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Volume 23, Issue 11



mini'app'les newsletter

the minnesota apple computer users' group, inc.

NOVEMBER 2000						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 7:00	2	3	4
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19	20 7:00	21	22 7:00	23	24	25
26	27 6:00 7:00	28	29	30 6:30		

- 1 **AppleWorks SIG**
Washburn Library
5244 Lyndale Ave S. Mpls
John Hunkins, Jr., 651-457-8949
- 6 **Board of Directors**
mini'app'les members welcome.
Byerly's
7171 France Ave. S., Edina
Lisa Huston 651-457-6950
- 8 **Microsoft Word SIG**
2850 Metro Drive Rm 124,
Bloomington
Tom Ostertag, D 612-951-5520 E
651-488-9979
- 9 **Macintosh Main**
Washburn Library
5244 Lyndale Ave S. Mpls
Lisa Huston 651-457-6950
- 13 **Apple II / GS SIG**
Tom Gates, 612-789-6981
Verify time and location

- 15 **Photoshop-Digital Imaging**
Augsburg Library
7100 Nicollet Avenue
Gary Eckhardt, 952-944-5446
- 16 **Macintosh Consultants SIG**
Embers
7525 Wayzata Blvd
St. Louis Park
Bob Demeules, 612-559-1124
- 16 **Quicken SIG**
2850 Metro Drive, Rm 124
Bloomington
Dale Strand, 612-835-5872
- 20 **Fourth Dimension SIG**
8200 Humbolt Ave South
2nd Flr. Conference Rm.
Bloomington
David Ringsmuth, 612-853-3024

- 22 **Programming SIG**
Washburn Library
5244 Lyndale Avenue S, Mpls
Andre Benassi 763-502-0187
- 27 **Macintosh Novice SIG**
Merriam Park Library
Marshall & Fairview, St. Paul
Richard Becker, 612-870-0659
- 27 **Meet Your iMac / Mac SIG**
Merriam Park Library
Marshall & Fairview, St. Paul
Brian Bantz, 612-956-9814
- 30 **FileMaker Pro SIG**
Partners, Suite 5
1410 Energy Park Drive, St
Paul Steve Wilmes, 651-
458-1513

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mini'app'les

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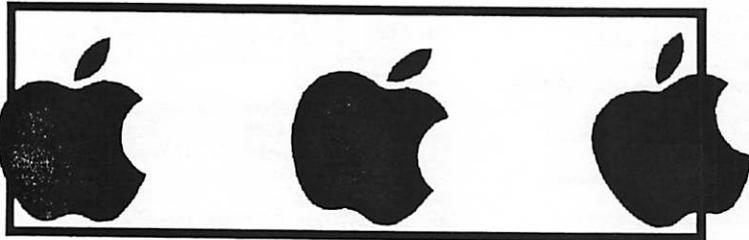
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December 2000 Preview

Here is the tentative calendar of our Special Interest Group (SIG) meetings for December 2000. Please pencil these events on your calendar. As always, when doubtful of a SIG date, time, or location, confirm with one of the following:

- Our BBS, the Calendar Folder in the Conferences Folder
- Our Voice Mail Telephone number: 651-229-6952
- The cognizant SIG Leader

Wednesday	December	6	AppleWorks nee ClarisWorks SIG
Monday	December	4	Board of Directors meeting
Wednesday	December	13	Microsoft Word SIG
Thursday	December	14	Macintosh Main SIG
Monday	December	13	Apple II / GS Main SIG
Wednesday	December	20	PhotoShop / Digital Imaging SIG
Thursday	December	21	Macintosh Consultants
Thursday	December	21	Quicken SIG
Monday	December	18	Fourth Dimension SIG
Wednesday	December	27	Macintosh Programming SIG
Monday	December	25	Macintosh Novice SIG
Monday	December	25	Meet Your iMac / Mac SIG
Thursday	December	28	FileMaker Pro SIG

Members Helping Members

Need Help? Have a question the manual doesn't answer? Members Helping Members is a group of volunteers who have generously agreed to help. They are just a phone (or an e-mail) away. Please call only during the appropriate times, if you are a member, and own the software in question.

Apple II / IIGS Software & Hardware	1, 5, 8, 14
ClarisDraw	2
AppleWorks / ClarisWorks	7, 8, 9
FileMaker Pro	
FirstClass	
HyperCard	11
MacWrite Pro	
Microsoft Excel	2, 5, 6
Microsoft Word	5
MYOB	6
PhotoShop	3, 13
Quicken	2, 6
QuickBooks and QuickBooks Pro	6
Mac OS 7	8
Mac OS 8	
WordPerfect	4
Cross-Platform File Transfer	5, 14
Networks	11
New Users	10, 11
PowerBooks	11
Classic Macs	11
Power PC 601 Power Macs	
iMacs	12

1. Les Anderson	651-735-3953	DEW
2. Mike Carlson	218-387-2257	D
3. Eric Jacobson	651-645-6264	D
4. Nick Ludwig	612-593-7410	DEW
5. Tom Ostertag	651-488-9979	EW
6. Ardie Predweshny	612-823-6713	DEW
7. Owen Strand	612-427-2868	D
8. Bruce Thompson	612-546-1088	EW
9. Pam Lienke	651-457-6026	EW
10. Tom Lufkin	651-698-6523	EW
11. Ben Stallings	612-870-4584	DEW
12. Rodney O. Lain	651-452-5821	EW
13. Gary Eckhardt	952-944-5446	EW
14. Michael Cumings-Steen	651-644-8653	DEW

D: Days, generally 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
 E: Evenings, generally 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.
 W: Weekends, generally 1 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Please call at reasonable hours, and ask if it is a convenient time for them. By the way, many of these volunteers can also be contacted on our BBS. We appreciate your cooperation.

If you would like to be a Members Helping Member volunteer, please send an e-mail message to John Pruski on our BBS, or call him at 952-938-2818, with your name, telephone number, contact hours, and the software or hardware areas you are willing to help others.

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Apple Distinguished Educator says revise strategy

by Dennis Sellers,
dsellers@maccentral.com
October 9, 2000, 7:00 am ET
Submitted by Bryan Lienke

Apple Distinguished Educator Anthony H. Robinson, who has been an Apple advocate and purchaser for over 11 years, thinks Apple needs to revise its hardware/software strategy.

Robinson is technology director K-12 for Putnam County Schools in Tennessee. He just finished the Tennessee leg of the "It's All About Learning Tour" with the Apple gang.

"I have spent more than 11 years either influencing the decision to buy Apple products, and have been the primary decision-maker of those purchases for my school system since 1992," he told MacCentral. "To say I am advocate for the platform is an understatement at best. We have bought millions of dollars worth of products over the last 11 years."

Robinson says that Apple has done a good job of listening to its customers for the last couple of years, but wonders if "they have really heard us."

"Yes, the iMac is a brilliant marketing ploy and one of the best computers since the old Ile Platinum," he says. "The Cube is way cool and the tower is the best looking computer on the market, bar none. But great looks only go so far! Apple started with a great four-tier strategy, and it seems to be working for the most part. But it's time to take it to the next level. I

know what I'm proposing isn't Steve's idea, but it is a real person out in the field who buys Apple products and supports them, too."

Here's what Robinson says is important and needs to be done, based on what he sees on a daily basis:

* Megahertz matters. "I don't want to hear the company line about dual processors and that, yes, the G4 500 is faster than the Pentium 1 GHz," Robinson says. "I know that, but your average Joe doesn't know -- and you WILL NOT convince him. We might as well be honest. If I am buying/selling computer A for \$1,599 at 1 GHz and computer B for \$1799 at 500 MHz, which one will be chosen? Not computer B. Joe doesn't understand Altivec and, moreover, he doesn't care. He just wants to tell his friends that his computer is a 1 GHz machine. The slowest Wintel chip I could find on Dell's page was a Celeron 566. While it's certainly no competition for the G3 or G4, the point is that 566 sounds like more than 500. Megahertz appearance is just as important as exterior plastics."

* Give us an iMac with a 17-inch monitor. "The 15-inch monitor is a deal killer," Robinson says. "The biggest complaint I get is, the monitor is 'too small.' Go with a 17-inch short neck. If Apple can get all that power in an 8-inch cube, surely the lowly iMac can be put in a 17-inch monitor case."

* Drop the price on the Cube. "Even at the education price it looks too expensive," Robinson says. "As was said to me last week, 'Why would I get that 450 MHz system with no monitor when I can get an iMac at 500 MHz with a monitor and printer for about the same money?' The average person may not understand all the technical jargon, but they do know 500 is more than 450."

* Kick Motorola's butt. "This sounds like more of number one, but the difference is Apple could make a deal with IBM to perfect the G4 and increase the speed on the G3 (which they have already done)," Robinson says. "Maybe even bring AMD into the act. There is nothing AMD would like better than to take more business away from Intel, and I bet they don't even care what kind of chips they sell. They have a new state of the art factory. It all translates into dollars."

Finally, 10 months at 500 MHz on both chips is four months too long. He says Mac users need 750 MHz now and 1 GHz by late spring as the slowest Pentium on Dell's page is 733 MHz.

"Apple must remember that glitz may help you win a battle, but it is the guts that win the war," Robinson says.

Griffin ships Cube serial card

by Brad Gibson, bgibson@maccentral.com
October 6, 2000, 9:00 am ET
Submitted by Bryan Lienke

Griffin Technology Inc. announced Friday it is now shipping the first Power Mac G4 Cube third-party add-on board that gives Mac users full serial support.

The US\$49 CubePort universal serial adapter gives Cube users a single serial port in place of the 56K modem. The board can be installed by an authorized Apple dealer who sells

Griffin products or by customers themselves.

Griffin first announced the Cube serial card on September 15.

In other Griffin product news, the company has posted version 2.51 of the iMate USB to ADB driver that allows IPD Alphasmart input devices to work with the 2.x version of the iMate driver. Additionally there is a fix for situations where the iMate control panel would not work.

The current iMate driver that sup-

ports all custom ADB drivers should be supported under the shipping version of OS, Griffin said. "We also expect to have a beta version prior to final OS X shipping version that will support devices that use custom drivers or communications protocols like trackballs, hardware protection dongles, drawing tablets and joysticks directly in OS X," the company said in a press statement.

X-Plane updated

Submitted by David M. Peck

X-Plane, the powerful OpenGL flight sim that is without a doubt the most comprehensive of its kind, recieved an update this weekend. The list of updates is long, so I'm only going to give you part of it:

INTERFACE/CUSTOM STUFF

- Fully-customizeable keys: check out the RESOURCES/KEYS folder... you can set your keys now any way you like!
- Go into World-Maker, put it in obstacle mode... now zoom way in on an airport... scenery-designers will be very pleased.
- HUD location and size is now customizeable in the viewpoint window in Plane-Maker.!
- Plane-Maker allows aircraft weights to be set to the 0.1 lb for RC planes.

iGeek: The insanity of Wall Street

By David K. Every

Submitted by Bryan Lienke

Contributing Editor David K. Every is a software engineer and editor of the MacKiDo Web site. He's been playing with and programming Macs since 1984 and can be reached at dke@mackido.com.

I am always amazed by how much Wall Street hates Apple.

Many people believe that you can't be different in the world and succeed, despite the fact that most successful companies were different--which is how they prospered in the first place. But this attitude is reflected in analysts' reports on Apple, which claim that Apple's latest successes are just delaying the inevitable. And when anything minor goes wrong, they foretell the death of Apple once again, as they have since 1981 and the introduction of the IBM PC.

The latest example of the hatred of Apple can be seen in the stock plunge. Apple issued a warning that revenues will be off by about 10 percent for the year, and earnings off by about 33 percent for the quarter. The Chicken Littles of the world overreacted, and soon the press was back at its old game of declaring the beginning of the end. Again.

- Cockpit lighting at super-high altitude better. (Shuttle, Mars, X-15)
- Plane-Maker lets you zoom in on the fuselage section cuts!
- Indicate in Plane-Maker if the plane has standard nav lites or not in the view menu.
- Throttle up/down a bit from the joystick operates the collective on the helos.

REFINEMENTS

- Jet-engine n1-mapping a bit better...
- Lit up OBJ TRIANGLE TEXTURES are ok now as well...
- Issues of temperature being reported correctly for elevation addressed...
- Graphical data output a bit "cleaner" looking and more precise to view...
- Engine/fuel flow/temperature response to mixture tuned a bit... best power is a bit rich of peak EGT now...
- Thermals taper out when real low since air is coming from the side at

The basics

The entire high-tech sector is sensitive right now. The dot-coms tanked at the beginning of the year, when people finally realized that they were overvalued. (The "duh!" heard round the world.) What's amazing is that many little dot-coms took it worse than the big ones, an irony because I think the smaller ones, and those in special sectors, stand the best chance of not being over-saturated, and thus giving you a better return on investment.

But what do I know? I'm not an investor who responds to hype and perceived value; instead I tend to buy based on actual value. This is a dangerous assumption, since I'm gambling that humanity will get a clue, and that the many simple-minded stock analysts won't control the world forever.

Intel came in a week or two ago, and gave everyone a sanity check--pointing out that the company may not reach goals--so they took a minor correction. And there seem to be indicators that federal measures to choke the flow of growth (by inflating the cost of money) have been working, and slowing down the economy just a bit. And we are in an election year, which always makes investors a little

that point not from below as in real life..

- Hangars/tower never bunched on top of each other like they used to be sometimes, trees drawn a bit better...
 - X-Plane uses male not female ATC voice now... works better for other speech engines...
 - No more jerky cloud movements as you fly into rising terrain.
- Check out the official website for the full piece of the cake. This update brings X-Plane up to version 5.41.

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trigger happy. Analysts seem to predict doom and gloom if candidate "X" gets elected, and it never seems to make a difference which one is elected since they are more the same than different.

Then Apple makes its minor warning, and suddenly the company is supposed to be worth \$8.37 billion less than it was the day before. Why? Because it only made just under \$2 billion (somewhere between \$1.85 and \$1.95 million) this year, instead of just over (\$2.05 million)? Or because it only grew about 20 percent this year, instead of more. Oooh, scary stuff -- the company is doomed, doomed I say! Sell now while you still can.

What happened?

This crosses the line from stupidity into insanity. What happened Friday that made Apple's previous valuation of \$17.39 billion suddenly so wrong? In most ways that you measure a company (P/E ratio, earnings, year over year growth, customer loyalty, and so on), the company is exactly the same today as it was a few days ago. In fact, this news likely means that next quarter will be better.

The big problems this quarter were as follows:

1. The iMac line was revamped late in the quarter, and Apple was pulling the older models off the shelves. This causes a slowdown, because you don't want to stick stores with lots of old models. And it took Apple a little longer than it had hoped to ramp up the low-end iMacs (\$799 models).

2. The iBook, as well, was revamped late in the quarter. Again, this means that you ramp down manufacturing and sales of the old model, and ramp up the new ones. Customers start getting leery about buying a computer when they expect a new model "any day now," and it's taken a little time to fill the stock on these new machines.

3. This was compounded by Apple's education quarter, the one when schools often buy heavily (the lowest-end models). Fewer models were to be found, and those were about to be replaced. So schools likely just delayed purchasing. Ouch. Bad timing. Not an indicator that iMac or iBook sales are slowing down significantly, just that introduction and delivery was mistimed. In fact, the models still seem to be moving quite well, and still offer excellent features and functions--even more so after the speed and feature bumps.

4. PowerBooks haven't gotten a major update in a while, so the line's sales and hype are winding down, and Apple isn't making the high-margin sales on the PowerBook that might be hoped. Rumors of new model announcements likely further depressed sales. However, this is a temporary situation, and we are likely to see new models and stimulation of this quadrant before the end of the next quarter.

5. Apple overpriced the Cube. Apple planned to have it as a larger-margined version of the iMac, and while it is an excellent machine that is selling well, it isn't selling as well as Apple had hoped/predicted. People basically said that a stylish, headless iMac (with a G4) is nice and a trend-setter, but not enough to warrant a \$500-plus premium. OK. Big deal. Companies price things, and then

adjust them based on market demands. It's easier to move a machine down in price than up, so I expect that Apple will react--bundle monitor and Cube, or drop the price, or add in software--to make it more attractive. Nothing traumatic or tragic, so no big hiccup.

What is likely to happen?

Steve Jobs described this quarter as, "We've clearly hit a speed bump." Not an exaggeration by any means.

Apple has smart leadership, smart people and good products. They've ramped up iMac sales, and have newly invigorated iMac and iBook lines. They are likely to introduce new PowerBooks before the holiday sales season. They may even reposition (slightly) the Cube. The G4's are still good machines and selling well, and demand isn't likely to go away. So this next quarter is likely to go fine as well. If the season is down, and the world economy isn't as great as last year, it could mean that Apple grows only a little. But Apple is not facing the kind of risk that would warrant the big selloff we saw.

Furthermore, if it were likely that the economy would turn down in the computer sector, then we should have seen bigger adjustments in PC companies. Let's face it: If people start getting frugal, they usually run to chop shops and start buying the cheap knockoffs rather than Compaq, Dell or Gateway.

So any kick in the market's shorts should be far worse for them than for Apple, because Apple is not just another PC clone company. It adds value, features and functions that PC's don't have. If you want a stylish, fanless machine, or you value your time (and like avoiding tech-support calls or fighting with installers) then Macs still have the same superiority they did a week ago. And while PCs are getting a bit easier to install and set up, they still haven't achieved the ease of use of the Mac. And this is at a time when more and more people are wising up and realizing that the Mac's superior design has value. So I think any downturn in the industry would be worse for the other machines than

Macs.

The only thing that could really change this scenario and hurt Apple is a bunch of negative hype, by the choice-haters in the world. Then maybe they could scare off customers like they did five years ago. But there seems to be a cycle time of every few years when the doom and gloomers get another chance to create the "Apple is doomed" scares all over again. <Yawn> If the bias weren't so vitriolic, it would be boring.

Fortuna's spin

One of the worst examples of bias that I read was at CNNfn. The author offered stellar quotes like:

"Most of the analysts who downgraded Apple Friday said that the revenue and earnings shortfall was a company-specific problem, not a sign of a slump for the entire personal computer industry."

Hello! It was like two or three of 20 analysts that downgraded the stock. This is not a compelling argument, this is deceptive attack.

"In our opinion, investors should not read this Apple blowup as evidence that PC demand is weak," said Merrill Lynch analyst Steve Fortuna in a research note.

Steve Fortuna is one analyst among many. Listening to one voice is seldom "balance." Some of his recent analysis includes:

* He disliked the Cube from the beginning, saying he didn't understand its niche, and believed the lack of expandability would hamper it. (So he failed to see its niches, but he didn't question the price point?)

* In July, when he talked about this quarter's Apple sales, he predicted the company would have higher-margin sales than they had before--projecting an 8 percent rise in average selling price, despite the fact that Apple was introducing newer low-priced models, and going into an education quarter, where low-end sales (not higher-end) usually increase.

* He said in an interview that Apple's recent sales growth was driven up by upgrade sales, but to mix a metaphor, said that when the "juice" has been squeezed out of that "orange" later this year, Apple will have to "find more first-time buyers." I don't think he realized the number of new buyers in the iMac and iBook lines.

* He went on to predict that Apple didn't have any long-term survival abilities in 2001 unless it shifts into making Internet appliances (and predicting that they would). This is because he thinks the upgrade sales will die out and that Apple can't get enough converts. But he ignores Mac OS X, and does he think that Apple has had 11 straight quarters of just upgrade sales? This makes no sense.

What I see in Fortuna is someone who is trying to make his own reality, or someone who believes his own hype. He predicted an increase in average selling price that doesn't seem to have happened. Strike one. He predicted that Apple's sales will slump not this quarter but in early 2001; he predicted an upturn for this quarter. Strike two. He doesn't seem to understand the draw of the iMacs and iBooks, and thinks that Internet appliances are the way to go, when many people only use the appliances as a stepping stone to buying more robust machines like iMacs or other PC's. We'll see if his predictions of Apple jumping into this market before or at January Expo are correct.

CNNfn's failure

Analysts want to be right, so predicting the beginning of the end in order to bring it about is not an uncommon tactic. I'm sure no ego is involved, and that Fortuna's attacks against Apple have nothing to do with his failed predictions.

But the really shameful thing is CNNfn's failure to do its job and investigate the people it quotes, and fairly disclose both sides of a story, or what biases (and success record) those sources have. Even worse, CNNfn got into spinning on its own with a chart that implied Apple's downturn.

The chart shows a substantial drop in June. Why? Because Apple did a stock split! CNNfn didn't adjust for it in the chart, nor disclose the fact. This is a horrendous error; stock charts always adjust for after-split cost, or they at least disclose (in big large letters) that there was a split. Without this note, the chart shows a downtrend that makes Apple look like a bad investment of late, when quite the opposite was true.

...and bias?

Other disingenuous quotes followed.

"In addition, Apple's announcement on Thursday was especially troubling because it noted that the company's sales have been weak in the education segment, a part of the market Apple historically has dominated."

This is their idea of a balanced news report? Spin things in the most negative way, and never explain the why's? Why were education sales weak this one quarter? Maybe because Apple didn't have the machines to sell. This isn't the beginning of some huge loss in the education segment; Apple is still very strong there. It is a minor one-quarter blip. To offer half-truths like this should be shameful to any magazine or news organization that claims to be professional and unbiased.

They went on to compound their spin with more spin. They brought back the "Apple was doomed" in 1997 stuff, which was never as bad as it was sold as. But they played that old card to try to bash Apple and scare away customers.

Then they discussed how Apple has a good balance sheet, but quickly suffocated that positive point by pointing to Apple's market share. Comparing Apples to oranges, or Apples to PCs, as if there is a comparison. Why not compare toasters with embedded processors, or WebTV sales to PCs as well?

They kept harping on the old, "Apple needs more software developers" diatribe, but failed to point out that more developers than ever have been moving to the Mac, and that OS X is likely to invigorate the movement

even more. They dodged the OS X Public Beta, and what it might mean to new development. Instead of telling the truth--"things have been looking up lately, with more investment and ISV's moving over," as well as a more-portable OS technology and better development tools--they make it seem the other way, that Apple is just barely hanging on.

Then CNNfn quoted Fortuna saying that Apple should think "outside the box" and follow Gateway. Hello! Are Fortuna and CNNfn really that ignorant of Apple's plans? It was nine months ago that Apple unveiled its strategy to do exactly that! Steve Jobs even called it "thinking beyond the box" in his Macworld Expo keynote. And at Expo, Apple talked about its new Web-based services, and how they were offering more technology services, and their partnerships, and so on. Apple revamped its already-profitable enterprise division (which they'd had since the NeXT acquisition, and before) to be iServices. To do what? Offer training, services, Internet consulting, and more. So Apple, which has been following this trend for between one and 10 years (depending on how you want to count) should look to Gateway's lead? Who started which trend when?

There are many trends going on in the computer industry and the economy at-large, but the cycle of mindless vultures pouncing on anything slightly negative in order to bash Apple is old and tiring. The problem is that news outlets are failing to do their job, such as investigating their sources, explaining both sides of a story, offering balance, or providing real analysis as to what happened and why. Interestingly, CNNfn forgot to disclose its partnership arrangements with Microsoft when it began bashing Apple. This makes CNNfn's story (and ones like it, both past and present) less about news, and more about hype and misinformation.

Full disclosure

I've invested in Apple stock. I've more than tripled my money (even after last week's adjustment) in the last few years by betting on Apple when the analysts said it was doomed. When a company is undervalued, and has



good technology, good strategies and good people, in a growing industry, I think it is a good investment. That Apple's stock took a pounding the other day just means that it is an even better investment now. I think CNNfn has the acuity to realize this, if it wanted to, but it is safer to follow the herd and bash alternatives, rather than take a risk and recommend them.

Heck, my philosophy applies to more than just Apple. I did the same thing the other day with Ford as well; its stock halved in value because of over-reaction to problems with Firestone tires. This large a drop in a stable company like Ford is rare, so I put some money there as well. Ford will bounce and, in a couple of years, no one will remember what the hype was about.

I'm not blindly contrarian. I just think I have more of a clue than many analysts do, and my ego isn't so big that I have to prove I'm right, or twist the

truth to try to make myself right. I try to just live, learn, and go on, and gamble that, over time, sanity will eventually win over stupidity and hype.

Conclusion

Apple is releasing new machines that are likely to be much faster and much more multi-processor aware, a move the industry will follow in a few years. It looks like Motorola may finally be getting off its incompetent rear and speed-bumping its processors, and completing its new processor designs. Apple has OS X in the works, which has a lot of potential. Consumers are finally catching on to the MHz game, and more of them are buying computers based on features and design rather than just on specs. The Internet is taking off, and things are becoming more standard and open, as is Apple's OS (UNIX-based).

This all means more software and solution choices for Macs. Even the

boom in Linux server sales is a likely win for Apple, in that the sales are coming from NT and Windows more than Macs. And Linux is more open than Windows, so it is a trend away from Windows to other choices. Microsoft is in a serious lawsuit that could easily end in its breakup, which would remove its biggest competitive advantage. Just having the government lawyers breathing down its neck is keeping the company more honest than it's ever been.

So most events and trends of late seem to be in Apple's favor, not against. Once again, I'm left to question what the selloff of Apple's stock was about? Was it sanity, and people coming to their senses, or was it stupidity and people overreacting to hype? If it was the latter, and I think it was, then I see Apple as a big investment opportunity.

WebSideStory: Apple retains core user base on the Web



by Dennis Sellers, dsellers@maccen-tral.com

October 9, 2000, 7:00 am ET
Submitted by Bryan Lienke

Hard as it is to believe with Apple having sold almost four million iMacs, many to first timers on the Mac platform, WebSideStory, a provider of real-time Internet intelligence and Web audience analysis, has reported that in terms of global Web usage share, the Mac OS has remained steady at around 3 percent since early 1999.

According to the WebSideStory data, Apple has retained a core following

among Web surfers worldwide, but hasn't cut into the Window's global OS share. As of Oct. 4, 2000, the Mac OS accounted for 2.84 percent of all monitored Internet usage, according to WebSideStory's StatMarket (whose statistics, according to WebSideStory, are collected from more than 40 million visitors a day to nearly 200,000 Web sites worldwide).

Windows had a usage share of 92.8 percent on the same date, while Unix had 0.44 percent. Other operating systems, including Microsoft's WebTV, Linux, SunOS, Silicon Graphics IRIX, Amiga, and IBM OS/2 among others, had an aggregate 3.90 percent usage

share worldwide.

Apple's Mac OS usage share on Jan. 10, 1999, was 2.66 percent. It hit a low of 2.39 percent on Aug. 1, 1999 and then a high of 3.21 percent on May 9, 2000, according to WebSideStory data. While the overall growth in Mac's usage has been nearly stagnant; it has held ground better than Windows, which has dropped by more than a percentage point from 94.11 percent on Jan. 10, 1999. Other operating systems have risen by more than a percentage point collectively since early 1999, according to the report.

Time to defend Apple

By John C. Dvorak, PC Magazine
Submitted by Bryan Lienke



Image and presentation are extremely under-appreciated in the tech world. Under-appreciated by everyone except Steve Jobs.

I was more than a little amused last week when Apple stock dropped by a whopping 50 percent in one trading day just because the company is

doing so well but can't keep up with demand. Okay, the stock market mavens are nuts nowadays and panicky, too. No sooner did the stock drop when a series of negative reports came out regarding the Apple Cube saying that many were developing hairline cracks. Hmmm, let me think. A big thick piece of clear plastic developing a crack. Incredible! I've never heard of such a thing. Assuming, of course, I've been living under a rock.

Plastic, indeed, cracks like that -- get over it. Fact is, Apple is getting a bum rap. But exactly why is Apple getting so much attention?

Doing design

Apple has managed to relight its fire based on nothing more than a pent-up demand for hot-looking computers. We cannot deny this. The sad part about this is that the PC world has

been unable to counter any of this with advanced designs. The old argument that people do not care about the look of a computer denies one simple fact of life: Most people care about the look of everything they own, although some will not admit it. Even people who buy pug-ugly cars such as the Ford Focus consider the design. Exactly why some people have such off-beat taste is another issue.

The key to Apple's good-looking machines is the anomaly known as Steve Jobs. No matter what anyone thinks of this egomaniac, there is no denying his heightened sense of style. He once said he didn't like Microsoft and company because as a whole the company had no taste. He's aware of his own good taste and finds people who don't have some sense of taste to be repugnant.

Jobs is a unique person who is a genuine taste-maker and could as easily be comfortable in the fashion industry cussing out models as he is in the computer business cussing out whomever. It's a unique skill that is probably more important than ever (taste, not cussing). It saved Apple, for sure. Now the question remains whether the rest of the industry can follow his lead. So far the answer is no. There have been some half-heart-

ed attempts, but nobody has jumped in with guns blazing. I'm more convinced than ever that we'll never see jazzy-looking PCs, because the kind of engineering and MBA talent that runs the computer manufacturing companies doesn't get that stylish. The closest anyone in the computer industry comes to Steve Jobs is the ascetic Larry Ellison with his \$5,000 suits and Japanese taste in environments. But he runs a software company and only dabbles in hardware once in a while.

That leaves nobody who cares enough to make a difference. The point is that this is not the fashion industry, and Steve Jobs is simply a fluke. What must be considered is the fact that this one lone element of good taste can make such a huge difference on the bottom-line profits of a company. Exactly why this phenomenon has not been promoted within the business-school environment is mystifying. Good taste is something that if you don't have it, you don't miss it. Few, if any, great American business-people have it. They were raised in a sterile environment unless they came from Europe. Few Americans are surrounded by art when they are children. Few are taught about good taste. Good taste to the American boy who becomes a scion of industry is a racing stripe down the middle of his car.

Most people cannot even dress themselves.

How about a Wintel machine?

I'm reminded of a time when I was giving a talk at an IBM sales meeting some years ago about industry trends. It was during the era when IBM had relaxed its dress code thus allowing employees to wear what they felt comfortable wearing. I looked into the audience and was stunned by the sea of mismatched clothes and dubious outfits. I thought to myself, Now I understand why IBM had a dress code! They don't know how to dress themselves. And these weren't just engineers but sales people too! Issues of good taste and style are very low-priority, especially in the tech world where raw brain-power and new ideas are considered the most valuable of assets. If you're a slob, so what?

But always lurking underneath it is image and presentation. Both are extremely under-appreciated in the tech world. Under-appreciated by everyone except Steve Jobs. I just wish he'd bite the bullet and do a Wintel machine for the rest of us

Ongoing Deals for Minn'app'les Members

Submitted by Tom Gates and Bert Persson

The following businesses have agreed to provide ongoing discounts to members of mini'app'les. When you contact these companies, please identify yourself as a member of mini'app'les to qualify for these discounts. For questions related to these discount offers, please contact Tom Gates - (612) 789-1713 evenings and weekends.

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For additional information about the user group discount and other services, contact CartridgeCare at (612) 331-7757.

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MacMillan Publishing produces frequent listings of new titles that have been added to their catalog. Mini'app'les will attempt to have these available on the BBS in addition to the catalogs.

Why Mac OS X isn't a Mac OS

Gordon Mulcaster, gozer@mac.com
Submitted by Greg Buchner

First a bit of History to frame my points.

Any modern* desktop operating system is an amazingly complex device. It must manage memory, 2D and 3D graphic accelerators, third-party apps, drivers and hardware, inter-application and even inter-computer communication and interact with the user in a way that is easy for non-technical people to understand and use.

When the Mac was being developed the overriding idea was to bring new levels of power (and therefore ability) to people who didn't have computer science degrees, the "rest of us". It implemented an object oriented UI that was so good it has since been copied (the concepts of, if not the look) with varying degrees of success by almost every other desktop OS.

The Mac's designers did a very good job of hiding the complexity of the OS behind a "candy coated shell". The designers of other systems have done the same, the Mac's designers just did it the best. The reason, the Mac was built from square-one with this concept in mind. Mac OS X is starting with a complete OS (Darwin, i.e. BSD UNIX) where the complexity is in plain sight, Apple's task now is to hide it.

Mac OS X is bringing with it (via Darwin) lots of new (for the Mac) technologies, protected memory and preemptive multi-tasking probably being the two most important. These technologies were not unknown when the Mac was being developed (the Lisa used pre-emptive multitasking a year prior to the Mac's release) and it's unfortunate that the Mac's designers didn't include them or (where impossible -- 128K isn't very much room) at least include the hooks to implement them later (e.g. make all the tool-box calls re-entrant). The original Mac didn't have enough memory to reasonably run two applications at one time (it didn't really have enough to run one) so things like multi-tasking and protected memory weren't concerns.

But the computer industry doesn't stand still, the Lisa had a staggering (for its time) one MB of RAM, the original Mac came out a year later with only 128 K (one eighth of a MB) -- today a video card is considered under equipped if it only has 16 MBs and computers routinely have 128 MB (1,000 times the original Mac's memory) and a GB is not that uncommon. As the Mac developed and new models were released with more RAM multi-tasking became possible and desirable and we got Multi-Finder but it was a hack**.

Multi-Finder is still with us in OS 9 (although it's just called Finder now) and it's still a hack. OS 9 doesn't have memory protection, the Toolbox isn't fully reentrant, multi-user support is a hack, etc. So while the Mac hasn't kept up with the industry on the technical side (a few key technologies aside, e.g. colour sync and QuickTime) the lead it took in 1984 has allowed it to keep up (and still be aout in front) on the interface side -- the Mac OS is still the easiest OS to "just get stuff done" with ("stuff" being non-computer stuff, e.g. editing a picture, recording a song, writing a letter... if what you want to do is serve Web pages the Mac's interface is of little concern).

Enter Mac OS X, its BSD/Mach base supports memory protection, preemptive multi-tasking, multi-users, multi-processors and all the other hot industry buzz-words. Apple's task with OS X is to wrap a GUI around it and hide the complexity, a daunting task to say the least. As can be seen with the public beta Apple has a long way to go, for example:

All OSs need the ability to be extended, whether it's to support a new video card, new printer, new font or a new multi-media format. With the Mac such extensions are handled by dropping files into the Extensions, Control Panels, Fonts, Control Strip, etc. folders. To make things even easier for Mac users, if such a file is dropped on the system folder, the system identifies it and puts it in the correct folder. The Extensions Manager automates things without taking away the direct manipulation ability. It's

similar for startup and shutdown items, fonts, colour sync profiles, postscript printer definition files (ppd's), etc.

(Technically the method these extensions use to patch into the Mac may not be as good as that used by Mac OS X, but that's not what I'm discussing here, I'm talking about how the user manages such things.)

Under Mac OS X extensions are listed in various XML formatted text files. So while a Mac user can enable and disable extensions using the normal file manipulation methods they are familiar with, Mac OS X users are going to have to rely on installers and uninstallers. If the user wants to directly manipulate things under Mac OS X (say to diagnose a problem) they are going to need a much deeper understanding of how things work.

For another example, the Mac handles volumes (HDs, network, floppies, CDs, etc.) in a very straight forward manner, when mounted they appear as an icon on the desktop available for direct user manipulation. Under OS X they are hidden away in a Window. Users see HDs, CDs, etc. (i.e. volumes) as separate entities and Macs treat them as separate entities. Mac OS X attaches volumes into the file system at an arbitrary point, while this may be a very nice feature for technically-oriented people, it makes things harder for non-technical users (i.e. "the rest of us") to understand.

The Mac has the most forgiving OS around. For the most part the user can move and rename file and folders with impunity. I've seen Macs with three or four old OSs laying around in the boot volume. I've seen Macs with multiple versions of the same extension. I've seen System Folders buried half a dozen folders deep and named "Don't Touch". I've seen Macs that have extensions designed to fix a problem with an older OS in a newer OS. I've seen Macs with drivers for hardware that was taken out of the computer a couple of years ago and they all still work.

Some people are bound to say that the way Mac OS X handles things is

better, that the technical improvements are worth the additional complexity -- and they may be right (but keep in mind that some people like complexity). I'm not so sure, I support 75 or so Mac users (mostly audio and video-post artists) and when I try to explain the technical advantages of Mac OS X their eyes glaze over... they aren't "computer people", they just use computers. And they use Macs because they can get their work done on their Macs without having to understand how they work.

When released Mac OS X may be the best, easiest to use version of UNIX available and it may run most existing Mac programs without a hitch, but it

Yahoo still lagging in Mac friendly service

by Dennis Sellers, dsellers@maccen-
tral.com

October 6, 2000, 7:00 am ET
Submitted by Bryan Lienke

There's still no word from Yahoo - the Internet media company serving over 120 million users monthly -- about when it's services will be more Mac friendly. As we reported in June, Yahoo has introduced several new software-based services that are generally only available for Windows, such as:

Yahoo Player, a digital media player based on Windows Media that plays MP3s, CDs, etc.

Yahoo Finance Vision, a financial news application that's a combination Web site/streaming video feed.

Yahoo Toolbar, a browser add-on toolbar that has a search box, links to

isn't a Mac OS. Apple should be making that clear in their marketing, their slogan for the roll-out of Mac OS X should be:

"The Mac is dead, long live the Mac"

If they try to market this as a Mac OS I think they will see a backlash when "normal" Mac users start trying to use it.

Windows was built on top of Dos in the mid 80's and even to this day that legacy shows through, even with Windows 2000. Can Apple do with Darwin and Mac OS X what Microsoft couldn't do with Dos and Windows

many My Yahoo modules, and alerts for new Yahoo Mail. And while there is a Mac version of Yahoo Messenger, an instant messaging client that also hooks into many Yahoo services like mail, news, sports, etc., it has fewer features than the Windows version (including no voice chat).

MacCentral reader Jeff Darnell says he's sent several e-mails to Yahoo! Broadcast, but "they've skirted on the issues that they exclusively use the Windows Media Player and that their multi-linked stations don't work on the Mac (same as Real Player ads before broadcast)."

"All I get is the commercial, and then I'm told I've lost connection in a window," he says. "This happens because Windows Media Player on

NT?

* for the purposes of this article "modern" is defined as supporting multi-tasking, a GUI, (local, intra, and inter)-networking, multi-media, 3D graphics, etc.

** "hack" is not a derogatory term.

*** If you have the Beta installed you are not a normal user.

the Mac is old. This frustrates me to no end. I have stations I used to listen to on Real Player, and now I can't. Almost all radio stations in the U.S. have Internet broadcasts and 95 percent of those are broadcast from Yahoo with WMP. This is supposed to be a service that everyone should have an equal right to use."

Contact Yahoo about this situation, and you get a standard reply along the lines of, "we are aware there is great demand among our Mac users, but at this time we have no timetable for developing a Mac version." But you're certainly welcome to ask them (politely) to add Mac support.

Simple Technology debuts Flash Disk Module line

by Ben Wilson,
bwilson@maccen-
tral.com
October 7, 2000, 9:30 am ET
Submitted by Bryan Lienke

Simple Technology has taken its expertise in the flash memory market, and used it to create a new line of products dubbed "Solid-State Flash Disk Modules." The product is intended to offer an alternative to traditional hard drives while using existing connection methods.

Simple Technology's Flash Disk Module offers a transparent design, replacing or augmenting convention-

al IDE hard disk drives.

Specifically, the product line is available in 40 pin (100 mil spacing) addressing similar functionality to 2.5" hard disk drive, 44 pin (2mm spacing) addressing similar functionality to 3.5" disk drives and standard 144 pin SoDIMMs.

The product line is intended to plug directly into the existing IDE connector style and does not require any modification to the software at the operating system or drivers, given that it fully adheres to the ATA/IDE standard.

"Specifically, we are positioning this family of products as an answer to the increasing storage demand for users with small footprint/high capacity needs. The increase in capacity offered does not compromise low power consumption, performance, compatibility and reliability of the solution offered," said Jeanclaude Toma, vice president of Marketing and Business Development for Simple Technology.

Pricing for the new storage devices has not yet been announced.



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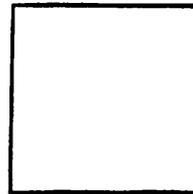
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Trans Intl announces PowerBook high capacity hard drive

by Brad Gibson, bgibson@maccen-
tral.com

October 6, 2000, 10:40 am ET

Submitted by Bryan Lienke

Memory and mass storage concern Trans Intl. LLC announced Friday the online availability of a new high capacity 2.5-inch 32GB hard disk drive for PowerBook G3s.

The 5400 rpm hard drive has one of the lowest drive latency's on the market at 5.5, delivering media trans-

fer rates up to 228.8 megabits per second and the highest shock rating of 700 G/1 ms.

On a hard disk, latency is the time it takes for the selected sector to come around and be positioned under the read/write head.

"With the availability of this new drive, Apple PowerBook G3 users can expand the internal storage capacity of their systems up to 32GB at the fastest possible transfer rate an inter-

nal 2.5 inch drive can deliver," a company press statement said.

In addition, Transintl.com has recently added complete instructions for installing and upgrading the RAM and the Hard Disk Drive in the PowerBook G3 and iMac models on its Web site.

November Photoshop / Digital Imaging SIG

Submitted by
Gary Echardt

On Wednesday, November 15, 2000, the Digital Imaging/Photoshop SIG will meet at the Augsburg Library

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Macintosh computers, monitors, Apple II's, Image writers. PC printers, hard drives, modems, PC's for sale.

at 6:30 PM at 7100 Nicollet Avenue. Doug Meisner and/or Brian Ziegler from Adobe will talk about the new version (6.0) of Adobe Photoshop and also about Image Ready (which is included with Adobe Photoshop).

If you have questions about the meeting, please contact Gary Eckhardt at
952-944-5446.

Bert (612) 861-9578 or post message on our BBS, bpersson@isd.net

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