

Facebook Likes Smartphone Making (Again)

Written by Marco Attard
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Fresh rumours emerge on Facebook's supposed smartphone-making plans-- the New York Times says Facebook is briefing employees with plans relating to the hardware game.



Apparently the social network also hired "more than half a dozen former Apple software and hardware engineers who worked on the iPhone, and one who worked on the iPad," NY Times sources continue.

One ex-Apple engineer even says he was questioned on "the inner workings of smartphones" by none other than Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg, who asked for intricate details such as "the types of chips used."

Facebook neither denies nor confirms the smartphone plans, but instead says "we're working across the entire mobile industry; with operators, hardware manufacturers, OS providers, and application developers."

Stories on Facebook making a smartphone (or two) are not new-- back in November 2011 AllThingsD reported Facebook was working with HTC on "Project Buffy," a smartphone running on a customised Android version.

Business Insider confirmed the reports, saying "Buffy" would come out on Q2 2012...

HTC already has smartphones carrying a dedicated Facebook button (the Salsa and ChaCha), while Orange sells 3 Facebook-centric phones in EMEA.

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Getting into hardware would make sense for Facebook-- now a public company, the social network needs new sources of revenue in order to keep shareholders happy. Not to mention it already has a popular operating system (Facebook itself) and a successful camera app (Instagram).

It also has enough money (\$16 billion) to invest in a smartphone maker-- HTC's current market value stands at around \$11.8bn, while the struggling RIM costs less than \$6bn...

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