



## **Social site Doppelganger sets sights on teens**

*Head of growing social network speaks with DV*

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by Pamela Henman

Virtual Web site developer Doppelganger, Inc. has received \$11 million in venture funding, according to [Red Herring](#).

San Francisco-based Doppelganger is the creator of vSide, a music-oriented "virtual realm" geared to teens. Similar to popular site Second Life, vSide allows its users to create avatars--or virtual likenesses of themselves--that can listen to music, throw parties, dance, interact with other avatars and more.

Venture capital firm Comventures leads the funding round along with existing backers Draper Fisher Jurveston, Trident Capital, Draper Richards, KPG Ventures and Greycroft Partners. To date, Doppelganger has raised \$25 million.

"(W)ith additional capital at hand ... we will continue to pioneer the next generation of social entertainment," Chief Executive Officer Tim Stevens said in a statement.

vSide originated as "The Music Lounge," but has since evolved into a free, full-fledged digital city, complete with lofts, nightclubs, streets and shopping venues. The company has partnered with fashion labels RocaWear, Kitson and StarStyle to offer users customized clothing options for their avatar for an additional fee.

DailyVista spoke with [Doppelganger's](#) Chief Executive Officer Tim Stevens for further insight into the company's strategy.

"We have been growing very rapidly, so we're very pleased at that," Stevens said. "We've got a model that's partner and brand-centric."

Stevens said that the funding Doppelganger received will be put toward expanding the [vSide](#) community with more venues, neighborhoods, original programming and user-generated material.

"A big part of the funding is to continue that expansion with more partners, a bigger world and more opportunities to bring and work with our advertising and content partners," he said.

In addition to partnerships, vSide attracts users via SMS text messaging and a newsletter, Stevens said.

"What we do from a marketing standpoint is to co-promote with our partners," Stevens said. "It's not just banner ads and search engine marketing."

Stevens said the ideal strategic partner is one that is “urban commercial” --a la New York City’s Times Square--like the automotive, consumer packaged goods and electronics industries.

For the foreseeable future, vSide will remain dedicated to the teen and young adult demographic Stevens said, although expanding to an older age group may be something Doppelganger will consider as it grows.

As vSide generates most of its brand awareness through strategic partnerships, Stevens said that Doppelganger is open to hearing from agencies that can provide strategic partnerships.

“We are definitely open for business, the reason for the new fundraising was to grow our capability,” he said.

According to The List database, Doppelganger works with the San Francisco office of New York-based SutherlandGold Group for public relations.

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