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Amherst nonprofit buys investment info Web site

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AMHERST - A non-profit organization based in Amherst now owns an informational Web site that serves the asset management and hedge fund industries.

The Chartered Alternative Investment Analyst Association, founded in 2002, promotes education in the alternative investments field.

It bought AllAboutAlpha.com, a Web site, on April 14.

Alternative investments involve investing in areas such as real estate, private equity, venture capital, commodities and hedged or absolute return strategies, as opposed to more traditional investments such as stocks or bonds.

AllAboutAlpha.com managing editor and lead writer Christopher Holt, who founded the site in July 2006, said in an interview that the acquisition will spur few immediate changes. In the long run, however, Holt said he plans to add to the 40 or so guest writers the Web publication has featured so far.

Holt called the site "a guided tour of the investment industry." It publishes digestible, easy-to-read articles on alternative investment news, which can serve as a research tool, he said, "but also something you can read over a cup of coffee in the morning."

Allen Halpern, a CAIA marketing associate, said the site, "dovetails extremely well with our educational focus."

Craig Asche, executive director of the CAIA Association, agreed.

"As a daily publication, AllAboutAlpha.com offers a perfect complement to the CAIA program, which is focused on foundational and long-term alternative investment education," he said in a statement. He said the site's "strategy-neutral stance" complements the CAIA's goal "to provide the finance industry with insights into this growing field."

He added, "We are committed to maintaining this independent voice as we move forward."

The CAIA Association began sponsoring the Web site in November 2007 and serious talks about an acquisition began in fall 2008. Financial terms of the acquisition were not disclosed, said Halpern.

Holt said he has long appreciated what he termed the CAIA Association's "holistic view" of portfolio construction and the role of alternative investments.

"I look forward to providing my fellow CAIA members with increased access to alternative investment knowledge available through AllAboutAlpha.com and to encouraging their active participation in the community we have created," he said in a statement.

Given the economy, alternative investments have had their challenges, said Holt, but overall he sees a long-term upward trend.

With the stock market struggling, Halpern said interest in investing elsewhere has risen.

"More people are looking to diversify their portfolios through alternative investments," he said.

Alternative investments do not necessarily go up or down with the stock market, he said.

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