

AFT LINES

The best is not
always left to last

Searching for a ferry start up?

No doubt most readers would have heard rumours, then confirmations to said rumours, regarding a quartet of barges built for internet search giant Google last year. It was all over the popular press, due at least in part to the supposed secrecy of the project.

Last November, the big G admitted it was behind the project, but didn't give much away about the intended purpose, stating: "Although it's still early days and things may change, we're exploring using the barge as an interactive space where people can learn about new technology."

My guess is that they have a very good idea what they will eventually be used for... but why spill the beans?



Anyway, less publicised was the company's move into the ferry business, following a spat with local council regarding the private use of public bus stops. A trial of about 30 days was run in January, with Google employees shuttled across San Francisco Bay to and from its Redwood City headquarters using the 149-passenger catamaran 'Triumphant', which was built by All American Marine to a Teknicraft design.

As the trial came to an end, there was no comment as to whether the service might be come a permanent offering. But if it did, one could imagine Google producing something interesting. No doubt ferry designers, builders and operators would be lining up at the prospect of dealing with what would certainly be the most financially credible start-up ferry operator one could hope to come across.