

Google Buys Videoconferencing Tech

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The search engine giant will not acquire the entire company, just the video conferencing software. It will also take on Marratech's technical team, according to a spokesman.

The deal "will enable from-the-desktop participation for Googlers in videoconference meetings wherever there's an Internet connection," Douglas Merrill, vice president of engineering, wrote in a Google blog posting. "It will be used in combination with our current video-conferencing equipment."

"We look forward to learning from the extraordinary ingenuity of Marratech's engineers as they focus on desktop conferencing research and development in Sweden, where they will continue to be located," Merrill wrote.

Google could provide no further details on additional functionality, when it will debut or whether or not it will be a free service.

If it is offered free of cost, the offering could be a hit to Cisco, which

last month shelled out \$3.2 billion to acquire WebEx, another provider of video conferencing capabilities. It would also serve as competition to Microsoft's LiveMeeting and Adobe Connect.

A Google spokesman had no comment on whether the Marratech acquisition was an effort to go after those rivals.

Marratech technology is based on research that started in 1995 at the Centre for Distance-Spanning Technology (CDT) at Luleå university of Technology in Sweden. It was initially conceived as distance learning technology but later morphed into e-meeting and web collaboration software, according to Marratech.

The company's technology runs on Windows, Mac or Linux environments utilizing a broadband connection, though it does not yet support Microsoft Vista or Mac OS X v.10.5, according to the company's Web site.

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