

Ballmer reiterates interest in Yahoo talks

March 19 2009, By ANDREW VANACORE , AP Business Writer

(AP) -- Microsoft Corp. Chief Executive Steve Ballmer is still signaling an interest in a deal to buy part of Yahoo Inc.

Ballmer said at a technology and media summit Thursday in New York that a deal would help improve Microsoft's Web search business by expanding the base of users. More people using the search engine means more advertisers. And, Ballmer says, a larger pool of advertisers will allow for more tailored ads next to search queries.

Ballmer said he has had only one conversation with [Carol Bartz](#) since she became Yahoo's chief executive in January. Ballmer said he congratulated her and said he'd like to chat at some point about a possible deal.

Bartz's predecessor as [Yahoo](#) CEO, [Jerry Yang](#), rebuffed a \$47.5 billion [takeover](#) offer from [Microsoft](#) last year. Since then Microsoft has said several times it would be open to a deal involving the companies' search engines.

Meanwhile, Microsoft has continued to develop its own search technology as it struggles to catch up with [Google](#) Inc. and Yahoo. The internal name for one of Microsoft's new search concepts is Kumo, which has prompted some quizzical comments and sneers since it was leaked in a staff memo. It probably will not be known as Kumo when it goes public, Ballmer indicated Thursday. "We need a name," he said.

Yahoo shares rose 53 cents, 4 percent, to \$13.95 in morning trading.

Microsoft shares were up 11 cents at \$17.07.

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