

Google Goes After Verity Customers

Written by Nisha Gandhi

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Google hopes to use the \$2,995 giveaway to capitalize on uncertainty in the enterprise search market created by Autonomy Corporation's recent acquisition of Verity.

Internet search giant Google Inc. began aggressively pursuing patrons of Verity Inc., making a play upon possible customer fears about Verity's coming acquisition.

Google said it will offer a \$2,995 Google Mini search appliance for free to customers that purchase one of its \$30,000-plus Google Search Appliances to replace an existing search system.

To take advantage of the supposed opportunity, Google began giving away its least expensive Google corporate search product, its Mini, to new Google Enterprise customers through January 2006, the company said.

Google's Mini can index as many as 50,000 documents and usually sells for \$5,000. Google's main enterprise box, the Google Search Appliance, and other appliances support indexes of between 1.5 million and 15 million and start at \$32,000.

Google says the Google Search Appliance is a tool for searching internal corporate sites, and the Google Mini is a search tool for public-facing Web sites. The company says it has over 2,000 business customers worldwide using its enterprise search hardware.

At stake is Google's share of the estimated \$600 million annually that corporations spend to improve upon their computer networks' search and collaboration capabilities. Enterprise search falls under the category that number-crunching analysts call "workforce optimization." Analysts at Datamonitor predict \$1 billion in sales of such services and gear by 2006.

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Right now, Google Enterprise, which has 2,000 corporate clients, ranks far behind Verity, the U.S.-based market leader with an estimated 15,000 companies.

Dave Girouard, general manager of Google Enterprise, acknowledges that Google's hardware does not have the bells and whistles found on some competing products. But he believes most companies do not really need or use such capabilities.

But there's "**customer turmoil**" because of the likelihood that U.K.-based software maker Autonomy Corp., which is buying Verity for \$500 million, will eliminate some Verity product lines that compete with Autonomy's own portfolio.

Furthermore, people say it would be very challenging to merge these two technologies, said Girouard.

Autonomy CEO Michael Lynch counters that Google's spin is not accurate. Their claims are not supported by the facts. Autonomy entered the corporate search market years after Verity, and it created its products to be compatible with the market leader's, he said.

Also, Autonomy is committed to maintaining much of Verity's present-day lineup, including its popular \$75,000 Ultraseek device, he said.