

Please e-mail your questions or comments to
 Bill Henry, Editor
 (henryw@bellsouth.net)



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MacWorld 2008

MacWorld will take place in San Francisco from January 14 to 18.

While no official announcements are made about the potential for new product or software the rumor mill sites are gearing up.

With the just released OS X Leopard 10.5 and multiple new products toward the end of last year few items leave themselves available for updates.

The Apple 12" Superslim notebook or tablet-style that was the only real new Mac rumor prior to the 2007 show expected at the 2008 show.

It's evolved a little - possible use of a flash (solid state) hard drive and featuring a multi-touch enabled display (like the iPhone) would well set it a part from Apple's current line as well as pretty much any other notebook out there.

Expect to see new Mac Pro Quad and 8-Way Xeons.. with a new 1.6GHz FSB (current is 1333MHz), with more massive on-chip cache, and clock speeds up to 3.2GHz or possibly 3.4GHz. Although that is just a little faster in clock than the current 3.0GHz offering - the faster bus + larger processor caches are said to increase performance by as much as 45% - huge!

HD format support finally introduced. I expect that Apple will officially introduce full Blu-Ray support as well as make Blu-Ray drives an option or the full line of iMacs, MacBook Pros, and Mac Pro systems. The video chipsets in all of these Macs now have specific HD video playback optimized support and Blu-Ray

players are available in both slot load as well as the 5.25" desktop versions. In the case of the Mac Pro, there have been two unused SATA ports on the logic boards since first introduction

A new AppleTV media station - in so many ways Apple has crippled the functionality that the AppleTV could offer.

My hope for a mid-level 'headless' Mac. Maybe the size of the original Cube G4 - with fast Core 2 Duo processors, two PCIExpress slots and a convenient Express34 card slot.. Not a Mac Pro, but nicely expandable - unlike the iMacs and the especially crippled Mac mini. I'd bet such a system in the \$900-1500 price range would sell like crazy just for the upgrade flexibility.

Stay tuned for the details about what really happened at MacWorld. Full coverage in the February PEEL.🍏



🍏 BAC January Meeting 🍏

The January 12th meeting of the Birmingham Apple Core at the Homewood Library will be a presentation about Leopard Mac OS X 10.5 by Carl Ross of the Summit Apple Store.

Come enjoy coffee, donuts, cookies etc.

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henryw@bellsouth.net

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jhill@hillhouse.com

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tedgallo@charter.net

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MEMBERSHIP

Ted Galloway

tedgallo@charter.net

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AOL to end support for Netscape browser

by Stephen Lawson, IDG News Service

An historic name in software will effectively pass into history in February as AOL discontinues development and active support for the Netscape browser, according to an official blog.

AOL will keep delivering security patches for the current version of Netscape until Feb. 1, 2008, after which it will no longer provide active support for any version of the software, according to a Friday entry on The Netscape Blog by Tom Drapeau, lead developer for Netscape.com. The Netscape.com Web site will remain as a general-purpose portal.

Netscape was the original mass-market Web browser and helped to popularize the Internet in the mid-1990s, but it has long taken a back seat to Microsoft Internet Explorer and Mozilla Firefox. Firefox itself traces its roots back to Netscape software that was made into open source. The Mozilla Foundation was founded in 2003, with support from AOL, and has released successive versions of Firefox while AOL continued to develop Netscape on top of the same platform, Drapeau wrote.

Groups within AOL have tried and failed to revive Netscape Navigator and gain market share against Internet Explorer, according to the blog entry.

“AOL’s focus on transitioning to an ad-supported Web business leaves little room for the size of investment needed to get the Netscape browser to a point many of its fans expect it to be,” Drapeau wrote. “Given AOL’s current business focus ... we feel it’s the right time to end development of Netscape branded browsers, hand the reins fully to Mozilla and encourage Netscape users to adopt Firefox,” Drapeau wrote.

The Mosaic Netscape browser was posted for downloading in 1994 by Mosaic Communications, which later changed its name to Netscape Communications. That company kicked off the

dot-com boom with its hugely successful initial public offering in August 1995 and was acquired by AOL in 1999. But Internet Explorer, introduced in 1995, eventually dominated the browser market. Microsoft’s bundling of its browser with Windows operating systems was a key issue in antitrust lawsuits filed against it in 1997.

As of this month, Netscape had only 0.6 percent of the browser market, which was still dominated by Internet Explorer with more than 77 percent, according to Web application and analytics firm Net Applications. Firefox was gaining, however, with market share just over 16 percent.

Users will still be able to download old versions of Netscape from an archive, though they will not be supported by AOL, Drapeau wrote. 🍏

Nominations and Election of Officers

The nomination and election of officers for 2008 will be held at the January 2008 general meeting.

All currently serving officers are standing for nomination to their present positions with the exception of the office of secretary.

Kurt Fattig will stand for nomination to the office of secretary. Kurt joined BAC around 1980 at the age of 15, but lost touch when he left for college. He has been using Apple computers for 28 years. He received a degree in Computer and Information Sciences from UAB in 1993.

Currently, Kurt is the IT Director for a Birmingham-based insurance brokerage. He has been building web applications and enterprise solutions with Java for the past 5 years. Prior to that he worked as a software developer and technical consultant developing 2D and 3D CAD and PDM (Product Data Management) software solutions for manufacturing companies and engineering firms. Kurt moved back to Birmingham (after 10 years in South Carolina) and has recently rejoined the Birmingham Apple Core. 🍏

Skype for iPhone via IM+ Mobile Messenger

SHAPE Services is known as the unique company bringing the high quality software solutions for the whole range of mobile platforms. SHAPE's products are running on Java phones, Blackberry RIM, Windows Mobile for Pocket PC and Smartphone, all Symbian subplatforms: S60, Series80, Series90 and UIQ; HipTop, i-mode, Palm and BREW devices.

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IM+ for Skype is a fully mobile application that enables voice and text communication with other Skype users and provides cost-effective calling to landlines and mobiles. 🍏

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<http://ocw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/web/home/home/index.htm>

MACSPEECH'S iLISTEN UPDATED FOR LEOPARD

MacSpeech has released iListen 1.8, an update to their Mac OS X speech recognition software. The new release is available at no cost to registered iListen 1.7x customers. iListen costs \$149, and is bundled with a headset.

iListen lets you control your Mac using a normal, conversational voice. You can use it for dictating letters, editing and formatting text, navigating, activating commands like print, cut, copy and paste and more.

iListen 1.8 has been updated for Mac OS X v10.5 "Leopard." It supports commands in the new version of TextEdit included with Leopard, Safari 3 and the Finder itself. Enhancements have been made to the Voice Launcher for Leopard, and to the Web Favorites command set.

MacSpeech also notes that various reported issues have been corrected and other refinements have also been made.

iListen requires Mac OS X v10.4 or later. 🍏

APPLE UPDATES AND UPDATED UPDATES

Apple has updated Security Update 2007-009 to v1.1, available in 10.4.11 PPC and Universal and 10.5.1 Universal flavors.

According to Apple's documentation, the new version does not affect the security content of the original update, but addresses an issue that may cause Safari to unexpectedly quit when browsing to certain websites.

Apple initially released Security Update 2007-009 earlier this week, which included a host of security updates for both 10.4.11 and 10.5.1.

About Java for Mac OS X 10.4, Release 6

Java for Mac OS X 10.4, Release 6 delivers improved reliability and compatibility for Java 2 Platform Standard Edition 5.0 and Java 1.4 on Mac OS X 10.4.10 and later. This release updates J2SE 5.0 to version 1.5.0_13 and Java 1.4 to version 1.4.2_16.

About QuickTime 7.3.1 for Leopard

QuickTime 7.3.1 for Leopard addresses security issues.

About GarageBand 4.1.1

This update improves overall stability and addresses issues with file export to iPhone.

Hints&Tips

www.mac-hints-tips.com

Scrolling

To activate and use the scroll bar in multiple open windows, you do not have to click on the window and then scroll; all you need to do is move the mouse over the window you want to scroll on and the scroll bar will work!

*Jerry Zigmont, MacWorks,
Madison Connecticut*

Easier Private Browsing in Safari

If you use Safari's private browsing feature a lot, you're probably tired of the "are you sure?" confirmation dialog that appears every time you use this mode. In Tiger, you couldn't do much about it. In Leopard, though, just hold down the Option key when you select Safari > Private Browsing, and you'll bypass the confirmation dialog.

Fast Access to System Profiler

You've always been able to launch System Profiler from the Apple menu — just select "About this Mac," then click the "More Info" button. But in OS X 10.5 (Leopard), it has gotten even easier: just press the "Option" key down, either before or after activating the Apple menu, and you'll see that "About this Mac" changes into "System Profiler." (And here's a side hint about System Profiler: it can now show you the potential burning speed of your recordable media. Just click on the "Disc Burning" entry in the "Contents" column, then insert your recordable media. System Profiler will then tell you the speed at which it can write to that media.)

*Rob Griffiths
Mad Mac News, Madison, WI*

DVD Conversion

Use these tools to back up commercial DVDs.

HandBrake (free): Many of the Mac DVD-ripping utilities do a decent job, but they can't touch the complete capabilities that HandBrake (Eric Petit and Laurent Alma's tool) offers for free. If you don't need HandBrake's many configuration options, choose its less full-featured sibling, Instant HandBrake (also free). Like HandBrake, Instant HandBrake can convert commercial DVDs to a format that's playable on your Mac, iPod, or Sony PSP.

VisualHub (\$23): VisualHub can convert almost any video format you throw at it to iPod, PSP, DV, DVD, TiVo, AVI, MP4, WMV, MPEG, and Flash formats. It can even fit up to 18 hours of video on one DVD, although that video will not look pristine.

What does this have to do with your DVDs? Although Techspanion claims that VisualHub won't convert video from commercial DVDs, it has (in many cases — though not always) done so successfully for me. For example, it ripped Master and Commander with no complaints but produced garbage when ripping my DVD collection of the first season of Arrested Development. (HandBrake had no problems with Arrested Development.)

Another bonus: VisualHub can help you put your converted content on a DVD (compressing it to fit on a single disc) and then burn it — no need to purchase additional tools such as Roxio's \$100 Toast or \$50 Popcorn 2 or Erwin van den Berg's €40 DVD2oneX2. Both of these utilities, however, do provide more flexible DVD-burning options than VisualHub.

Chris Breen's Mac 911

What To Do When plist Files Go Awry

If your favorite application keeps crashing, fails to load, or freezes your Mac, the problem could be within your plist files. Property list (plist) files store specific application settings and preferences, and are usually found in either the Library/Preferences Directory in the root directory of your hard drive, or in the Library/Preferences Directory in your User name folder.

Plist files are listed according to their host application: for example, TextEdit's plist file is named com.apple.TextEdit.plist (The beginning part of the name, "com.apple," indicates the vendor that created the application, insuring that no two plist files will have the exact same name.)

If you have a problematic application, you may have a corrupt plist file. Here's what you can do.

Start anew: Remove the application's plist files. The next time you launch that app, new plist files will be created with default application settings. Presumably, a new file will no longer have the corrupted data of the original file, thereby eliminating the problem.

Check for intruding apps: In some instances, more than one application may be writing to a plist file. For example, Safari's plist is often used by Apple's Mail.

If you are experiencing repeated corruption of the com.apple.Safari.plist file or another plist file, investigate the other applications that could be writing to the file.

To do this, navigate to the plist file that you want to inspect, select its icon, and press Command/I on your keyboard.

Next, launch some of your routine applications and check to see if the "Get Info" window closes. This tells you that the app you just launched is using that plist file. Reinstall (or consider replacing) the offending application.

*MacFixIt.com
via LIMac Forum, Long Island, NY*

Hints & Tips *continued from page 4*

Check Definitions and Spelling Quickly

Mac OS X hides a clever little way to double-check a word's spelling and definition at the same time. Instead of launching the Dictionary application, you can open a dictionary window with a simple keyboard shortcut. Here's how:

- Select the word you want a definition for.
- Type Command/Control/D

The dictionary window appears showing what the word means along with how to spell it. Click anywhere else in your document to close the dictionary window. The downside is that this keyboard shortcut doesn't work in every application. Most Apple applications recognize the shortcut, but some third-party apps don't.

~ Jeff Garnet

The Mac Observer

via Mouse Tales, North Coast MUG, Berea, OH

Migrating to a New Mac

Now that Apple has completed its transition to Intel processors, a lot of Mac users are thinking about replacing their old PowerPC machines. Here are tools and tips that will make the job easier.

FireWire Cable

When you first fire up a new Mac, Apple's Migration Assistant (found in /Applications/Utilities) will help you move your data, but it'll demand a FireWire cable to do so.

External FireWire Enclosure

You have multiple IDE hard drives in your old Power Mac, yet your new Mac Pro works only with SATA drives. What to do with those old drives? Consider sticking them into FireWire hard-drive enclosures. Just slip an old drive into the enclosure, and you've got an external hard drive. Enclosures with Oxford 911 and 912 chip sets (which let your Mac boot from those drives) run from \$50 to \$80 and are available from vendors such as Other World Computing (eshop.macsales.com) and FirewireDirect.com. Note that if you put your old Mac's boot drive into an enclosure, it won't boot your new Mac until you install an Intel-compatible version of OS X.

Drive Adapter

FireWire enclosure too rich for your blood? Or maybe you need to connect your old drives to your new Mac only for a short time? Newer Technology makes a \$25 USB 2.0 Universal Drive Adapter — a couple of cables that let you connect an IDE or SATA device directly to your new Mac via the Mac's USB 2.0 port.

Serial Numbers

As efficient as Apple's Migration Assistant is about moving your applications from Mac A to Mac B, sometimes it misses some of the files that authorize you to use those apps. So just in case, make a note of all your applications' serial

2008 Year of the Phone?

GE's **Cell Fusion** products let you link your cell phone using wireless Bluetooth technology. The point is to mesh the sound quality and other benefits of a landline phone with the convenience and cost savings of a cell phone. Consumers could, for example, take calls to a cell phone on a home phone when the wireless device is charging, or make long-distance calls on a home phone while using a cell-phone plan. Due in 2008: A "home gateway" device that gives any cordless phone the ability to share a line with a cell phone.

The first phones bearing Google's (GOOG) Android operating system are expected to hit the market in the second half of 2008—just in time, it would seem, to compete with the second-generation iPhone and whatever new BlackBerry device Research In Motion cooks up. The cost of the OS (it's free) can't help but upend the competitive landscape for smartphones, but only if Android lives up to the hype.

A major iPhone rival is Research In Motion's (RIMM) BlackBerry. The devices may appear to be aimed at vastly different audiences, but they overlap in an increasing number of ways. BlackBerry phones now play music and video, while iPhones handle text messaging and e-mail, and are increasingly in demand among business users. The BlackBerry 9000 series, as yet only the subject of rumor, is said to look an awful lot like an iPhone, even sporting touch-screen technology.

DECT 6.0 Cordless Phones

Digital Enhanced Cordless Telecommunications (DECT) phones operate at the new-to-the-U.S. 1.9 GHz frequency. Though newly approved in the United States, DECT has been widely used in Europe for many years and is similar to the GSM cellular system. The Wi-Fi friendly DECT technology is designed especially for areas with a large number of users and it easily integrates into homes with Internet and Wi-Fi services. Key advantages are that the 1.9 GHz frequency is not used by other wireless technologies and that battery life is usually improved by 30% over 5.8ghz. Though the environment has a large influence, DECT also typically provides greater range than cordless phones that operate at other frequencies. Well, the new-to-the-U.S. DECT cordless phone technology really does live up to the hype. Although all DECT 6.0 cordless phones are not created equal, most DECT phone models provide a winning balance between exceptional voice clarity and suitable-to-fantastic range.

Digital Enhanced Cordless Telecommunications is popular with manufacturers (a good thing for consumers) because it's a global standard. Phones that operate at lower frequencies are prone to much in the U.S.


It's also dedicated to cordless communication in residential, commercial and public environments, so you're unlikely to be interfering with other home electronics. Besides premium voice quality and extended range, DECT technology is inherently more efficient with battery life. 🍏



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Ted Galloway
tedgallo@charter.net

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Chris Per-
1722-B 28th Ave. So., Homewood, AL
35209
e-mail: chris@perrycomputer.com
www.perrycomputer.com



Bill Henry, Editor
2438 Mahaska Drive
Birmingham, AL 35244

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