

# Google examines R&D alliance with MLE

By John Kennedy

GOOGLE is in talks with IDA Ireland about the possibility of performing advanced research and development (R&D) activities in Dublin as part of a potential link-up with Media Lab Europe (MLE). The news followed a visit this month by Google founders Sergey Brin and Larry Page to MLE's operation in Dublin.

Both Brin and Page were in Dublin recently to officially open Google's new 60,000sq ft Barrow Street HQ that, already employing 150 people, is ahead of target to create 240 jobs within three years.

Brin said that he and Page were impressed by some of the research they saw at MLE and even ventured that it was better than what they've seen at MLE's parent Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston. They also said that Google is examining the potential of "performing advanced R&D activities" in Dublin.

At a press conference following the official opening Adam Freed, head of international online sales and operations, acknowledged that talks are taking place. "The

IDA and MLE have been pushing us for quite a while and we have had some strong meetings on the subject."

Freed said that no concrete decisions have yet been made but that production engineers at Google's Dublin office have been "bouncing around the idea" for some time.

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Since it opened its doors in April last year with just five employees, Google's Dublin office has built a team of more than 150 people, speaking 35 languages.

When the company floated on the NYSE in August, Google sold 19.6 million shares at US\$85 each in the biggest initial public offering (IPO) so

far by an internet company. On the first day shares ended trading at US\$100, valuing the company at US\$27.2bn and raking Page and Brin stakes at US\$4.35bn. Trade ranges from a high of US\$104.06 to a low of US\$95.96.

The IPO also brought instant riches to hundreds of

employees of a company that was dreamed up in a college dorm room in 1998 but soon became synonymous with internet searches.

About 1,000 of Google's nearly 2,300 employees are now millionaires on paper, according to an analysis by Salary.com, which tracks employee compensation.



Veteran broadcaster John Bowman questions Google billionaire founders Sergey Brin and Larry Page about their plans for Europe