

TechCrunch

The End Of The CrunchPad

by **Michael Arrington** on November 30, 2009

It was so close I could taste it. Two weeks ago we were ready to publicly launch the **CrunchPad**. The device was stable enough for a demo. It went hours without crashing. We could even let people play with the device themselves – the user interface was intuitive enough that people “got it” without any instructions. And the look of pure joy on the handful of outsiders who had used it made the **nearly 1.5 year effort** completely worth it.

Our plan was to debut the CrunchPad on stage at the **Real-Time Crunchup** event on November 20, a little over a week ago. We even hoped to have devices hacked together with **Google Chrome OS** and Windows 7 to show people that you could hack this thing to run just about anything you want. We’d put 1,000 of the devices on pre-sale and take orders immediately. Larger scale production would begin early in 2010.

And then the entire project self destructed over nothing more than greed, jealousy and miscommunication.

On November 17, our deadline date for greenlighting the debut three days later, the CEO of our partner on the project, Chandra Rathakrishnan, sent me an email with the subject “no good news.” Yuck, I thought. Another delay, probably with the screen that had been giving us so much trouble – capacitive touch at 12 inches isn’t trivial. And sure enough, the email started off with *“no good news to update. updated hardware is still on its way , so that’s a timing issue. friday will be a challenge now.”*

But the email went on. Bizarrely, we were being notified that we were no longer involved with the project. Our project. Chandra said that based on pressure from his shareholders he had decided to move forward and sell the device directly through Fusion Garage, without our involvement.

Err, what? This is the equivalent of Foxconn, who build the iPhone, notifying Apple a couple of days before launch that they’d be moving ahead and selling the iPhone directly without any involvement from Apple.

Chandra also forwarded an internal email from one of his shareholders. My favorite part of the email: *“We still acknowledge that Arrington and TechCrunch bring some value to your business endeavor...If he agrees to our terms, we would have Arrington assume the role of visionary/evangelist/marketing head and Fusion Garage would acquire the rights to use the Crunchpad brand and name. Personally, I don’t think the name is all that important but you seem to be somewhat attached to the name.”*

And with that, the entire project self destructed.