



AUGUST 13, 2013

## Facebook buys speech translation software company

Facebook gains speech-to-speech translation mobile app Jibbig to better connect its users across the globe

By Zach Miners | IDG News Service

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Facebook is acquiring a company that specializes in speech interpretation and translation software. The move, disclosed Monday, could help Facebook better connect its users across the globe.

The deal to acquire Mobile Technologies was announced in a [blog post](#) by Facebook product management director Tom Stocky. Terms of the acquisition were not disclosed.

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"We believe this acquisition is an investment in our long-term product roadmap," he said.

Voice technology has become a critical element in how people use mobile devices and access the Web, he said, and acquiring Mobile Technologies "will help us evolve our products to match that evolution."

Mobile Technologies' flagship product is Jibbig, a speech-to-speech translation mobile app. Facebook plans to continue supporting the app for the time being, a company spokesman said.

Mobile Technologies has also developed the first automatic, simultaneous interpretation service for lectures and has deployed it in educational settings, according to the company's [website](#).

Facebook's larger infrastructure will allow Mobile Technologies to better build out its products, the company signaled. Facebook "provides the perfect platform to apply our technology at a truly global scale," the company said.

Many of Mobile Technologies' employees will be joining Facebook at its headquarters in Menlo Park, California. Facebook declined to specify exactly how many employees would be coming on board, or comment further on the deal.

"Although more than a billion people already use Facebook every month, we are always looking for ways to help connect the rest of the world as well," Facebook's Stocky did say.

One way the social network is already trying to connect more people worldwide is through its Facebook For Every Phone initiative. The program is aimed at developing markets like India, Indonesia and the Philippines, to provide a stripped-down Facebook app to people who may have a feature phone but not a more advanced smartphone. More than 100 million people use that app every month, the company [announced](#) in July.

Mobile Technologies' services could also increase Facebook's ability to compete against rival speech recognition and search products already offered by Google and Apple. Google,



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for example, offers its [Google Translate](#) app to translate languages from around the world, while Apple offers voice recognition technology through Siri on its smartphones.

Facebook is working to enhance its search offerings more broadly through Graph Search, an early stage social search engine designed to provide information to users based on their social connections. The company did not say whether it also had plans to integrate Mobile Technologies' tools into that product.

Zach Miners covers social networking, search and general technology news for IDG News Service. Follow Zach on Twitter at [@zachminers](#). Zach's email address is [zach\\_miners@idg.com](mailto:zach_miners@idg.com).

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