

Big data company WANdisco clicks on US listing amid fears of City exodus

A London-listed company with a valuation of close to £1bn is preparing to list its shares in the US amid an intensifying debate about the waning attractiveness of the City to public companies.

Sky News has learnt that WANdisco, a 'big data' business, has hired bankers from Evercore Partners to prepare for a listing in New York.

City sources said the timing of a dual listing remained uncertain but was likely to take place this year or next.

The move is significant because of [growing fears about the London market's ability to compete](#) with the far deeper pools of capital available to companies in the US.

This week, Arm Holdings, the chip designer, concluded a months-long review by confirming that it would [only list its shares in New York](#) – a move that was interpreted as a snub to Britain because of its UK headquarters and former membership of the FTSE-100 index.

Ministers, including Rishi Sunak during his stint as chancellor, had lobbied intensively to persuade SoftBank, the Japanese owner of Arm, to pursue a dual listing in London.

“After engagement with the British government and the Financial Conduct Authority over several months, SoftBank and Arm have determined that pursuing a US-only listing of Arm in 2023 is the best path forward for the company and its stakeholders,” Arm chief executive Rene Haas said on Thursday.

The anxiety about London's attractiveness was compounded when

[CRH](#), the FTSE-100 building materials giant, said it had drawn up plans to relocate its listing to the US, where the bulk of its business is conducted.

Flutter Entertainment, the gambling group behind Paddy Power and Betfair, is also proposing to establish a secondary listing in New York but is expected to follow that by ditching its primary listing in London.

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Ferguson, the plumbing and heating products' supplier, moved its main listing to the US last year.

A number of other companies are examining similar moves.

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US switch 'highly likely'

WANdisco's move to establish a listing in New York has been on the cards for years.

David Richards, the company's chairman, president, chief executive and co-founder, first talked publicly about the possibility of its shares trading in the US in 2017.

Based in Sheffield and Silicon Valley, WANdisco describes itself as a data activation platform which uses cloud-based analytics technology to aid clients' decision-making.

The company has a market capitalisation of more than £890m and has seen its shares rise more than fivefold over the last year.

One source close to WANdisco said it was now "highly likely" to press the button on a dual listing.

The growing number of London-listed companies exploring US listings has triggered recriminations about the underlying reasons, with Arm's decision to shun the City being partly blamed on the rules of the Financial Conduct Authority.

Many early-stage investors and corporate chiefs suggest that much of the blame lies with the attitude of large institutional shareholders and the increasing dominance of passively managed funds.

Shares in technology companies such as Darktrace and Deliveroo have endured a particularly difficult ride since going public in London in recent years.

A spokesman for WANdisco declined to comment.