Google worker shows early-draft glimpse of Chrome OS

July 20 2014, by Nancy Owano

The Chrome OS is in for a future look. Athena, a Chromium OS project, will bring forth the new Chrome OS user experience. Google's François Beaufort on Friday, referring to the screenshot he posted, said," As you can see below, the first draft consists in a collection of windows with some simple window management." Beaufort was displaying a work-in-progress look on Google+. The team is currently experimenting, and Beaufort also shared instructions for people who want to take a look at the new design in the Chromium source code. Andrew Cunningham in

Ars Technica summed up what the screenshot tells us about Google's work on it thus far. The new UI "displays a cascading stack of cards, each of which appears to represent an individual browser tab. At the bottom of the screen, an app drawer full of dummy icons and a Search field will allow the user to jump quickly into other applications." Although Google-watchers who are viewing and commenting on his post do realize this work is not yet in its final stage, numerous reactions to Friday's screenshots indicated reactions that were mixed.

"Chrome evangelist François Beaufort gave us a glimpse of the potential future of Chrome OS on Friday, and boy is it ugly," said a PCWorld writer. Brad Chacos, who uses a Chromebook as his primary day-to-day laptop, found it difficult to understand why a multi-windowed approach is better than the browser tabs in Chrome OS. Nate Swanner of SlashGear noticed how "The updated user interface that may be coming to Chrome OS takes a lot of cues from Android's Chrome.

"Athena is likely an overhaul to make design a bit bolder and simpler, which is the aim of Material Design. Touch-friendly use cases will make the platform more attractive to users and OEMs alike, as the popular touchscreen Acer Chromebook proves. Tying Chrome in with Android, at least aesthetically, is a nice choice, too."

Andrew Grush in Android Authority said, "While I personally think the colors used make the interface a bit ugly, we have to remember that Google is still working on the effort and that it will likely be much more refined when it arrives to Chrome OS later this year."

That also reflected other comments, that the posting was showing something yet to be polished. Cunningham of Ars Technica wished to look at the bigger picture. "Putting aside the rough, obviously-a-work-in-progress aesthetic of the interface, it bears a strong resemblance to the new multitasking UI in the Android L release, which shows apps and

individual browser tabs as a similar stack of cards."

Fundamentally, one can connect the dots in the light of Google's effort to work on a "visual language." Michael Rougeau in TechRadar commented that a common visual language for Google's various products and platforms was part of Google's plan for the future, "and today we got a glimpse of what Chrome OS looks like with a more Android-like interface."

He said, "The screenshot he shared shows a vertical card-based multitasking interface that resembles both the current Chrome tabs system on Android devices and certain aspects of the upcoming Android L update's Material Design UI."

Companies with a consistent design across multiple platforms more easily create and maintain brand recognition. Google describes Material Design as a new visual language intended to bring a consistent user experience, from smartphone, to tablet to desktop. One can expect to see its look across Google's platforms.

  More information: — codereview.chromium.org/302473005 — plus.google.com/+FrancoisBeauf … rt/posts/7cTeMNvCc4z

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