

Going

## NEXT GEN

By Scott Leon

NEXT GALAXY MEDIA IS CREATING THE FUTURE IN DIGITAL MEDIA.



A cursory glance at Next Galaxy Media's (NGM) Web site won't reveal much to the average person about just what this rapidly growing entertainment marketing company does. But, for those of us who are into entertainment technology and love gadgets like our iPods, once you find out what they're about, the future of entertainment media will seem that much brighter. If you've ever downloaded music or video from the Internet, you're familiar with the type of technology this company creates and the services they offer, but what the talented folks at Orlando-based NGM are working on is light years beyond that, at the cutting edge of entertainment technology.

Creating and producing DVDs for stars such as Will Smith (shown here) is just the tip of the digital media iceberg for Next Galaxy Media.

"Basically, we handle everything from production to marketing, but have four main areas of operation: entertainment technology consulting, production, distribution and marketing," says Mary Spio, CEO and founder. "Specifically, we design programs that allow both video and audio media to be transmitted via the Web or satellite. We also produce, distribute and market any and all types of digital media, whether it's movies, games or promotional material."

NGM's projects range from creating and producing DVDs for celebrities including André Agassi

and Will Smith to using its video automation system to create digital concert backdrops for the likes of Britney Spears and Mary J. Blige.

Arguably, the most cutting-edge of this company's services is the creation of systems that allow distribution of digital media by satellite or Internet. One specific example is the work Spio did to help the Boeing Company create Boeing Digital Cinema. She designed, built and, along with Boeing, patented a system that gives a film studio the ability to deliver a release directly to the theater by satellite. So far, Lucas Arts has used this technology to distribute *Star Wars*,

than buy a complete CD. In the very near future, even movie rental companies will provide downloadable films over the Internet or via cable. In fact, *Brokeback Mountain* went directly to the Internet for its home video release before it went to movie rental stores. NGM makes this possible for both the studio releasing the film and for any store that wants to go digital."

Oddly enough, most of the technology that NGM uses and develops is based on systems originally built for the military. In fact, Spio's first work on digital transmissions came in the form of projects that focused on the way the military

result of the city's commitment to becoming a digital technology hub.

"When we saw the city's strategy for advancing digital technology, it was as if they took a page right out of our business plan. Compared to Los Angeles, where Media Evolutions began, it became clear that the technology bases between these cities were vastly different. While L.A. appeared to have no strategy for developing one, Orlando was already on the move," explains Spio. "Plus, when combined with Orlando's commitment to growth and entrepreneurship and the cost of what's available to the entertainment



NGM handled the video content creation for Live 8.

*Episode II*; it has also been used for *Planet of the Apes*, *Ocean's 11* and *Monsters, Inc.*, among others. Not only is dissemination of media in this manner more efficient, it's also much less expensive. According to Spio, circulation via satellite costs roughly one percent of traditional methods. But, this is only the beginning. Spio holds three other patents for ways to digitally target and display cinema content based on psychographics and demographics. With her help, NGM is revolutionizing the film industry.

"We are at the forefront of a paradigm shift within the entertainment world that is fundamentally changing the way people access movies and music. It used to be that people went to a record store and bought albums, tapes and CDs, but now everyone downloads music over the Internet," says Spio. "Traditional ways of selling music and movies are becoming archaic. More people download individual songs now

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transmits encoded signals via satellite that she conducted while in the Air Force.

"We still use a very similar technology and some of our encryption is every bit as sophisticated as what the military currently uses," says Spio.

For a company at the forefront of entertainment technology you might wonder why Next Galaxy is based at Universal Studios Orlando rather than in Los Angeles. The answer might surprise you. The company was born in early 2005 out of a merger between two companies: Media Evolutions and Spio's original company, TSG Consulting. They chose Orlando as their home base as a

industry here versus every other place we looked, we knew that no other city would provide us with what we needed as completely.

"In fact, the infrastructure, costs and resources have made it very easy to attract clients and other segments of the entertainment industry to Orlando to do business. No other city would have allowed us to be this successful this fast. With Orlando's continued commitment to becoming a worldwide leader in digital technology, we expect to be able to continue achieving our goals of creating the next generation of digital media." ✕