA website used 300GB of data transfer through Amazon Web Service and received over 3 million file requests from their Amazon Simple Storage Service.

TBFA is expecting at least 200,000 visitors in the month of November, and is already steadily on its way to achieving that goal. In 2009, Google Analytics reported approximately 30,000 visitors in the month of November. Offord says that next year, if the website sees a similar increase in popularity, traffic volume will increase another 1000% over this year. The top Black Friday websites, who have been established for over five years, are estimated to be receiving approximately 2-4 million visitors each in the month of November. By laying the proper groundwork now, and making the website and hosting solution scalable, Offord says, *"We believe that in the next three years this volume of traffic will also be realized by https://www.thanksgivingblackfridayads.com/ if all goes as planned."*

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