

Adobe tech chief likens Apple to 19th century railroad

May 6 2010, By John Letzing

Apple Inc.'s recent competitive behavior is similar to that of a 19th century railroad company, Adobe Systems Inc.'s top technology executive said Wednesday.

"Apple's playing this strategy where they want to create a walled garden" around the Internet, Adobe [Chief Technology Officer](#) Kevin Lynch remarked at a tech conference in San Francisco. He then compared the company's moves to the deployment in the 1800s of railways with varying gauges that precluded compatibility with those of rivals.

"If you look at what's going on right now, it's kind of like railroads in the 1800s," Lynch said.

Apple and Adobe have been engaged in an escalating war of words over the effective banning of Adobe's [Flash technology](#) on popular Apple products such as the iPhone and iPad.

Apple recently issued a requirement that software for its [iPhone](#) and iPad devices cannot be written in Flash, a ubiquitous Adobe program used on Internet sites and services.

[Steve Jobs](#), Apple's chief executive, took the unusual step of airing his criticisms of Flash in a long essay posted on a company Web site last week.

Adobe responded by dropping its investment in making Flash compatible

with the Apple devices, saying it will focus instead on platforms such as [Google](#) Inc.'s Android operating system.

"I don't think it's the role of the company to exercise that judgment over what people are making," Lynch said to a smattering of applause, while charging that Apple's practices are "preventing healthy competition."

Apple spokeswoman Trudy Muller referred to her previous comments on the issue, stating that Apple uses "open and standard" technologies, while Flash "is closed and proprietary." Muller also referred to Jobs' comments, calling Flash dated and unreliable.

Federal antitrust regulators reportedly are looking at Apple's rules for development on its devices, and may launch an investigation.

A prototype Adobe tablet running on Android was displayed at the technology conference; it included Flash and featured an internal hardware composition developed by Nvidia Corp.

"We're working closely with them to optimize the software and hardware integration," Lynch said of Nvidia.

"That's a prototype, but there are a bunch of different manufacturers using those guts," he commented, adding that a number of related tablet devices are likely to be released in the coming months.

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