

# Marriott to double its hotels in Europe

By CHARLOTTE CUTHBERTSON  
Epoch Times Staff

Marriott International is boosting its hotel portfolio in Europe by doubling its presence there by 2015.

With 174 hotels currently in Europe, Marriott hopes to add 40,000 rooms across its 18 different brands, including Ritz-Carlton, Bvlgari, JW Marriott, Marriott Hotels & Resorts, and Renaissance Hotels.

Marriott's announcement was made Tuesday at the International Hotel Investment Forum in Berlin.

"We see strong opportunity throughout Europe to grow our portfolio," said Arne Sorenson, president and chief operating officer of Marriott International in a press release.

"Our new operating structure, comprised of four continental divisions including Europe, will help facilitate global growth and bring our teams closer to markets and to our customers. We have tremendous opportunities to grow, with over a third of our current pipeline and about half of our full-service openings this year located in markets outside North America."

The company, based in Bethesda, MD, has operated in Europe for 35 years.

Amy McPherson, president and



Bank of the Danube river with the Hotel Marriott building in the Hungarian capital Budapest, Feb. 8. ATTILA KISBENEDEK/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

managing director of Marriott International Europe said the new developments include nearly 30 projects including the Renaissance Moscow Monarch Center Hotel (2010), the Courtyard by Marriott Budapest (2010) and the JW Marriott Hotel Ankara (2010).

"Europe is the largest lodging market in the world and holds enormous potential for Marriott. Our talented new team here is aggressively accelerating our focus on growth," McPherson said. "With a footing in most of Europe's gateway cities, we are thrilled to see our

expansion continue into secondary cities and emerging markets. We are confident we are well-positioned to achieve this ambitious expansion goal."

Marriott's first European Residence Inn, an extended-stay brand, will also open in Munich in 2012.



The Panic Button of U.K.'s Child Exploitation and Online Protection Unit. CEOP

## Facebook under fire for lack of 'panic button'

By STEPHEN JONES  
Epoch Times Staff

LONDON—The social networking site Facebook has been accused of failing to protect young British users from the threat posed by pedophiles.

The U.S.-owned site, which has 23 million users in the U.K., has so far refused to display a "panic button" through which young people can report abuse directly to officials.

In so doing, the site has become a safe haven for predatory pedophiles, senior police officials and politicians said on Tuesday.

The criticism comes after the jailing on Monday of Peter Chapman for the rape and murder of 17-year-old Ashleigh Hall. Chapman, a 33-year-old convicted double rapist, had groomed Ashleigh through Facebook by posing as a teenage boy. The pair swapped mobile phone numbers and agreed to meet.

On the night she died last October, Ashleigh was picked up by the man she thought was Pete's father. She was raped and suffocated, and her body was dumped in a field near Sedgfield in County Durham last October.

Chapman was jailed for life on Monday. Speaking outside Teeside Crown Court, Ashleigh's mother, Andrea Hall, made a tearful plea for other teenagers to be wary of strangers on social networking sites.

"The message is for people just to be careful," she said. "Make sure you please do tell somebody if you are going to meet a person. That is

the message; don't go on your own."

Two other social networking sites—Bebo and MSN—both have included on their sites an official "panic button," which files a report to the U.K.'s Child Exploitation and Online Protection Unit (CEOP). The information is then used to file intelligence reports on suspects and can spark police investigations into pedophiles, rapists, and violent individuals.

Jim Gamble, the former senior police officer in charge of CEOP, said that the organization had received 267 reports last year about suspected abuse on Facebook—43 percent of which involved "grooming." Grooming is the term for an adult manipulating a child into a trusting relationship, so that the predator can arrange to meet and sexually abuse the minor.

Gamble said that CEOP had only received one or two reports of abuse directly from Facebook itself.

"The vast majority are coming from people who, ironically, are having to go to other sites that have our button and send the report to us. That is just not good enough," he told BBC Radio 4's Today program on Tuesday.

"Their argument for not putting our button into their environment, in my opinion, doesn't hold water. When we look at the cases that are coming to us, of the grooming cases, less than 3 percent of the cases are coming from Facebook to us. The rest are from members of the public who are, in a particularly difficult moment in the online environment, having to go elsewhere."

## The marketing corner: Online TV advertising for small businesses

By ADELE LASSERE

There has been much buzz about online television viewing. As a small business owner, you may have wondered if this is really an effective means to advertising your business. It can be—based on research from Nielsen; Americans are consuming more video on the Web, mobiles, and television.

The behaviour is very similar to TV viewers who are digital video recorder (DVR) users. Many viewers who watch television online are usually catching up on missed programming and not necessarily using online or mobile

television viewing as a replacement for live viewing. This is the same principle for the DVR users. Television may not be accessible at a given time. Therefore, the DVR users record and watch their favorite shows later. It is not unusual that 18-34-year-olds account for the most time viewing television online. Given that the Web usage tends to skew younger, this pattern of behaviour is predictable for this age group.

Additionally, women spend a higher percentage of time viewing television online than men. YouTube, Hulu, MSN/Windows Live/Bing, and ABC Television are a few sites that many

online viewers are frequenting for television shows. Time spent viewing online averages over three hours in a given month per user. It is expected that time spent viewing online will continue to grow as more shows and films are available online.

Ads with the highest recall are those that have aired on television and have been repurposed for viewing online. This doesn't mean that there isn't much recall with ads created specifically for online. However, it does mean that repeated airing of an ad has more traction with the viewers' ability to recall the ad, especially, if it is a spot that

is likeable. A good example of a likeable ad is the Doritos Super Bowl commercial by Frito-Lay, a unit of PepsiCo, Inc. It received the most views online and won most user-rated polls.

Remember that online advertising can be very efficient and trackable. Always consider your product and who purchases your product/service before you buy advertising. One thing is for sure—viewing shows online or via mobile devices is here to stay.

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## Borrowing money: Understanding how the numbers work

By DAVID BERKY

I would like to tell you a true story. The names have been changed to protect the innocent, the ignorant, and the dishonest.

John was interested in purchasing a new truck. John had done his homework and knew exactly what make, model, and features he wanted on his new truck. He had visited several dealerships looking for the exact truck he wanted. He wanted to get it now and didn't want to wait to have one custom built.

Finally he found a dealership that had the exact truck he was looking for and he even liked the colour.

Now it was time to negotiate the price and financing. John realized that he was not very good at numbers, so he asked his friend Cindy to come along and help him make sure he was getting a good deal.

The salesperson looked up the pricing information on the truck and added in all the extra fees for tax, title, license, and so on. The total cost came out to about \$22,000.

Cindy remained quiet while the salesperson explained the financing options that were available to John, checked John's credit, and determined an interest rate for the loan. The salesperson then went to check with the manager to make sure the financing application was completed properly and to calculate the monthly payment.

The salesperson returned and announced that the payments on the five-year loan would be about \$420 a month. Cindy checked the numbers and agreed with the calculations. But John was a little shocked and disappointed.

Seeing his expression, the salesperson mentioned that the monthly payment may be more than what John would feel comfortable with and that maybe they could lower the payment by going to a six-year loan instead.

John then looked to Cindy, who said that this would lower the monthly payment, but John would end up paying more interest because

of the longer time for the loan to be paid off. John wasn't too concerned about paying a little extra as long as he could afford the monthly payments (and drive his truck home today).

She asked to look at the numbers, but this time the salesperson was a bit hesitant.

The salesperson asked John how much he could afford to pay each month on his truck loan. John indicated he could pay up to \$375 per month. The salesperson then went to "get approval" from the manager to extend the length of the loan and to recalculate the monthly payment.

Upon returning, the salesperson announced that he was able to "wrangle a good deal out of the manager" and was able to get the monthly payments down to, you guessed it, \$375. John was excited. All he had to do was sign the papers and he could drive home with his new truck at a monthly payment he could afford.

But Cindy was curious. She asked to look at the numbers, but this time the salesperson was a bit hesitant. The salesperson tried to change the subject one or two times, but Cindy insisted on seeing the numbers.

Cindy reviewed the numbers and did some of her own calculations and found that the monthly payment on the truck loan should have been about \$350 a month. So how did the salesperson come up with \$375 per month?

After looking at the terms of the contract a bit closer, Cindy noticed that the price of the truck was now \$24,500, an increase of \$2,500. Cindy asked the salesperson why

the price of the truck had just gone up. After trying to dodge the question and then blaming it on a mistake by the "finance department," Cindy and John walked out of the dishonest dealership.

As excited as he was to have his new truck, John was angered that the salesperson/dealership had tried to rip him off by taking advantage of his lack of understanding in how the numbers in a loan relate.

John then had Cindy explain to him in basic terms how the numbers related and what to look for in the financing terms.

Cindy explained that there are four elements to a loan: the principal or amount you are borrowing, the interest rate, the time period, and the monthly (or weekly, bi-weekly, and so on) payment.

And the numbers relate like this: If the amount goes up, the payment goes up. If the interest rate goes up, the payment goes up. If the time goes up, the payment goes down.

In the case of John's truck loan, they extended the time so that the payment would go down. But the payment went down further than what John was willing to pay. So they decided to increase the amount so that the payment would match what John said he could pay.

But they "forgot" to explain to John that the price went up to make the payment hit his target. And they couldn't come up with a valid reason for the price increase when Cindy questioned them on it.

Without Cindy and her knowledge of how the loan numbers relate, John probably would have got his truck, but he would have needlessly overpaid \$2,500.

John found a truck he liked even better at a different dealership, brought Cindy along to help make sure he was getting a good deal, and then took her out to dinner.

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David Berky is president of Simple Joe, Inc. a marketing company that sells simple software under the brand name of Simple Joe.

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