

Was there really an Opera billboard outside Microsoft main campus?

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In an interview with the *Seattle Times*, [Rod Hamlin of Opera Software claimed](#),

We put a big red billboard out by Microsoft last year that said, “Want to be a real Internet explorer? www.opera.com.” We got some interesting feedback on that. All of the AT&T executives could see it and all the Microsoft guys driving back home past Marymoor Park.

Okay, so where was this billboard? He says it was near Marymoor Park, and that it could be seen from AT&T executive offices, which makes sense so far because [AT&T Wireless has offices](#) in the Redmond Town Center business and shopping center, which lies [right across the highway from the park](#).

But then things fall apart. First of all, there is no billboard stand anywhere along the stretch of highway that goes between Marymoor Park and Redmond Town Center.

Second, if you go to [the regulations governing highway advertising in the State of Washington](#) [[easier-to-read PDF version](#)], section [47.42.040](#) describes the types of signs allowed, and the alleged Opera billboard does not appear to be any of permissible types. (The closest match would be [47.42.040\(4\)](#), if Opera had offices within twelve miles of Redmond Town Center.)

Third, you’d think there’d be plenty of pictures of an advertising campaign this cheeky. But I haven’t been able to find any online. POIDH.

Here’s [an actual cheeky prank \(and the response\)](#). The Internet Explorer team since learned their lesson, and now they [send congratulatory cake](#).

Stop the presses: A colleague of mine says that he *saw the sign*. But it wasn’t a billboard. Actually, it wasn’t even a sign. It was a sponsorship banner hung on the fence of one of the sports fields at Marymoor Park, the sort of sign that more traditionally might read *Bob’s Auto Repair proudly supports youth sports. [Go Mustangs!](#)* I asked him why he didn’t take a picture. “I guess we’ve all become pretty jaded. Either that or everybody figured somebody else would take a picture (so then nobody did).”

After our conversation, he went and took a picture.

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