

Google to introduce its own PC?

January 6 2006



In a move that will be seen as a direct challenge to Microsoft's domination of the media business, Google Inc. is preparing to launch a low-price personal computer, reports the Los Angeles Times newspaper.

In recent years, Microsoft Corp. has become the undisputed leader of the media landscape with its Windows operating system, which set the pace in office computing, video game consoles, home networking systems and TV set-top boxes industries.

Now however, Google Inc. is entering the fast changing media business arena. Though not as cash-rich as Microsoft, the Internet search leader is considered Microsoft's fastest growing competitor. Media experts believe Google can shake up the established order in the field of entertainment and technology by the end of this year. Analysts at investment house Bear Stearns last month claimed that Google was

preparing a box capable of moving digital Internet-sourced media content around the home using local wireless or wired networks.

Google PCs will be available at Wal-Mart stores and other retail outlets. The machine will utilize Google's own operating system, a contributory factor in its pricing level at just \$200. The Google Operating System is far from displacing the Beast of Redmond from its throne, particularly in the desktop segment as many PC manufacturers still install Microsoft's Windows operating system.

"Google Cubes" —small hardware boxes enabling users to move songs and digital files to and from their PCs and TV sets - will also be introduced to the market. Google co-founder Larry Page is due to address an audience on Friday at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. He is expected to give more details about both the product and the distribution structure Google will employ to market this product.

Whilst the idea of a low-cost, information system for consumers is a good one, previous attempts to launch a competitor to the established order have failed due to lack of funding. With Google's name and the huge marketing and distribution program the company plans to employ, cheaper Google-made PCs stand a real chance of succeeding where others have previously failed.

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