

Will Steve Jobs' final vendetta haunt Google?

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Google can only hope that Steve Jobs' final vendetta doesn't haunt the Internet search leader from his grave.

The depths of Jobs' antipathy toward Google leaps out of Walter Isaacson's authorized biography of Apple's co-founder. The book goes on sale Monday, less than three weeks after Jobs' long battle with pancreatic cancer culminated in his Oct. 5 death. The Associated Press obtained a copy Thursday.

The biography drips with Jobs' vitriol as he discusses his belief that Google stole from Apple's iPhone to build many of the features in Google's Android software for rival phones.

It's clear that the perceived theft represented an unforgiveable act of betrayal to Jobs, who had been a mentor to Google co-founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin and had welcomed Google's CEO at the time, Eric Schmidt, to be on Apple's board.

Jobs retaliated with a profane manifesto during a 2010 conversation with his chosen biographer. Isaacson wrote that he never saw Jobs angrier in any of their conversations, which covered a wide variety of emotional topics during a two-year period.

After equating Android to "grand theft" of the iPhone, Jobs lobbed a series of grenades that may blow a hole in Google's image as an innovative company on a crusade to make the world a better place.

"I will spend my last dying breath if I need to, and I will spend every penny of Apple's \$40 billion in the bank, to right this wrong," Jobs told Isaacson. "I'm going to destroy Android because it's a stolen product. I'm willing to go to thermonuclear war on this. They are scared to death because they know they are guilty."

Jobs then used a crude word for defecation to describe Android and other products outside of search.

Android now represents one of the chief threats to the iPhone. Although iPhones had a head start and still draw huge lines when new models go on sale, Android devices sold twice as well in the second quarter. According to Gartner, Android's market share grew 2 1/2 times to 43 percent, compared with 17 percent a year earlier. The iPhone's grew as well, but by a smaller margin — to 18 percent, from 14 percent.

Both Google and Apple declined comment to The Associated Press when asked about Jobs' remarks.

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Jobs' attack is troubling for Google on several levels.

It suggests that Apple, which has pledged to be true to Jobs' vision, may try to derail Android in court, even if Google obtains more patent protection through its proposed \$12.5 billion acquisition of phone maker Motorola Mobility Inc. The derision comes across as a bitter pill for Page and Brin, who have hailed Jobs as one of their idols. It also appears to contradict Schmidt's repeated assertions that he remained on friendly terms with Jobs even after he resigned from Apple's board in 2009.

Most of all, Google should be worried whether the Android brand is damaged by the withering criticism of a revered figure whose public esteem seems to have risen as friends, colleagues and customers paid tribute over the past few weeks.

"The words of cultural icons have a lot of power after death," veteran technology analyst Rob Enderle said. "This almost sounds like a spiritual leader declaring a jihad on Android as his dying wish."

Apple fans tend to be fiercely loyal, making it more feasible to envision an anti-Android movement taking shape like some kind of political protest, Enderle said.

It's also possible that Jobs' criticisms of Google may be seen as hypocritical. That's because some of Apple's computing breakthroughs were based on technology developed by others. The Mac's easy-to-use interface and its mouse controller, for instance, came out of Xerox Corp.

The bitter divide between two of the most beloved and successful technology companies would have seemed inconceivable a few years ago.

In 2006, Google and Apple were on such friendly terms that Jobs welcomed Schmidt to Apple's board of directors with these words: "Like Apple, Google is very focused on innovation and we think Eric's insights and experience will be very valuable in helping to guide Apple in the years ahead," Jobs said.

But in 2008, a year after the iPhone came out, Google unveiled plans to release Android as a free software system that phone makers can use to make devices that compete with the iPhone. Jobs was so infuriated that he went to Google's Mountain View headquarters — about nine miles from Apple's Cupertino office— to try to stop the project, according to the biography.

Jobs' persuasive powers failed to sway Google's leaders.

Now, more than 550,000 devices running on Android are being activated each day. Apple, meanwhile, sold about 3 million fewer iPhones than anticipated in the July-September quarter, contributing to a sharp drop in the company's stock. The newest Android challenger to the iPhone, the Galaxy Nexus from Samsung, is scheduled to go on sale next month.

Although there's no indication in the book that he ever forgave Google, Jobs set

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aside his disdain for the company long enough to counsel Page nine months ago, according to the biography.

After Google's Jan. 20 announcement that Page would replace Schmidt as CEO in April, Page called Jobs for some pointers. Jobs told Isaacson that his first instinct was to reject Page with a curt expletive, but he reconsidered as he recalled his times as a young entrepreneur listening to the advice of elder Silicon Valley statesmen including Bill Hewlett, co-founder of Hewlett-Packard Co.

Jobs didn't mince words when Page arrived at Jobs' Palo Alto home. He told Page to build a good team of lieutenants. In his first week as Google's CEO, Page reshuffled his management team to eliminate bureaucracy. Jobs also warned Page not to let Google get lazy or flabby.

"The main thing I stressed was to focus," Jobs told Isaacson about his conversation with Page. "Figure out what Google wants to be when it grows up. It's now all over the map. What are the five products you want to focus on? Get rid of the rest because they're dragging you down. They're turning you into Microsoft. They're causing you to turn out adequate products that are adequate but not great."

Page has shut more than 20 Google products and services in his first six months as Google's CEO as part of an effort to "put more wood behind fewer arrows." It was the type of discipline Jobs instilled on Apple when he returned in 1997 after a dozen years of exile. Jobs killed such products as the Newton handheld device and the PC clones that were allowed to run on Apple's operating system.

It still remains to be seen whether Jobs' words of wisdom or his grievances will leave a bigger imprint on Google.

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