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By:

[Welcome to the Google twilight zone!](#)

Where everything is possible



Since the beginning of the year and until now, Google has launched all sorts of new services and in the last three months, the search engine announced something new almost every two weeks. New features for the search engine, new local services, new software for the desktop searches or price cutoffs for the hardware components sold by Google, all these in such a short time. Although some services are only beta, you shouldn't think that Google will ever give up on these services, beta meaning the project can still be added significant improvements. And according to the statements of the company founders, Google's expansion is far from over. In February, Brin commented that although in the last two years 2,300 persons have been hired, the number is still small compared to the expansion plans of the management. So, despite the company's profits increasing six times (and notice that we are talking about profits, not turnover), it's obvious Google has more aces up its sleeve which will be gambled at the right time. So let's speculate on what else the "Don't be evil" company has installed for us.

A. G Messenger? Probability: 90% As Page stated, 70% of the company's resources are directed towards searches and related services and only 20% of the company's income are allotted for the development of other services, like Froogle for instance. But Page also stressed the importance of online social communication, and considering that out of the 20% allotted to other types of services, Google was able to launch Gmail, the chances for an instant messaging program are very high. It's hard to believe the growing popularity of these services and the fact that they represent excellent advertising platforms has not been taken into consideration by Google. Hello, the photo sharing service, already contains the seeds of an IM service and let's not forget Orkut, an online social communication network, which is affiliated to Google. So don't be shocked if in a short time you will add G Messenger or Google Messenger to your list of messengers along with Yahoo and MSN.

B. G Browser? Probability: 50% Lately, especially after FireFox's success, more and more users dream about a Google browser. When the company hired Ben Goodger, one of the engineers from Mozilla FireFox, the launching of a Google browser started to be regarded as matter of months. Actually, it's hard to believe Google will venture in such a domain, and more probable is an interface that combines several services, in a better way than Google Toolbar does or even to extend its functions and compatibility. One of Google's secret ingredient to success, lied in the existence of separated services and the preserving of the simple start page, aspects which differentiated it from its main competitors, Yahoo and MSN. But since lately, the range of services is much wider and diversified, a Lord of the Rings "one to rule them all" interface can be an interested option. Google's representatives denied several times the rumors about such a browser.

C. Local services? Probability: 95% At this moment, services like Google Local or Google Maps are available in the United States and Great Britain. Although Google officials never forget to outline that the main concern is the search services, we should keep in mind that the company's income is mostly generated from advertising, and Google Local is an excellent platform to distribute even more and targeted ads. Google has now branches in nine European countries, and if Google Local is successful in Great Britain, how hard do you think it is to launch Google Local Deutsch or Google Local Français? Obviously these services cannot be launched over night and Google would require partner companies, like Great Britain's Yell, but just think of the ad potential of such services. On the other hand, Google Local would not be the only service suitable for "localization". Google Video is currently indexing TV shows from the United States, but imagine a national service for each country. A lot of TV guides will probably go bankrupt.

Just take a peek at the Google Web Search Features

<http://www.google.com/help/features.html> web page and think how many of those functions can be implemented for a country. The latest example backing up our theory that Google is interested in national versions of services is the GMail interface availability in several languages. **D. Video content distribution? Probability: 65%** iTunes's success and the way in which Apple is promoting its product have closed the music download market, and so the next battle will be video distribution. The probability of Google developing a service similar to iTunes, but for movies, is minimum, because it wouldn't match the company's vision and the DRM and sums of money Google would have to pay to provide movies could only complicate things. There are already two important projects for such a service: Google Movies and Google Video and it is hard to believe Google doesn't have something installed for this domain, even though it won't get directly involved in the movie distribution. **E. CRM/ERP type software? Probability: 75%** Nowadays, fast searching in a client or product database of a certain name, references, address, preferences, price or availability is the foundation of every business (online or offline). Imagine a database which supports searches and implementations similar to what Google is offering? In a matter of seconds, such a database could operate searches in thousands of references, and return accurate results about any client or product. Google Search Appliance might be a step towards Google's affirmation on the enterprise segment. Considering the infernal growing rate of the amount of information, a solution for organizing and indexing all the data is just what a company needs. Google is very interested in offering products and services for companies and it can prove to be a worthy opponent for the IT&C giants. **F. Google services for cell phones Probability: 100%** Google has already conquered the Web and considering its 2.1 billion searches per month, it's unlikely that it will be dethroned in the near future, so the next battle will be in the cell phone sector. Considering that the number of cell phones exceeds the number of PCs, it's easy to imagine that in the next 2-3 years, cell phone searches will be the next Holy Grail for search engines, and Google is already offering a series of services for cell phones, like Google SMS or Google Local. Cell phones that are able to store MBs of information are no longer a novelty and since 2007 perpendicular storage will be available, as Hitachi recently announced, every cell phone will incorporate a hard disc. Like the Google Desktop Search, imagine how would you like Google Mobile Phone Search on your 20GB cell phone hard disk to help you find any file saved in a hurry. **G. Better advertising services? Probability: 100%** 7.9 billion dollars. This is the appraisal of the search advertising market for 2005 and 23.2 billion dollars by 2010. Or at least that's what the Piper Jaffray & Co analysts say. And now guess who owns most of the market. Google! At the end of this month, Google would have already acquired Urchin Software, a company specialized in program and service developing, whose products are used by websites owners and those involved in online advertising. In other words, better advertising services from Google, more precise client targeting, local advertising services, all the requirements for online advertising supremacy. Urchin Software also provided web hosting services, but Google has no intention of getting involved in this domain. But since Google is king of the online advertising, why bother with petty things like web hosting? **H. New Google services for users? Probability: 90%** My Search History beta has just been launched and already online privacy activists are complaining that Google is taking users the right to remain anonymous. This controversy has several aspects. On one hand, Google has publicly announced its intention to find more about those who use their services and accomplishing this using a less invasive method is to be saluted. Anyway, a feature like My Search History is not aimed at the ordinary Internet user, but more likely at those who operate daily thousands or tens of thousands of searches on Google. On the other hand, I don't see how can Google keep a record of the searches without knowing who operates them. It's true this data is a gold mine, but if it ends up in the wrong hands, it will trigger a lot of problems. **So, what will be next ...?** What and when will Google launch is a riddle with multiple answers. The aim of the article was to give you a perspective on what might

Google launch in the future, but only Page and Brin know exactly what the plans are. But what we really know for sure is that we are witnessing the growth of a company which will tip the balance in the IT&C world, perhaps even more than Microsoft. In the end, I want you to think, even for just a minute, about how the world would look without Google.