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Top-secret Google data center almost completed

But the search engine giant is keeping mum on the subject

Linda Rosencrance [Today's Top Stories](#) » or [Other Data Center Stories](#) »

June 16, 2006 (Computerworld) -- Search engine giant Google is nearing completion of a new data center on the banks of the Columbia River in The Dalles, Ore. But trying to get information about the project is almost as difficult as finding Bigfoot.

Although Google officials did go so far as to confirm that the company is building a facility in The Dalles, that's about all they would say -- except to note that the company has technology infrastructure facilities around the world that support its services.

"As the breadth of our services and number of users grow, we will build additional infrastructure to support them," said a Google spokesman. "Our facility in Oregon is part of this effort."

Nolan Young, city manager of The Dalles, which is home to numerous Bigfoot sightings, said he had signed a non-disclosure agreement with Design LLC, the Delaware firm that negotiated the purchase of the land on Google's behalf, but he could not confirm when, or if, Google will take up residence in The Dalles. However, he did say that the new facility would create between 70 and 100 new jobs.

Other than that, Young said, the only information he could provide was what has been in public documents or spelled out in press releases. "There's a firm in the area, Design LLC, that's in the process of constructing two buildings approximately 34,000 square feet," Young said. "We have issued building approval and planning approval for those to proceed. We are also providing water and sewer service to those facilities, and three buildings have been approved. Construction is wrapping up on two of them."

Young said one of the reasons Design LLC -- read Google -- decided to locate in the community was because the company needed a fiber connection, and the city had built a fiber-optic loop to their site. Rob Enderle, an analyst at San Jose-based Enderle Group, was able to add a bit more information to the mystery.

"All I know is the location has to do with the power station and cooling water supply in close proximity, suggesting that this thing is really big and incredibly power-hungry," Enderle said. "Labor is cheap, with a \$30,000 average salary per year in the area, suggesting equally low living expenses."

Enderle said the data center sits on a 30-acre site -- with options for future expansion -- and should be able to handle over 20 million users, perhaps a lot more.

"It could become the hosting home for a set of applications that currently do not exist and an expansion point for some, like their video stuff, that are currently just getting started," he said. "It is expected to be cutting-edge and was supposed to go live in 2007. But given the 'cutting-edge' part, it has significant risk of slipping that time frame."

"In short, it will be one of the most powerful data centers on the planet and may move the consumer market aggressively to a software-as-a-service model -- with advertising funding changing dramatically the technology market as we know it," Enderle said.



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