



## **Opera Sings for Windows Mobile**

By Matt Hines

January 18, 2006

Opera Software ASA released Wednesday a beta version of its mobile technology designed for use on devices running Microsoft Corp.'s Windows Mobile Pocket PC software.

ADVERTISEMENT

Dubbed the Opera Mobile 8.5 Web browser for Windows Mobile Pocket PC, the application boasts the ability to deliver Internet capabilities to any device running the Microsoft operating system, including a number of so-called smart phones, or handsets with PC-like capabilities.

Opera Mobile is based on the same technology used in the company's eponymous desktop browser, and the new beta for Microsoft-based devices will run on handsets running either Windows Mobile 5.0 or Windows Mobile 2003.

At the heart of the company's wireless browser products is its Small Screen Rendering technology that aims to convert Web pages meant for consumption on desktops into a format where they can be viewed comfortably on mobile devices.

Company officials said they hope the availability of the Pocket PC beta will encourage more people to begin using mobile Internet applications to forward the interests of the market as well as its own technologies. Opera had planned to launch the Pocket PC browser beta last year, but delayed the launch until 2006 to work on other products.

The Oslo, Norway-based company is expected to launch its Opera Mini mobile browser, which is based on Opera Mobile but designed for even simpler handsets, sometime before the end of January. In June, the company launched Opera for Windows Mobile 2003, and

last month the firm signed a deal with search giant Google Inc. to use the company's search tool as the startup page for devices running Opera Mobile.

[PointerClick here](#) to read more about Opera's deal with Google.

"We're trying to jump-start the mobile Internet revolution, and our trials with users show us that when people download the browser they begin using the Web on their handsets more frequently," said Eskil Sivertsen, an Opera spokesman. "The biggest obstacle in growing use of the mobile Web to this point is the inability of other browsers to convert sites into something people are willing to look at, and that's what we believe the browser does best."

While Opera gives its browsers away free of charge, the software maker is hoping to drive revenue via deals with mobile carriers, digital content providers and other companies to whom it offers a white-label version of the applications. Those companies can use the technology to build their own, branded versions of the tool to offer to customers.

eWEEK.com Special Report: Advances in Web Browsers

Sivertsen said that Opera executives remain confident that the company can build enough revenue to continue to develop its products while essentially handing out its technology for free to anyone willing to download the software to their handset. He said Opera is already working on a number of distribution deals for the technology with wireless carriers and content providers.

"Hopefully, operators will see traffic increase as a result of people using the browsers, and that will convince them that they can build new revenue streams off of Opera and the mobile Web," Sivertsen said. "Distribution of the technology won't happen overnight, but we believe that operators' desire to distribute more 3G content will encourage them to take a look sooner rather than later."

One company already endorsing Opera Mobile 8.5 for Pocket PC is Japanese mobile carrier Willcom Inc., which announced that it has begun loading the technology as the default Web interface on Sharp Corp.'s W-ZERO3 device.

In related news, Opera announced Tuesday that it signed a deal with wireless networking specialist Bytemobile Inc. to create a more powerful version of Opera Mobile. Bytemobile, based in Mountain View, Calif., markets a technology known as Optimization Services Node (OSN) that carriers use to speed mobile Internet performance.

Bytemobile claims that OSN has been deployed by 60 operators worldwide, including Willcom, serving a total of nearly 1 billion subscribers.