CAMP NEWS APRIL 2006

The next meeting of the Capital Apple Macintosh Performa User Group will be held on Wednesday, April 12th, 2006, at 7:00 p.m. in Room 117 at Gardiner Area High School. Sue will review/demonstrate Onmigraffe, a graphic organizing tool. (correct, Sue?) The usual Q+A and raffle will also occur. Directors will meet at 6:15. All are welcome to attend.

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At 30, Apple Is Mainstream -- And a Target
By Mike Musgrove
Washington Post - Sunday, April 2, 2006

As Apple Computer Inc. enters its fourth decade this week, it faces a set of headaches that are relatively new to the company: The ones that come from being a top dog.

After spending most of its life as a respected but cultish small player, Apple has entered the mainstream, courtesy of the iPod. For years, tech industry watchers wondered if the company would even survive, as Apple's share of the computer market dwindled to a sliver.

With the success of its digital music player and online music store, Apple is now finding itself accused of being a monopolist. French lawmakers are trying to make Apple stop linking its online iTunes Music Store

exclusively to its iPod player, and music publishers are chafing at Apple's refusal to charge more than 99 cents a track at iTunes. Both argue that popularity gives Apple unfair control over the market.

Even malicious software-writing hackers are showing an unwelcome interest in Apple's Mac computer. This year has seen two "malware" programs designed to muck up the Mac operating system. Though the programs weren't particularly damaging, antivirus software companies were quick to pile on with talk of how Mac is about to become the new "it" platform for hackers to attack.

These are the sort of problems that Microsoft Corp. usually has had to deal with as the tech industry's biggest player.

"Once you get to be a certain size, you get to be a target," tech pundit Rob Enderle said. "You can do pretty much whatever you want when you're small, but when you're the dominant player, the rules change."

Apple's numbers are still small on the home computer side -- it controls less than 5 percent of the market -- but it has arrived at a tremendously influential place in pop culture.

"Apple's importance in high technology is grossly disproportionate to its market share," said Owen W. Linzmayer, author of "Apple Confidential 2.0: The Definitive History of the World's Most Colorful Company." "Apple is considered by many the research and development company for the rest of Silicon Valley."

Silicon Valley historians credit Apple with changing the course of the personal computer revolution about five or six times, though Mac fans can argue for a higher number.

Apple didn't make the first computer, perhaps, but this was the company that brought personal computers to the masses and made the personal computer revolution possible with its early understanding of the importance of an easy-to-use graphic interface for computer users.

Decades later, the iPod is the latest and most profitable example of the company's skill at turning technology into something that changes people's lives. The world already had several MP3 players to choose from

before Apple made its entry, but Apple's product took it from a niche gadget class and transformed it into a cultural force.

As if its innovations weren't enough of a contribution, Apple gave Silicon Valley its best and longest-running storyline, one that even non-techies could appreciate. There was the rivalry between Apple founder Steve Jobs and Microsoft's Bill Gates. Apple was the better computer, the legend goes, but it lost the computer wars because Jobs didn't license its operating system software to computer makers, as Microsoft did.

Even without a nemesis to contend with, Apple's internal history is its own odd drama. In 1985, Steve Jobs was edged out of his own company. In his absence, the company lost its way and languished. When Apple bought Jobs's second company a decade later, he shortly became Apple's chief executive again. Jobs sold his animation company, Pixar, a project started during his time away from Apple, to Disney earlier this year.

Today, the tech industry is in a race for the living room. Some credit Jobs with starting the movement in this direction. In 2001, Jobs started talking about the "digital hub" -- in which the computer's role is that of a center of the digital lifestyle, a connecting point for gadgets such as the digital camera and the MP3 player.

Sure enough, the concept is the dominant one in the consumer tech industry, with every company from Microsoft to Intel to Apple toiling away at products that will play music and video files, display pictures and network with the home office computer.

As for Apple's market share in the computer world, it's still low. Research firm IDC figures that Apple had 4 percent of the computer market in 2005, up from 2.7 percent in 2000. By comparison, the company held 15 percent of the computer market in 1985.

Analysts have theorized about the iPod having a "halo" effect for Apple's computer line. The theory goes that consumers who fell in love with the iPod's graceful and easy-to-use software would go back to the Apple store and buy the company's beautiful computers. Steve Jobs says the halo effect is real, though many tech analysts dispute it.

Apple has some trends going in its favor, regardless.

For years, Apple was at a disadvantage because the sheer number of Windows computers in the world meant that software developers were more inclined to make products for that operating system. These days, though, a computer's main use is accessing the Internet -- so the operating system doesn't matter as much.

Now that Microsoft has announced that its next version of Windows will be delayed until next year, some analysts figure that Apple has an opportunity to sell some computers to Microsoft customers who are tired of waiting for an updated operating system.

But maybe the computers don't even really matter anymore to Apple. The iPod, along with the iTunes online music and video store, has started to contribute more profits and revenues to its parent company than the Mac computer line.

It's hard not to notice that all the interesting speculation about what's next for Apple has little to do with what the next computer will look like. Mac fan sites are predicting a TiVo-like device, a new iPod with a larger video screen and a personal digital assistant, among other things. One popular and persistent rumor says Apple has a cell phone in the works.

Many Mac fans have been holding out hopes that Apple will come out with some new product to celebrate its 30th birthday this week -- even though the company has not distributed the customary "save the date" invites that usually precede its announcements.

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Mac OS X: Living Long and Prospering

By Rob Pegoraro - Sunday, April 2, 2006

Yesterday, Apple Computer Inc. turned 30 years old. But an equally significant anniversary occurred two Fridays ago: March 24 marked Mac OS X's fifth birthday.

Four major updates later, that operating system ranks as one of Apple's greatest successes. First, it broke the company's long streak of unfinished operating-system projects. Second, OS X has shown that it's possible to fix three of the worst parts of computing: adding programs, removing them

and keeping everything in good working order.

Users and authors of other operating systems might want to ponder that example, not least after Microsoft's March 21 announcement that its already-late replacement to Windows XP, Windows Vista, would be delayed yet again. It's now not scheduled to appear in stores until January.

That Mac OS X would make any kind of dent in the universe was no sure thing when version 10.0 arrived on March 24, 2001. Its mere existence was a minor miracle: Since 1994, Apple had pledged to replace the aging Mac foundation with a multitasking, crash-proof system, then repeatedly failed to ship anything resembling that goal.

The best it could do was crank out lesser upgrades to a code base first released in 1991, with architectural defects dating to the Mac's birth in 1984. The Mac looked great and was easy to use, but it crashed way too often and tripped over its shoelaces when asked to run too many programs at once.

Mac OS X also looks great -- its fluid, shimmering, translucent Aqua interface has been imitated many times, most prominently in Windows Vista's Aero Glass graphics -- but those nifty special effects aren't the most important feature in OS X. Nor is it this operating system's agile multitasking and nearly crash-free stability, or even the processor-independent architecture, that make it at home on both PowerPC and Intel chips.

Instead, it's the way Mac OS X lives by three basic principles, which together make it easier to live with than any competitor.

· *The system is separate from everything else*. Perhaps scarred by the old Mac OS, which could easily be modified and destabilized by third-party extensions, Apple locked up the core of OS X. Users can look but can't touch at the system's guts without typing an administrator's password, and the same goes for any programs that they install and run.

The immediate benefit of this is security against viruses and other intruders. They can't do nearly as much damage as they could in Windows, where everybody normally has the run of the machine, without a user's express consent.

This policy has also kept OS X free of the rot-from-within that afflicts Windows over time. A Mac's System folder won't clog up with byproducts of software installations, because they usually can't get there in the first place. The programs themselves all land in the same Applications folder (more on that later), and if they must add any system-wide supporting files, they go in a separate, easily inspected Library folder.

· *Each user's files are separate from everybody else's.* Every file you create or use exists in your own home folder, named after your user name, including any personalized settings and cached files for your programs. This ensures that the users of a Mac can customize their software without affecting each other's experiences and vastly simplifies debugging faulty programs and making backups of data.

If a program starts acting up, just run it in another user's account -- or create a new account. If the problem persists there, you need to look for an updated copy of the program. If it doesn't, you can probably fix things by deleting the applications files from the Library folder in your home directory.

And when it's time to back up your data, you don't need to scour the hard drive. Just copy your home folder to as many CDs or DVDs as it takes to hold everything.

· *Each application acts as one, indivisible file.* Credit Apple for persuasiveness here: After five years, Apple has convinced the vast majority of programmers to support OS X's optional "application bundle" feature. This lets a developer package a program and its supporting cast-- code libraries, foreign-language translations, plug-in components, help files and so on -- in a special folder that OS X displays and treats as a single file.

It would be hard to make installing an application simpler than it is under this system: After downloading the program, you drag its icon to the Applications folder. There is no step three.

Likewise, "uninstalling" a program consists of dragging its icon to the trash. (Preference and cache files will be left behind, but they won't harm the system and can be deleted easily enough if you want.)

Not all programs work this way. For example, printer drivers and some high-end programs, such as Apple's iLife suite, need the help of an installer. But even then, those programs still generally appear as single files in the Applications folder, which as a result is far easier to read than the Start Menu's All Programs list, much less the Program Files folder.

Some of those three characteristics show up in other operating systems, such as Linux. Some will appear in Windows Vista when that ships.

But they've been present in OS X from the start, giving Apple time to add such outrageously convenient features as the Migration Assistant that automagically whisks your files, settings and applications to a new Mac and the "Archive and Install" system fix that gives you a clean copy of OS X while preserving everything else on the Mac.

This progress has come at a cost, though: To leap this far ahead, Apple had to ditch a lot of old baggage. While OS X can run "Classic" applications written for the old Mac OS, that compatibility has always been a bit awkward in practice. And on Intel-based Macs, it's gone entirely. Even many newer applications have been rendered obsolete by OS X's major updates.

This transition has been rough on developers and on users, but most of them -- and many others who switched from Windows -- have followed Apple's lead.

Could Microsoft, with so many more customers to satisfy, have made the same trade-off with Vista? Probably not. But maybe it should have. In operating systems, a little revolution every now and then isn't just a good thing, sometimes it may be the only way forward.

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At 30, Apple still has appeal

SAN JOSE, California (AP) -- Silicon Valley's historic orchards have virtually disappeared but one notable fruit still stands: Apple.

As the storied company prepares to celebrate its 30th birthday April 1, Apple Computer Inc. will have brushed off its bruises from product failures and arguably misguided decisions to emerge with a shine that's more than skin-deep.

Its brand name and products -- from the Mac to the iPod -- resonate as both hip and innovative.

For all of its recent successes, however, Apple also has its share of challenges ahead as it matures into a digital media provider.

In the digital music arena, where Apple dominates, French lawmakers are angling to force the company to change its successful way of chaining its popular iPod player to its online iTunes Music Store.

Recording labels are also chafing at Apple's insistence that its song downloads remain 99 cents apiece. Apple's CEO Steve Jobs rebutted by calling the record industry "greedy."

In the computer space, where Apple is seeing its best sales in years, information-security firms have discovered a few new vulnerabilities in its Macintosh operating system.

Though the security breaches have been innocuous, security experts say they signal that Apple is a higher-profile target now for hackers, who in the past have focused heavily on Microsoft Corp.'s predominant Windows system.

"Apple is on more people's radar now that the company is a major force," said Tim Bajarin, president of Creative Strategies, a technology consultancy. "And these are all growing pains."

Apple's journey began in 1976 when two college dropouts -- Jobs, a marketing whiz, and his friend Steve Wozniak, an engineering genius -- filed partnership papers on April Fools' Day, their eyes set on building and selling personal computers. Another friend, Ron Wayne, opted out of the risky venture within two weeks.

Their first product was a build-it-yourself computer kit. A year later, in 1977, the Apple II microcomputer was born. It was not the first personal computer but it was the most successful -- a hit not just among engineers, but home users, too. Many credit the Apple II as the genesis of the personal computer revolution.

Apple's cultural and technological influences only grew from there. Some of the Cupertino, California-based company's creations have been duds that failed to make it any money, but became a source of inspiration and income for others.

The Apple Lisa, introduced in 1983, used an innovative icon- and mouse-based graphical user interface that laid the foundation of today's computers and replaced the previous arcane text-based systems. But the Lisa was a commercial flop: Its high price -- $9,995 -- sent business users to PCs from rival IBM Corp.

The hugely successful -- and more affordable -- Apple Macintosh followed in 1984, giving birth to desktop publishing by allowing users to create their own newsletters or printed material.

Microsoft eventually copied the user-friendly graphical interface and licensed its Windows software to manufacturers who copied the IBM PC. The clones proliferated while Macintosh sales were hobbled by Apple's decision not to license its software to other hardware makers.

The next decade was punctuated by an internal power struggle that forced then-chairman Jobs to leave the company, a series of execution missteps, and botched projects -- most notably the Newton, a handheld computer dubbed a personal digital assistant.

In 1996, when Apple was struggling for a foothold in the personal computing market and its efforts to upgrade its operating system were going nowhere, the company bought Jobs' second computer company, NeXT, returning the prodigal son to the fold, and later to the helm.

Jobs, whose charismatic persona is the face of Apple, led the company's resurrection with one breakthrough after another -- first with the iMac, then the slick new OS X operating system, then the iPod music player, then the market-leading online iTunes store.

A side venture Jobs acquired during his absence from Apple, Pixar Animation Studios Inc., had also put the already celebrated high-tech executive in the middle of Hollywood. The connection to Pixar, which is now being acquired by The Walt Disney Co., has since bolstered Apple's rising star in the world of digital entertainment and consumer electronics.

Apple's iPod and iTunes franchises have popularized the notion of music -- and more recently, video -- on-the-go. They also spawned the modern explosion in podcasts, or self-made broadcasts of audio programming over the Internet to portable gadgets.

Today, Apple's well-honed, self-propelled reputation as David fighting the Goliath of Microsoft and the rest of the PC industry belies reality.

Apple may still hold roughly only a 4 percent share of the worldwide PC market, but analysts say its current operating system set the bar for rival Microsoft with innovative features, including 3D-like imaging and a side pane for "widget" applications.

Many analysts expect that Apple's market-dominating iPod -- which works with both Windows and Macintosh machines -- and its new computers based on Intel Corp. chips -- the same used by Windows -- will help grow Apple's slice of the PC market.

Meanwhile, Apple's financial health is better than ever. It posted record revenue of

nearly $14 billion for its fiscal 2005 and is armed with more than $8 billion in cash.

"Apple will continue to be a force in portable music and video, and desktop innovation," Bajarin said. "Its key challenge now is how it will extend the Mac more into the digital lifestyle, into the living room and the rest of the house, as well as to other portable devices."

No matter how well the company does with its future endeavors, many things people do today -- from desktop publishing to music downloads -- will long be regarded as the fruits of Apple.
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Thanks to those who sent along suggested articles for the newsletter / sk