

CAMP newsletter - November 2006

The next CAMP meeting will be held at GAHS, room 117 (Kristy Ferran's room) on Wed. Nov. 8th at 7pm (directors at 6:15). All are welcome to attend. Becky Ranks will demonstrate Comic Life. Take pictures or drawings and make comic strips complete with balloons! Jeff Frankel will demo PhotoFrame 3.0. in order to build professional looking frame effects for your photos. FMI, call Sue Westlake at 685-4510.

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- 1] Latest On Apple's Phone: Cingular Out, MVNO In?

Thursday November 2- Mac Rumors

Cingular officially announced today its new mobile music service, deciding to partner with Microsoft, Napster, Yahoo! Music, XM Satellite Radio and eMusic for a subscription-based service model.

Many have seen this event as an essential death-sentence to the rumor that Apple would be launching the 'iPhone' as Cingular-only initially. However, the possibility still exists that Apple could operate as a "mobile virtual network operator" (MVNO) on Cingular's network.

Early this year it was discovered that Apple was seeking RF engineers with EDGE experience (EDGE is a relatively high-bandwidth mobile network for GSM carriers such as Cingular). Around the same time, Apple acquired a large datacenter in California that was originally designed for MCI WorldCom.

A release date concerning Apple's phone has notoriously been a moving target for rumor sites to pin down. The latest consensus has appeared to pin down early 2007 with an introduction perhaps at MacWorld San Francisco, however some unconfirmed rumblings from MacRumors sources have been indicating that a spring release may be in the cards.

By Jim Dalrymple November 03, 2006 11:42 am ET – Macworld – By Peter Cohen

MAC Viruses

Symantec has posted details about what it calls a "low risk level" virus affecting Mac OS X called OSX.Macarena. The company has already updated the daily virus definitions file used by its Norton Anti-Virus software for the Mac to address the problem.

Peter Ferrie's writeup for Symantec describes OSX.Macarena as "a proof of concept virus that infects files in the current folder on the compromised computer." OSX.Macarena "infects other files when they are executed in the current directory, regardless of file name or extension."

Writing for The SANS Institute (a resource for information security training and certification), Section 66 security consultant Swa Frantzen said, "to be honest the virus is no big deal in itself. But it is yet another warning for a lot of parties involved."

“As we said before the ability to have viruses and all sorts of other malware is inherently available in all modern operating systems, Mac, Linux, BSD, ... included,” Frantzen added.

“It is a warning to get antivirus protection for those Macs, even if the shopkeeper told you you do not need it, even if there are no viruses in the wild today, even if it’s hard to buy it.”

3] September 25, 2006 – Macworld – By Jim Dalrymple

Aperture 1.5 unveiled at event in Germany

Apple on Monday announced the release of Aperture 1.5 during a special event at the Photokina tradeshow being held in Cologne, Germany. In front of a standing room-only crowd of 1,000 people Apple executives demoed some of the new features and told the crowd that updates for existing Aperture users would be free.

“Any notion that Apple is not 100 percent committed to this space has been completely erased,” Rob Schoeben, Apple’s vice president of Applications Product Marketing, told Macworld following the event. “Our customers are betting on our application and they are putting their reputations on the line everyday — we have responded by delivering a strong set of new features and some very nice refinements.”

The heart and soul of Aperture 1.5 is the Library, according to Apple. The new library system allows photographers to store images on internal disks or other locations like external drives, CDs or DVDs. The system also allows users to rate, review and organize images, even if they are offline.

Aperture also now features integrated support with iLife ‘06 and iWork ‘06, which means users can access Aperture media to build Web sites, create presentations in Keynote and copy photos to iPhoto, using JPEG versions of the Aperture images.

“Every single one of those applications can see the Aperture Library as

easily as it can see the iPhoto library,” said Schoeben.

Other new features in Aperture 1.5 include a luminance-based Edge Sharpen filter for extremely high-quality sharpening results and a new Color tool that lets photographers tune the hue, saturation and luminance of specific color ranges within each image.

Schoeben said the Loupe magnifier has been dramatically enhanced with a set of onscreen controls, smooth zooming with up to 1600 percent magnification and a new option that enables it to be detached from the cursor while making adjustments. Individual image adjustment settings can now be saved as presets that can be automatically applied through a menu command, so that photographers can quickly and easily make standard adjustments.

Apple has also developed a new API plug-in architecture so that third-party developers can tap into Aperture and allow customers to seamlessly connect Aperture’s workflow to their service. Currently Getty Images, iStockphoto, Pictage, Flickr, PhotoShelter, DigitalFusion, Soundslides and Connected Flow all have plug-ins that are being shown in Germany.

While Aperture has been known for its high system requirements, Schoeben had some good news for notebook users. “Aperture runs on every single mac that Apple actively sells,” he said.

In addition to the new and enhanced features, Apple has also included support for three new cameras — the Fuji S2, S3 and the Sony A100.

Aperture 1.5 is available later this week in English, French, German and Japanese as a free update to current Aperture 1.0 customers. Aperture 1.5 is available to order for new customers for a suggested retail price of \$299 through the Apple Store, which will be updated at 12:00 am local time tonight.

4] October 19, 2006 – Macworld – By Jim Heid (**Aperture review**)

Aperture 1.5 – Apple’s photo workflow application gains flexibility

Summary

Pros: Groundbreaking approach to image editing; excellent new adjustments; versatile library-management options; integrates with iLife and iWork '06; upgrade is free; numerous interface and feature improvements.

Cons: Various bugs, one potentially serious; can't import XMP sidecar files; needs more zoom options and keyboard shortcuts for adjustments; inadequate printed documentation; adjusting large Raw-format images can be slow on all but the fastest Macs and those with Apple's recommended graphics cards.

Processor Compatibility: Universal

OS Compatibility: 10.4.8

Price as rated: \$299; upgrade, free. Best Current Price: \$264.90 (ProductFinder)

5] Apple Mac OS X Leopard Preview: Who's the Copycat Now?

Sometimes I wonder how Apple CEO Steve Jobs can sleep at night. He appears to spend half his waking hours ridiculing Microsoft's admittedly behind-schedule operating system, Windows Vista, for copying Mac OS X features. But this week at Apple's annual Worldwide Developer Conference (WWDC), he announced ten new features for Leopard, the next version of OS X, most of which will seem more than vaguely familiar to Windows users. I'm not dim: Microsoft does copy Apple on a fairly regular basis. But seriously, Steve. Apple's just as bad.

More important, perhaps, is that the new OS X features that Jobs and company announced this week aren't, by and large, all that impressive. Two of the new features--Time Machine and Spaces--are valuable additions to OS X and worth discussing, though both, interestingly, have been done before in other OSes. The other Leopard features Apple announced, alas, are almost all a complete waste of time. They're the types of things one might expect of a minor, interim update, or from free

Web downloads. They are certainly not major features as Jobs claimed.

OK, enough Jobs bashing. The guy's a visionary and truly important presence in the industry, and it will be a sad, sad day when he steps down from his post at Apple and fades into the sunset. (The reality of this possibility seemed all the more real this week. Am I the only one that though Jobs looked oddly gaunt and sickly during the WWDC keynote?) But as I've often said of Apple and Jobs: They do good work. It's too bad they feel the need to exaggerate so much.

Anyway, what I'd like to do here is address Apple's comments about Windows Vista and Microsoft, and take a look at the Leopard features Apple announced at WWDC. It's important for you to understand, however, that I don't have Leopard. I'm basing this only on what Apple showed off at WWDC.

Redmond, start your photocopiers

If you watch the WWDC keynote telecast (and the accompanying "PC guy" intro video, both of which are available on the Apple Web site), you'll notice immediately that Apple is more than a little preoccupied with Windows Vista. That's understandable, since Windows is Mac OS X's primary competition (in the sense that 2 percent of the market is competition for Windows) and Apple was inspired by Vista features like Spotlight (er, sorry, Windows Search) when creating its previous OS X version, Tiger (see my review). But that's not a slam, really. Give Apple some credit for getting to market first--by a long shot--and doing a fantastic job of implementing features that Microsoft, frankly, may never get right.

But by the same token, I have to admit to being a bit shocked by how childish Apple is about Vista. Say what you will about Microsoft (heck, I do), but the company is at least deferential to its customers in public, about as far from smug as is humanly possible, and it very rarely takes pointed shots at the competition. From the opening PC guy video ("Widgets, gadgets... completely different. They are their own thing. Just like Aqua. I mean, uh, Aero.") to the last moments of the keynote, Jobs and company unleashed a never-ending, tireless diatribe against Microsoft and its upcoming Windows Vista release.

Jobs was quick to tout the progress Apple has made with its OS since

2001, when both Windows XP and the first version of OS X shipped. "What have we been doing for the last five years?" he asked. "We've been putting out releases of OS X." He claimed that Apple shipped five "major" updates to OS X, including Cheetah, Puma, Jaguar, Panther, and Tiger, though I'd argue that virtually none of those were major updates at all. (Unless you count the cost. At \$129 for each version, that's about \$750 on Mac OS X upgrades since 2001. That kind of puts the cost of Windows in perspective.) But he counted Tiger on Intel as a sixth major release, because of the effort in porting the OS X code to a new platform (which, actually, had been in the works for a long time and wasn't the 210 day project Jobs claimed).

By that measure, Microsoft has improved Windows by a far greater degree. In the same time frame, it has shipped Windows XP Home Edition, Windows XP Professional Edition, Windows XP Professional x64 Edition, Windows XP Media Center Edition, Windows XP Media Center Edition 2004, Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005 (and 2005 UR2), Windows XP Tablet PC Edition, Windows XP Tablet PC Edition 2005, Windows XP Home and Professional N Editions, Windows XP with Service Pack 2 (SP2, absolutely a big Windows upgrade), Windows XP Embedded, Windows Fundamentals for Legacy PCs, and Windows XP Starter Edition in various languages. Heck, I might be missing some versions. No, they're not all major releases (The N Editions? Eh.) But XP x64, like Tiger on Intel, was a major engineering effort. And Apple has nothing--absolutely nothing--like the Media Center and Tablet PC functionality that Microsoft has been refining now for several years. So let's put the silliness about Microsoft doing nothing for five years to rest, shall we?

But of course, Apple couldn't let Microsoft off without some silliness. "What has our competitor been doing for the past five years?" Jobs quipped to the loving laughter of the WWDC crowd. "They've been trying to ship a single release that's had many names [it's had one name, Vista, and one codename: Longhorn. --Paul]. Jobs then carted out Bertrand Serlet, Apple's senior vice president of Software Engineering, to ridicule Vista. Seriously, that's why he was there.

Here's what he said, and what I think about it.

First, the guy was funny. And he made some good points. But he stepped over the line, of course. He said that Microsoft was ripping off Spotlight

with Windows Search in Vista, which in fact, had been developed and publicly discussed long before Spotlight ever saw the light. (To be clear, Apple borrowed that one from Microsoft, but implemented it much more quickly.)

He said that Vista's IE 7 stole the friendly RSS view from Safari, Apple's Web browser. And sure enough, he's got a point. I said so in my own reviews of IE 7 betas. It's a great feature, and Apple did it first.

He incorrectly alluded to the fact that Microsoft separated out its email application from Outlook and created Windows Mail, which in Apple's mind is very similar to Apple's Mail.app. That's untrue. Windows Mail is simply the latest version of Outlook Express, which is a decade old and has been part of Windows since 1998. Mail.app is a fine program, but come on.

He said that Windows Calendar is awfully similar to iCal, the calendar application in OS X. And again, he is correct. Microsoft has told me that it's position is that there are only so many ways to do a calendar application, but come on. As Serlet effectively demonstrated, Windows Calendar is almost identical looking to iCal, right down to the candy-colored appointment blobs. That's just embarrassing.

He even took a shot at Vista's glass-like logo, because it looks too much like an OS X icon. Whatever. Microsoft is pushing a "glass" theme in Vista, and the logo represents that. He noted that Vista is "still Windows": It includes the ugliness of the Registry, DLL hell, and Product Activation. Fair enough.

Curiously, Serlet did not bring up Dashboard, Apple's environment for widgets, and Sidebar, Microsoft's environment for gadgets. That's good, because Apple stole Sidebar idea wholeheartedly from Konfabulator and other widget environments that predated Dashboard.

Leopard feature rundown

During the first public preview of Leopard at the WWDC keynote, Jobs and a curiously selected flunky (Scott Forstall, Apple's vice president of Platform Experience) ran down a list of ten "major" new features in Apple's next "major" operating system release. Again, most of these features are not major by any definition I'm aware of, and if this were all the new

features in Leopard, I'd have to describe this cat as a minor update at best. But Jobs mysteriously promised that Apple would reveal "some top secret features" at a later date. "We don't want our friends to start their photocopiers any sooner than they have to," he said [Yawn]. Whatever. Here's what they talked about.

1. 64-bit application support

Thanks to the 64-bit Xeon chip that will be shipping in the new Mac Pro systems, Leopard will be fully 64-bit enabled (unlike Tiger, which is only partially 64-bit and then only on certain Power PC systems). That means that OS X will finally do what Windows XP x64 Edition did last year: Run 32-bit and 64-bit applications natively, side-by-side. Good for them.

2. Time Machine

Time Machine is a truly good idea: It helps you automatically back up everything on your system and restore earlier versions of files at any time. But this was a great idea over three years ago when Microsoft first added it to Windows Server 2003 as Volume Shadow Copy (VSC, or "Previous Versions" to end users). In fact, VSC is such a good idea, Microsoft is adding it as a purely client-side service in Windows Vista as well.

Now, Apple being Apple, Time Machine is implemented with what can only be described as an over-the-top user interface that consists of an animated star field and a series of windows disappearing into the back, where the Big Bang at the beginning of time (apparently) awaits. Get it? You can go back in time.

Anyway, it's a neat feature, and it's certainly a major feature that will benefit end users. It looks silly, but maybe that's just me.

3. The Complete Package

Apple is integrating applications like Boot Camp, Photo Booth, and Front Row into Leopard. Previously, these applications were only available with new Macs, or in the case of Boot Camp, as a free public beta download. Sorry, but this is hardly impressive.

4. Spaces

Another truly major new feature, Spaces lets you utilize multiple desktops, each of which can contain its own set of application. Multiple desktops have been around for decades, and even the earliest Linux

versions had this feature. Microsoft even implemented it in NT-based versions of Windows, though the company curiously never made it easy to access this functionality until it shipped a free PowerToy for Windows, called Virtual Desktop Manager, in 2001. It works an awful lot like Spaces, frankly, though Apple's version is obviously more polished and, well, Apple-like.

5. Spotlight

Apple's version of Windows Search will now search other Mac clients and workgroup servers, functionality that Microsoft will add to Windows Vista with the release of Vista SP1 and Longhorn Server in late 2007. It will also support advanced search features, like better search syntax, just like Windows Search. And, as with Windows Vista, you'll be able to launch applications and find recent items with Spotlight. Gee, Spotlight still seems an awful lot like Windows Search.

6. Core Animation

A low-level graphics technology aimed at developers, Core Animation will usher in a new generation of graphically animated application. Time Machine's hokey effects were designed with Core Animation, but I'm hopeful that other developers will do something cool with it (Apple did show off a gorgeous screensaver it created with the library). The end result is that Core Animation will not directly effect end users in Leopard until developers take advantage of it. Clearly, it was thrown out as a bone to the developer-heavy crowd.

7. Accessibility improvements

Apple is working to dramatically improve how well Leopard will work for people with disabilities, and they certainly deserve some credit for this work. Leopard will new voice technologies, Braille support, positional audio cues, and extended keyboard capability, in addition to closed captioning. The voice feature seems like a decent improvement, but didn't sound any better than Vista's voice synthesis to me (Jobs played both side-to-side during the keynote).

8. Mail

Apple's Mail application (often called Mail.app in reference to its beginnings on the NeXT platform) is being updated with some truly lame features: Stationary, notes, to-do notes, and RSS. Ugh. These aren't major features, and they're certainly not worthy of the time Jobs gave them

during the keynote. Outlook Express users have been clogging the Internet with Stationary-based HTML email for a decade, and it's as unwelcome now as ever. Integrating notes and to-do notes into Mail is nice, but then Microsoft's Outlook has done this for several years. And RSS functionality is welcome, if overdue.

9. Dashcode and Dashboard improvements

Hoo-boy. Destined for the same thrash heap as Automator and Sherlock on most user's Macs, Dashcode lets developers build Dashboard widgets with templates, debugging tools, a visual editor for CSS, and other tools. For Dashboard itself, Apple is allowing users to sync Dashboard widget preferences to two or more Macs, but only when you pony up \$69.99 a year for the .Mac service (another nice annual cost that many Mac users gleefully pay).

10. iChat

Leopard will include an enhanced version of iChat that includes multiple-logon support, invisibility, animated buddy icons, video chat recording, and tabbed chats. These are the types of features many free IM applications already include, so it doesn't sound particularly compelling. But Apple is adding a number of additional features that are somewhat interesting, like Photo Booth effects, photo slideshows via a video chat, and backdrops, where you can underlay video or still images behind your video image in a video chat. Cool, but again, not what you'd call a major OS feature.

More to come...

Jobs noted there was more to come and specifically called out dramatically improved parental controls, multi-user iCal with CalDAV support, and Xcode 3, a developer tool. All of these, of course, are evolutions of existing products and technologies, and not major new features.

Lies, damnable lies, and statistics

More than any other company I cover regularly, Apple plays light and loose with facts. The company is so insidious with this behavior, in fact, that I could almost turn Apple myth busting into a full-time job if I thought someone would pay me to do it. Here's one example from the keynote:

Apple shipped 1.33 million Macs in the quarter ending June 30, 2006. It was their best Mac quarter ever. Jobs noted that the Mac's growth rate was "dramatically faster" than the rest of the PC industry, about 16.5 percent for the Mac, compared to just 6 percent for the PC. "We're gaining market share," Jobs declared triumphantly, to cheers. Ahem. Not so fast, Steve. In the previous quarter, the Mac's growth rate was significantly lower than that of the PC (13.1 percent for the PC vs. 4 percent for the Mac). More to the point, Apple's explosion growth in 2005 did nothing to help the Mac's market share, which is still mired at 2 percent worldwide. In other words, Steve's claim is baloney: Apple hasn't really gained any appreciable market share at all--indeed, Apple has lost market share every year since Jobs took the CEO helm--but his comment is technically true: In the slice of time that is the second quarter of 2006, Apple gained--get this--about 1/10th of one percent of market share. And the WWDC crowd goes wild.

Conclusions

I get a lot of flak from the Mac community and no doubt this article will start another round of name-calling. (See how Apple's childish behavior rubs off on its fans?) That's a shame, because I'm actually a huge fan of both Apple and Mac OS X. I just want Leopard to be better--much better--than the OS that Steve Jobs and company described this week and, yes, I want Apple to be more honest when it describes the products it and its competitors make. I'm no Microsoft cheerleader (sorry, it's true). And I'm not claiming that Vista is somehow "better" than Mac OS X Tiger or Leopard, though I do find myself to be more productive in Windows than in OS X. Your mileage may vary. Ultimately, as a fan of technology, it's hard not to be impressed by Apple in general, but depressed that Leopard doesn't appear to be all that exciting. I, for one, am hoping that the secret features Jobs alluded to are as inspiring as they are mysterious. That's the Apple I look up to.

--Paul Thurrott
August 9, 2006

