Google engineer goofs, tells whole world that Google doesn't get it

October 12, 2011 | 2:55 pm

Google Inc. has a leaked manifesto on its hands and it may be a stickier problem for Google than Brad Garlinghouse's famous "Peanut Butter" manifesto ("Change is needed and it is needed soon") was for Yahoo Inc. in 2006.

In what may have been a Freudian click, a Google engineer accidentally published to the whole world (instead of just to Google) a lengthy, searingly honest diatribe on the failure of Google to create a powerful platform.

Steve Yegge published the post to his Google+ profile. The post took Google to task for not creating a platform for its new social networking service that would encourage outside developers to build on it.

In it, he called out Google executives, including co-founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin and Executive Chairman Eric Schmidt: "Google+ is a prime example of our complete failure to understand platforms from the very highest levels of executive leadership (hi Larry, Sergey, Eric, Vic, howdy howdy) down to the very lowest leaf workers (hey yo). We all don't get it."

Not only does it not hold back, it's an insightful piece on one of the essential differences between Google and its rivals, Apple, Facebook and Microsoft, each of which have thriving ecosystems.

Remember when Google and Microsoft were competing to invest in Facebook? Facebook went with Microsoft because the Redmond, Wash., technology giant fundamentally got the idea that you have to build a true platform rather than just a bunch of popular products.

At Google, Yegge says all engineering groups are clustered around individual products. (Of course, Google has done a far better job of building open platforms with its mobile software Android and its Web browser Chrome).

On Wednesday Yegge had a new post on his Google+ profile explaining that his "long opinionated rant" was intended for Google employees. He said he decided on his own to remove the post even though other Google folks are freely sharing it.

Google+ launched as an invitation-only service in June. It has been available to the public since September.

In an unrelated note, Google said Wednesday that it had added real-time search and improved hashtags.

RELATED:

Larry Page is fostering Google's start-up spirit

Google CEO Larry Page returns to Google+

Google makes another attempt at social networking

-- Jessica Guynn

Photo: People walk past a logo next to the main entrance of the Google building in Zurich, Switzerland. Credit: Arnd Weigmann / Reuters