

Google Plans 2008 Launch of Enhanced Web Hosting

4 December 2007, by Mary Anne Simpson



Google plans to launch Google Sites in 2008. The initial plan is to enhance Google Apps and Google Page Creator features by using JotSpot for collaboration tools. The new enhanced features may set up a possible rivalry between Microsoft Virtual Office and Google Sites.

Google is always up to something. In a recent symposium in Ann Arbor, Michigan on Google Apps, Scott Johnson the former vice president of development for JotSpot laid out the plans for the Google 08 enhanced web hosting feature.

For those Google watchers out there, it is not breaking news that Google acquired JotSpot. According to Your Search Advisor dot com, Andrew Miller who attended the conference, Google presented information about the upcoming plans to launch "Google Sites."

The former vice president of development for JotSpot laid out the synergy between Google Apps and JobSpots. He restated the Google mission, "To organize the world information and make it universally accessible and useful."

In a Q & A session, Google spokesperson stated that "Google Sites" will launch in 2008. It will expand on Google Page Creator already integrated within Google Apps. Google Sites will be

based on JotSpot collaboration tools. The Google Sites will allow businesses to set up intranets, project management tracking, customer extranets, and any number of custom sites based on multi-user collaboration. There is a possible wikis application that may be included in the plan.

The upcoming Google Sites will use Jotspot according to Scott Johnson. It will also use Google Gears for off-line work and eventually adapt it to Gmail and Google Calendar.

In response to questions of collaborations and off-line work, Johnson stated that the same algorithms will reconcile simultaneous editing and off-line work when it merges back into the on-line version. The JotSpot enhancement on Google Sites will allow all file types to be uploaded and stored. The initial launch of Google Site will not include OCR capabilities for importing PDFs or other graphical displays.

I have been using the Zoho Writers on-line site recently that allows users to do word processing off-line. It utilizes Google Gears for the off-line feature. I am very impressed with the ZOHO Writer and other features for writing in a variety of formats. Parenthetically, ZOHO does provide for import and export of PDF, HTML, Word files, ODT, SXW, RTF, and Text files. At this time, Google Site does not plan to support video conferencing capabilities.

Given the versatility of ZOHO and full range of services offered, it seems like Google should have considered a more strategic acquisition. ZOHO outshines Google Docs, Page Creator and Sun's Open Office 2.2. It is comparable to Microsoft Front Page and Word, but more versatile.

ZOHO offers collaboration, web publishing and the interface is understandable and intuitive. The only issue I have with ZOHO is that if you use the Microsoft Explorer, it times out. ZOHO works fine with the latest version of Firefox. I have not used

Jotspot, but from their recent comments in Ann Arbor, it has a way to go before it will meet ZOHO's existing features.

I contacted ZOHO for information as to whether they have been in discussions with Google. According to a ZOHO spokesperson, the only common thread between Google Apps and ZOHO is the use of Google Gears for off-line word processing.

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