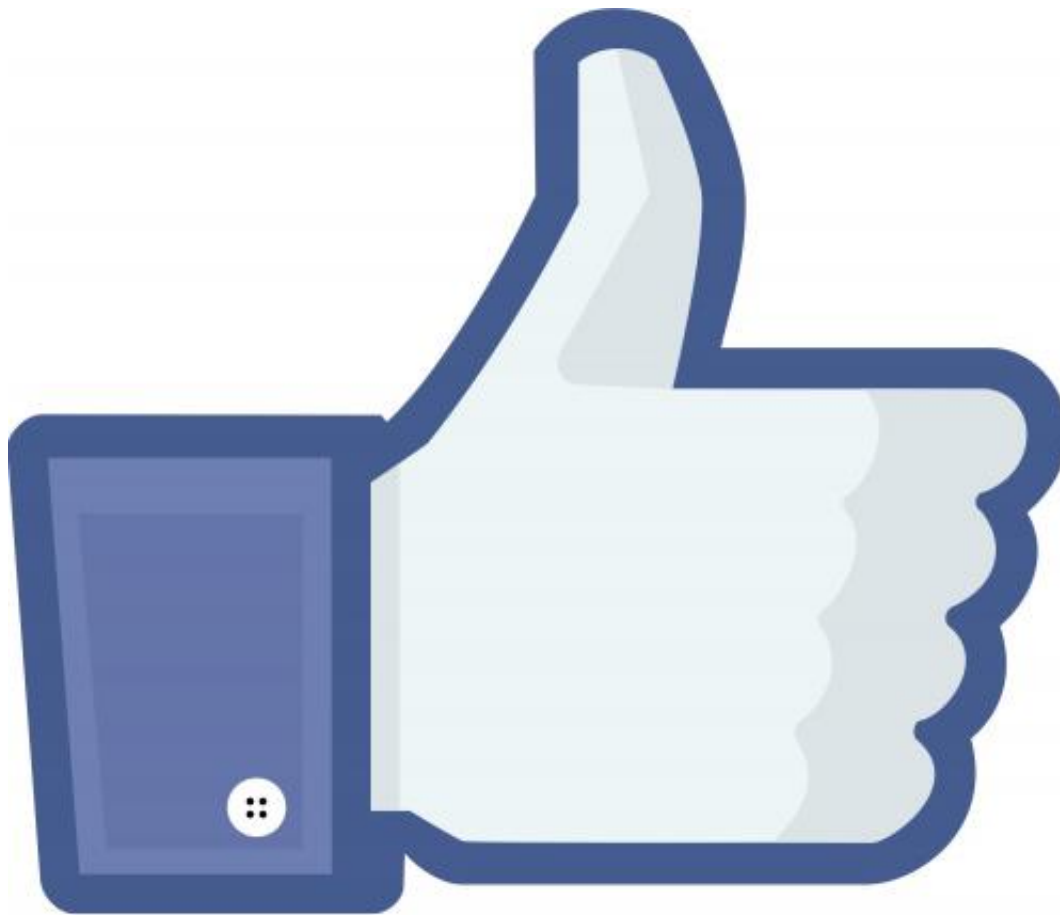


Facebook testing Blu-Ray Disc technology for cold storage

January 30 2014, by Bob Yirka



(Phys.org) —Facebook has announced at the ongoing Open Compute Project summit that it has begun testing a Blu-Ray Disc technology

storage system for offloading less important data. Jay Parikh, VP of engineering for the company, told those in attendance that the prototype system the company has built is a single cabinet that houses 10,000 (presumably 100GB) discs and is capable of holding a petabyte of data.

The [storage](#) cabinet stands approximately seven feet tall, is movable and has robotics inside that resemble an old-fashioned juke-box. Instead of choosing songs to play, the robotic arm chooses a disc to read or write to. The move comes as Facebook continues to grapple with the enormous amounts of [data](#) created as over a billion users post updates to their pages. The cold storage strategy is meant as a system to house seldom or never used data in a more cost effective manner. Parikh reported that the cabinet uses 80 percent less energy than the hard-drive based devices it currently uses and costs half as much to build. Because the system utilizes magazines, he also noted that discs or whole magazines can be automatically removed from the cabinet for storage in an even colder fashion—presumably in a warehouse of some sort.

The first cabinet built is a prototype (Facebook has posted a [video](#) of one of its hardware engineers explaining how it works), which means the [company](#) plans to continue testing it, though Parikh also reported that the first cabinet has actually been put to use. Facebook would like to increase the storage capacity of the cabinet and believes it's possible to build one capable of holding five petabytes—that's just a small fraction, of course, of the data that Facebook stores—a reported 3 exabytes. In the meantime, the company plans to build more of the cabinets and to use them for storing real data, with the goal of storing up to 150 petabytes in just the next few months.

In the past, representatives for Facebook have revealed that the company is also looking into using flash memory for storage—once again to reduce costs. Its use would presumably be for high-speed specific purpose applications, whereas the Blue-Ray cabinet would be used to

hold data that users very seldom access.

More information: via [GigaOm](#)

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