

## **HP puts weight behind Palm smartphone system in blow to Microsoft**

Hewlett-Packard has turned its back on smartphone software from Google and Microsoft, putting its resources instead behind the operating system it acquired when it bought Palm, the troubled handset maker, this year.

Jon Rubinstein, the Palm chief executive who has stayed on to lead HP's gadgets business, said in an interview with the Financial Times that the world's biggest technology company by revenue had decided to opt for Palm's webOS operating system.

"HP voted with its pocketbook," Mr Rubinstein said of the \$1.2bn transaction. "It's all about focus."

HP is on track to deliver a tablet computer running webOS early next year, as well as a Windows-based tablet that will ship sooner, he said. It has abandoned a project to launch a smart-phone based on Google's Android open source operating system and there will be no tablet based on the system, Mr Rubinstein said.

The decisions will come as a blow to Google and especially Microsoft, which is hoping that widespread support from hardware makers for its forthcoming Windows Phone 7 operating system will vault it back into contention in smart-phones. As the largest PC maker, HP is one of Microsoft's closest allies.

Microsoft played down the loss of HP, saying the company had not been a big participant in the smart-phone business to date. But the steps show how the success of offerings in the smartphone and tablet segments, including Apple's iPhone and iPad, are shaking up old patterns as companies adapt to take advantage of the biggest growth area for computing power.

Palm's operating system software is well regarded by the industry, as it is better at simultaneously running multiple applications than the latest Apple equivalent. But with limited private funding and a fast-moving, crowded field, it never achieved the mass adoption that would have allowed it to compete with powerhouses such as Apple and Google. The latter has seen its Android software adopted by a swath of handset makers.

A former head of Apple's iPod division, Mr Rubinstein expressed some frustration at the lack of new Palm products since the completion of company's acquisition by HP in July. But he was confident on the revised version of webOS – webOS 2.0 – and said HP had plans to leverage its enormous customer base for personal computers in order to sell more smartphones. HP will make cloud computing – the delivery of software functionality from remote locations – a focus, Mr Rubinstein and Steven McArthur, HP senior vice-president, said.

One early cloud service to be aimed at consumers will be a system for streaming music to multiple devices. "As we roll out PCs to folks, we can give them opportunities to store and upload music to the cloud," Mr McArthur said. The music will be streamed to HP's smart-phones, which will also store the most listened-to songs on the gadget for faster playback.

**Fonte: Financial Times, London, Sept. 29<sup>th</sup> 2010, Companies & International, online.**