

Reprinted from  
**The New York Times**

**MEDIA TALK; THE GOOD SIDE OF DIAMONDS, BEFORE A  
MOVIE SHOWS THE BAD**

September 4, 2006

By MARIA ASPAN

A new Web site about diamonds is intended to tell retailers and buyers positive things about the diamond industry. But the site's real target may be potential moviegoers and fans of Leonardo DiCaprio.

The site, [diamondfacts.org](http://diamondfacts.org), will officially open on Wednesday, according to the World Diamond Council, a trade organization. The site comes on the heels of an announcement in June that the industry would mount a public relations campaign in response to "The Blood Diamond," starring Mr. DiCaprio, to be released in December by Warner Brothers. "Blood diamonds" and "conflict diamonds" are the names given to the gems that finance civil wars in certain African countries. The movie is set in Sierra Leone in the late 1990's, according to Warner.

According to Eli Izhakoff, the president of the World Diamond Council, the Web site is the culmination of a long campaign to increase public awareness of reforms in the diamond trade, especially the institution of a certification process for legitimate, nonconflict diamonds since the time period depicted in the film. "We've intensified our efforts because of this upcoming movie," Mr. Izhakoff said. "We wanted to make sure that retailers and consumers get the facts about the good things that diamonds do."

This isn't the first time an industry has mounted a media defense against Hollywood. Oil companies silently weathered criticism after movies like "Syriana," but mobilized active defenses against documentaries, like "An Inconvenient Truth," the film by Al Gore. When it opened in May, groups associated with the oil industry used TV and the Internet to counter its claims about global warming.

The Competitive Enterprise Institute, a group financed in part by Exxon Mobil, produced two TV commercials focusing on carbon dioxide. And a video on [youtube.com](http://youtube.com), "Al Gore's Penguin Army," depicted a Gore-like figure blaming global warming for everything from Mideast conflicts to World Series results, while his penguin audience snored. According to The Wall Street Journal, the video was linked to a public relations firm serving Exxon.

Copyright © 2006 by The New York Times Co. Reprinted with permission.