



Italy's top newspaper publishers form online ad network

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Italy's two biggest newspaper companies, RCS MediaGroup and Gruppo Editoriale l'Espresso, have formed an online advertising consortium to boost online revenues when print faces recession, Reuters reported Wednesday.

This consortium, called Premium Publisher Network, is the first of its kind in Europe, and will be open for other groups to join.

The move made sense, analysts said, although they think online advertising was still a niche of the total market.

"When the cake is too small and there is a competitor like Google, anything that makes critical mass is useful to face this oligopoly," according to an analyst at an Italian bank.

RCS and l'Espresso will offer advertisers access to 40 percent of the Italian Web ad audience, according to Audiweb Netview, **Reuters reported**. The network will start operating by the end of the first half of 2009, and its performance advertising will be able to charge based on readership levels.

According to Reuters, the two publishers will still offer online display advertising separately.