



In order to claim that bigger piece, WebKit is a necessity, Opera CTO Håkon Wium Lie told me on Wednesday morning. After all, that same rendering engine is what underpins Apple's Safari and Google's Chrome, and given the dominance of iOS and Android in the mobile market, it's become a primary concern for web developers.

"People are using WebKit prefixes for CSS properties and it's been troublesome for other browsers to render those pages without supporting the WebKit prefixes," Wium Lie said. "That has been part of the shift we're seeing and it's also been part of our decision making. What we see as very positive is that we will be able to take some of our best engineers and have them work on common code that many people will use — we will reach more people this way."

Opera's statement said WebKit and Chromium would gradually be used in "most of" the company's upcoming smartphone and PC browser iterations. However, Wium Lie suggested that "our whole product line will be affected in due course by this".

Those who want to see some competition maintained in the mobile browser rendering engine space had better keep their fingers crossed that [Mozilla's Firefox OS](#), which uses Gecko, sells like hotcakes.

Chromium, WebKit and Opera have met before, of course, notably last year when Russian [web giant Yandex released a browser](#) that combined Chromium with WebKit and Opera's Turbo engine, which uses server-side compression to cut down on the amount of data the user needs to download, saving them money in the process.

Wium Lie denied that Opera would be paring down its model to that of a mere feature provider, but hinted that there was some precedent in what Yandex did. He also stressed that Turbo and the "impressive infrastructure" that enables it were integral to Opera's future.

"We will be using Chromium, but you can do a whole lot of stuff on top of that," he said. "Yandex released a browser that does some interesting things and adds features, and changes the UI, and it's different from the Chromium browser itself. We worked with Yandex on that and we will be doing similar things with our own stuff. The rendering engine is an important part of the browser — it's not everything."

Opera's new Android browser will get a showing at Mobile World Congress later this month (we will be there, naturally), as the company will also be touting its operator-targeting, pay-per-use [Opera Web Pass](#) technology. As for Ice and the other outcomes of the shift to WebKit and Chromium, we'll have to wait a bit longer.

[GigaOM](#) | by David Meyer on February 13, 2013



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