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## Seagate CEO hints at SSD tech to come

Hybrid technology that could finally bring prices down

by Katie Scott published on 5 November 2008

Seagate's CEO has confirmed that the company is working on its very own line-up of Solid State Drives in a briefing with Pocket-lint.

Bill Watkins, CEO of Seagate, gave a rare hint at what kind of SSD technology the company is pumping resources into.

Watkins admitted the company has some issues with SSD: "We'd love to have an SSD range, that's why we're investing (as much as \$100m), as there are a lot of things that we like about them. But there are also some problems".

In particular, he pointed to a performance issue with the read/ write cycles SSD deliver. And there's the issue that they are simply far more expensive to produce than hard drives.

But Seagate may have a solution in a technology that combines the two current types of NAND SDD solutions.

At the moment, you have SLC (single layer chip) and MLC (multiple layer chip) - the latter is cheaper but has reliability issues. Watkins announced that Seagate is working on a hybrid of the two, and while he couldn't say much, he added that the company is also investing in the controller technology needed.

But what else can we expect from what is now one of the world's three biggest (and profitable) storage experts?

Watkins said that the real focus for today is on the home.

"The world has changed. In 1999, for example, we saw massive spending on storage by



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businesses worried about the Millennium Effect. Now homes are being flooded with content, such as HD movies and photographs, and all of this requires lots of storage. We now sell more storage into homes than we do into the enterprise arena."

To reflect this, a Seagate network attached storage solution for the home is in development, said Pat King, senior vice president of global marketing.

These sorts of solutions, and the increasing hunger for more storage in homes, means that Seagate isn't flustered by the world economic slowdown - even if sales this Christmas are less than impressive.

Watkins concludes: "Everyone is like deer in headlights at the moment. We are hoping for a sturdy Christmas selling period but we are also prepared if it doesn't show up".

"At the moment, people come into stores to buy storage when they have run out of room. To use an analogy - you don't clean out your wardrobe and so you won't clean out your drive. You just buy more. People are pack rats, they will always be and we love them for that."