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Apple Claims More Than 1 Million Downloads Of Safari For Windows

Fast adoption among Windows users is key to driving support by Web companies, one industry insider remarked.

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The Safari Web browser for Windows has only been available in beta since Monday, but Apple has already started the numbers game against rivals Mozilla Firefox and Microsoft Internet Explorer.

Apple on Thursday said more than 1 million copies of Safari 3 for Windows were downloaded in the first 48 hours the free software was available.

Of course there's no way to say at this point whether this is an indication that Safari will have any market impact on Firefox or the dominating IE. As expected in beta software, researchers started finding flaws in the new browser's coding within an hour of its release.

"Yes, it has some issues, but it is a beta," Van Baker, analyst for Gartner, told *InformationWeek*. "It's a use-at-your-own-risk kind of environment right now."

Users also may find that some Web services won't be available yet on Safari. Yahoo's new Web mail client, which is in beta and has the look and feel of Microsoft Outlook, doesn't support Safari 3. "We support Safari with the traditional Yahoo Mail interface," a company spokeswoman said in an e-mail. "At this time, the Yahoo Mail beta doesn't support Safari, but we're working on it."

In crowing about downloads, Apple apparently hopes to light a fire under companies like Yahoo to make Safari 3 support a high priority. Fast adoption among Windows users is key to driving support by Web companies. "If they can successfully do that (show strong adoption) than they become a more viable platform because of it, and Yahoo and other developers will probably make their platforms compatible," Baker said.

Apple is certainly doing its part to get Safari in front of Web surfers. The company's current home page sports the look and feel of the browser. With Safari, Apple is also looking beyond the PC, toward its iPhone, which is set for release on June 29. The company is instructing software programmers to use Safari and Web 2.0 standards as a development platform for third-party applications on the touch-screen mobile phone.