

Google unveils box for business videoconferences (Update)

February 6 2014, by Michael Liedtke



Google is introducing a videoconferencing tool designed to make it easier and less expensive to hold face-to-face business meetings even if the participants are scattered in different locations.

The device, called "Chromebox For Meetings," goes on sale for \$999 Thursday in the U.S. and will be available in the coming weeks in Canada, the United Kingdom, Japan, Spain, France, Australia and New

Zealand.

The \$999 price includes technology support for the first year. Customers needing support after that will have to pay \$250 annually. Chromebox For Meetings is being sold by Dell Inc., Hewlett-Packard Co. and AsusTek Computer Inc., all of which already sell an assortment of gear to corporate customers and government agencies.

Google Inc. said the box contains everything needed to set up a videoconferencing system that can connect people in up to 15 different locations. The company said someone simply needs to connect the device to a display screen and follow the instructions step by step.

The videoconferencing kit relies on several existing Google products: the Chrome operating system based on the eponymous Web browser; the technology running Google's free Hangouts video chat system; and a suite of applications that the company has been selling to businesses for several years.



Most of Google's previous forays in corporate markets have been aimed at competing with Microsoft Corp.'s Office software and Windows operating system. With the expansion into business videoconferencing, Google is attacking products made by Cisco Systems Inc. and Polycom Inc.

The introduction of the new Chromebox also underscores Google's commitment to continue stamping its brand on a variety of gadgets, just a week after announcing plans to sell its Motorola Mobility smartphone business to Lenovo Group Ltd. for \$2.9 billion. Google bought Motorola in 2012 with aspirations of building it into an influential player in the growing smartphone market, but the deal turned into an expensive mistake.

More information: chrome.blogspot.com/2014/02/chromebox-simpler-and-better.html
www.google.com/intl/en/chrome/news/for-meetings.html

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