

Google's Chrome OS to be ready for 2010 holidays (Update)

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Google Chrome

(AP) -- Consumers will have to wait until next year's holiday shopping season to find out if Google Inc.'s new operating system can deliver on its promise to make low-cost computers run faster.

Google set the late 2010 target date Thursday during its first preview of a much-anticipated [operating system](#) that eventually may mount a challenge to [Microsoft](#) Corp.'s Windows - the foundation for most personal computers since the 1990s.

The Internet search leader announced plans in July for an operating system named after its Chrome [Web browser](#). At the time, Google said

Chrome OS would be ready during the second half of 2010. That left open the possibility that Chrome OS computers could be on sale as early as next summer.

But Google is taking its time so outside programmers can contribute to Chrome OS, which is being developed under an open-source model in which anyone can help with development and share improvements. Google also intends to work closely with computer manufacturers to ensure they meet the Chrome OS's requirements.

Chrome OS is initially expected to be limited to people looking for inexpensive, lightweight computers designed for Web surfing. None of the so-called "netbooks" running Google's operating system will have a hard drive, and they will need Internet access to run applications.

That could limit interest among users who need their machines on the go and might find pockets of time without Internet service on planes or trains.

Still, Google views the Chrome OS netbooks as a supplement to fully loaded computers that run applications on a hard drive. Google believes the Chrome OS could get heavy usage, given that most people spend most of their computer time connected to the Internet anyway.

Suggested retail prices for the Chrome OS computers won't be set until closer to their debut. Google executives, though, indicated the Chrome OS should be in the same \$300 to \$400 range of other netbooks, even though the company isn't charging manufacturers to use its system.

The computer manufacturers that have expressed an interest in using the Chrome OS include Acer Inc. and Hewlett-Packard Co.

The Chrome OS also is an important step in Google's crusade to get

people more comfortable with "cloud computing," the idea of keeping their applications and data on remote computers operated by a third party such as Google.

Underscoring Google's commitment to cloud computing, the Chrome OS machines won't even have a hard drive. By leaving out that and other components, Google is promising the Chrome OS machines will seem more like a television than a computer because they will be ready to use within a few seconds of turning on the power button. Even the sleekest of Windows-powered machines typically require 30 seconds to 1 minute before applications can be opened.

Google's foray into [computer](#) operating systems represents one of the most daring challenges yet in its escalating duel with Microsoft.

While Google has been trying to attack Microsoft's software franchise, Microsoft has been trying to undermine Google's dominance of the Internet search and advertising market. Neither has made a significant dent so far.

With their low price tags, Chrome OS also could potentially undercut Apple Inc.'s Mac computers. The increasing competition between Google and Apple prompted [Google](#) Chief Executive Eric Schmidt to resign from Apple's board just a few weeks after the Chrome OS was announced.

More information: Google blog: [googleblog.blogspot.com/2009/11 ... -os-open-source.html](http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2009/11...-os-open-source.html)

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