

Honeycomb Shut Tight-- For Most

Written by Marco Attard
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Bloomberg reports Google's holding tightly to Honeycomb's source code-- releasing it to none but its biggest partners.



Now smaller developers and manufacturers are going to find out what happens when the Google decides its software "is not ready to be altered by outside programmers". The only manufacturers having Honeycomb access are the industry's heavyweights-- Motorola, Samsung, LG, HTC and their likes.

Some commentators say Google's holding back in order to "protect" users from "poor experiences". Yet the delay won't protect anyone: the smaller hardware vendors in Europe will only suffer more delays (and the costs involved) while waiting for Google to finally open its now closed vendor club.

Meanwhile the poor experience will continue flooding the market-- in the shape of inferior Chinese mobile Android iPad-wannabes.

With the situation as it is, the only Honeycomb tablet options retailers will have are those from the big brands-- the Xooms and Galaxy Tabs. Which is where the "poor experiences" theory falls flat. No big company will risk its millions-- and reputation-- in the name of an unfinished OS, not even a Google-branded one. If Honeycomb wasn't ready, no one would have had it.

In an interview with Businessweek, Android group head Andy Rubin also expresses fears that should Honeycomb be released out in the open source wilds, nothing would stop manufacturers from using it in smartphones, creating a "really bad user experience." Then again, as mentioned

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earlier, nothing's stopping Chinese developers from shoehorning the Android 2.2 (or earlier) experience into tablets.

One would expect any normal company (whose motto does not read "Do No Evil") to do just that-- using first access privileges in order to sell to the industry's big players. With the "delay" expected to run for a few more months, the competition-- the small hardware vendors-- struggles between a rock and a hard place, while retail has to stick to selling Big Brand Honeycomb.

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