

The TarMac Vaporware Gazette

all the news that's fit to download!



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Mac Pro Specs on Show

July 14, 2006 - M. Sharp - Insanely Great Mac

AppleInsider is displaying a table-full of specs it claims represent the mothership's upcoming "good, better and best" Mac Pro configurations. With Core Duo processors running on a fast 1.33GHz system bus, there's not anything terribly new or exciting. Although we will see fresh graphics (up to ATI X1800) and storage (up to 320GB) inside, one that may be missing outside will be a fresh enclosure—something that ThinkSecret said would make the cut. Apples to apples. Regardless of what's on the inside, it's sure that Apple will claim the "new" kit is at least four times faster than current, long-in-the-tooth PowerMac G5 hardware. Still one wonders what G5 hardware would be available now if Apple hadn't pulled the plug? Given past promises it seems almost certain that little would have changed... Are there any among us that still doubt the wisdom of the switch?



Artists renditions by andyapofish. Front and rear masks created in Adobe Illustrator.

Jobs: No 2 'Media Giant'

July 17, 2006 - Insanely Great Mac - M. Sharp

The Guardian has published a list of the people it considers the world's most-influential media personalities. This somewhat parochially British listing is headed by BBC director Mark Thompson and our man Steve has been named the runner up.



Jobs transformed the music industry and in the process created a whole new demographic—the "iPod generation." Launched just five years ago, the ubiquitous music players have gone from being the preserve of the early adopter to a part of our everyday language.

Jobs rises four places in this year's list, keeping Rupert Murdoch in the No 3 spot for the second year in a row.

Editor's note: It can be argued with force that the perception of Apple's influence is in fact overblown. After all, Jobs et al have yet to deliver their second act...



Tonight's Agenda

Help desk until 6:45 with Tom

6:45 **MagicTime!**
New members - Brian
Dues (\$3) - Ray

7:30 Tonight's demo:

Mobile Backup Tips

presented by Brian Fountain

8:00 Wrap-up - Brian



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	Good	Better	Best
Processor:	Dual-Core 2GHz Intel Xeon	Dual-Core 2,33GHz Intel Xeon	Two dual-core 2,66GHz Intel Xeon
L2 cache:		4MB shared	
System bus:		1,333GHz	
Memory:	512MB DDR2 667		1GB DDR2 667
Standard graphics:	ATI Radeon X1600 Pro with 256MB of DDR2 video memory	ATI Radeon X1800 GTO with 256MB of GDDR3 video memory	
Hard drive:	250GB Serial ATA; 7200 rpm		320GB Serial ATA; 7200 RPM
Optical drive:		16x SuperDrive with double-layer support	
Expansion:	Three open PCI Express expansion slots: two four-lane slots and one eight-lane slot		
Ports and Bays:	One FireWire 800 port, two FireWire 400 ports (one on front), four USB 2.0 ports (one on front), two USB 1.1 ports (on keyboard), two internal hard drive bays (one occupied)	two optical drive bays (one occupied)	
Audio:	Optical digital audio input, optical digital audio output, analog line-level input, analog line-level output, front headphone minijack, analog line-level input and speaker		
Networking:	Dual 10/100/1000BASE-T (Gigabit) Ethernet ports; integrated wireless and Bluetooth 2.0 + EDR	antenna; optional AirPort Extreme	
Accessories:	Apple Keyboard, Mighty Mouse, USB keyboard extension cable, DVI to VGA adapter		
Price:	\$1,799	\$2,499	\$3,299



A Work List for Windows Vista

July 16, 2006 - Washington Post - Rob Pegoraro

Windows Vista -- Microsoft's years-late successor to Windows XP -- has moved from being a speck on the horizon to a figure in the middle distance. It's still far enough from stores to be easily ignored by most customers, but close enough for enthusiasts to chatter away feverishly about its features.

To get the attention of people in the first group and give those in the second group something to play with, Microsoft recently offered a free download of the second beta-test Vista release. Six months before the announced release date in January -- a date that could still be moved back -- a preview edition may not tell much about the finished product. But after a week of tests on a few machines, Windows Vista Beta 2 does make a few things clear. Vista will be the biggest change in Microsoft-style computing since Windows 95, making fundamental alterations to foundations and facade.

For those changes to deliver their advertised benefits, however, a lot of work remains before Vista's debut.

The upgrade experience: Vista's belated arrival means Microsoft has to make it as quick and painless as possible to upgrade a computer from XP to Vista. But Vista's hardware requirements may stand in the way: Microsoft suggests a gigabyte of memory, 128 megabytes of video memory and a 1 GHz or faster processor. (Vista needs the extra video memory for its slick optional Aero Glass interface.)

Vista's interaction with an existing XP installation can also cause trouble. On a new Hewlett-Packard Pavilion desktop computer, Vista Beta 2 didn't accept its Glass-capable graphics card, even after a driver upgrade, and downshifted to its plainer standard interface. Yet on a new Apple iMac, a clean installation of Vista (added using Apple's Boot Camp software) displayed Aero Glass without any tinkering.

On both computers, Vista displayed a ravenous appetite for memory. If only a top-of-the-line machine can run Vista acceptably well, Microsoft will have a disaster on its hands.

The Pavilion upgrade took an hour and 40 minutes, while the from-scratch installation on the iMac took just an hour and 18 minutes.

But on a four-year-old ThinkPad meeting Vista's basic requirements, the installation stalled. After a forced restart, the Vista installer gave up and reverted the poor machine to XP.

Security. Vista aims to fix XP's biggest weakness by limiting the ability of individual programs to mess with the system. But it also must coexist with thousands of old programs that require that level of access. Vista's solution: You grant permission to each such application, or it won't run. That feature needs serious work. On the Pavilion, the permissions dialog -- which seizes your attention by denying access to every other program and dimming the rest of the screen -- popped up incessantly while providing too little information on the program in question.

Even on the iMac, where Vista didn't have an old Windows setup underfoot, the permissions dialog kept surfacing. Just deleting an icon from the desktop brought up three of the alerts. The more users have to deal with these warnings, the better the odds of them blindly clicking their "Continue" or "Allow" buttons when viruses try to run.

The new interface(s): Aero Glass or not, Vista won't look too familiar to Windows veterans -- but Mac users may feel at home. As in Mac OS X, every file-browsing window in Vista has a search box at the top-right corner, a list of important folders at the left and a toolbar at the top.

That file search operates off an index that Vista compiles in the background; in Beta 2, however, it took more time to catch up on changes than either OS X's Spotlight or Google Desktop -- and was dismally slower at full-disk searches.

People familiar with OS X's Dashboard or Google Desktop's "widgets" will also recognize Vista's optional Sidebar, which floats at the right edge of the screen for quick access to such "gadgets" as a clock, a notepad and a calculator. The Start Menu gets a welcome revision in Vista. Instead of an "All Programs" listing that blocks the entire screen with a seemingly endless tree of branching sub-menus, its list of programs is confined to the left two-thirds of the Start Menu. A search box lets you find programs quickly.

Aero Glass provides extra, sometimes entrancing, visual effects. Windows shimmer into place, their borders appear translucent, and mousing over taskbar buttons or hitting the Alt and Tab keys brings up thumbnail previews of each open window.

Throughout Vista, traditional text menus are hidden (the Alt key reveals them). Instead, toolbar buttons atop each window both execute commands and reveal drop-down menus of their own. That's a big, potentially upsetting shift -- a gutsy move for Microsoft.

On the other hand, will the final release of Vista still reveal parts that appear unchanged from Win 95 or 98 (for example, the Options screen in Windows Mail, a souped-up version of Outlook Express)?

Maintenance: Over time, the ugliest aspect of Windows can be its care and feeding; the phrase "soul-numbing tedium" comes to mind when contemplating such tasks as regulating what software runs at start-up.

Will Vista make sufficient progress on this front? Beta 2 leaves that question open. Its Control Panel screen provides a clearer, searchable view

of system settings. Its hierarchy of folders on the hard drive is simpler, with just three folders at the top (Windows, Program Files and Users) and only one folder in each user's directory for such program data files as Web bookmarks and e-mail archives (too bad it's still invisible).

But debugging a balky driver dumps you into the same old Device Manager interface. The Task Manager still offers nearly no help in identifying all the software active on your machine. And the system registry and the Registry Editor look as horrifyingly awful as ever.

Between now and January -- or whenever Vista arrives -- those issues could get better or linger unfixed. Unfortunately, six months go by fast when it comes to operating-system development. You have to hope that Microsoft makes the most of that time or postpones Vista if necessary. If not, who knows how long the next one will take?

Microsoft Jettisons Old Editions of Windows



July 16th 2006 - Remy Davison - Insanely Great Mac

Microsoft has ended support for several earlier editions of Windows, including 98, 98SE and Millennium Edition (ME), a Washington Post article notes.

Microsoft details the cessation of support for these operating systems on its own page. None of these OSes will receive updates any longer, including security updates.

Relatively few of these OSes would still be deployed, and certainly not in any enterprise environment. Conversely, Windows 2000 is still deployed fairly widely in consumer, education and some enterprise environments.

Analysis: And let's not forget that MS needs people to buy new PCs and copies of Vista to make the entire investment in that project worthwhile. Plus it saves time not having to write security updates for worthless legacy OSes. Apple -- let's face it -- has much the same attitude: little support is given to older OSes, except to the version of the OS immediately preceding the current one (at present, Panther, OS X 10.3). But 10.0-10.2 are obsolete and as unsupported as OS 9. But at least Apple still gives away antique versions of the Mac OS for those who want to run vintage Macs -- like OS 6.x, OS 7.0 and 7.5.x (while we're on this, it'd be nice if Apple allowed free downloads of OS 7.6 8 and 9 for those who want to run them on older hardware).

Analysts: Blu-ray Looms in Apple's future



July 13, 2006 - Jim Dalrymple - MacCentral

The competition between the competing next-generation optical disk technologies of Blu-ray and HD DVD has entered a new phase, as optical drive makers start rolling out the first products based on the rival technologies. As products based on these formats begin to arrive in stores, one major question for Mac users is: When will Apple integrate this new technology into its computers?

The question is more than just idle speculation. Apple enjoys a long track record of embracing emerging technologies—think FireWire, Bluetooth, and wireless networking, among others—and incorporating them into its offerings. Also consider that Apple is on the board of directors for the Blu-ray Disc Association, and it's not hard to envision a future where Macs are sporting Blu-ray-based drives.

As with any future product, Apple is keeping its plans for Blu-ray under wraps. But industry analysts don't think we'll have long to wait before Apple puts a Blu-ray drive in an Intel-based Mac.

The most likely candidate? The as-yet unreleased machine that will replace the Power Mac as Apple's professional desktop offering. "Apple's past practices favor bringing new optical technologies to professional systems first," said Jupiter Research senior analyst Joe Wilcox. "DVD-RAM and DVD-R formats are excellent examples."

Ross Rubin, director of analysis at market-research firm NPD Group, agrees that Apple will work with the professional machines first. However, noting that Intel-based pro desktops have yet to appear, he predicts Blu-ray drives won't wind up in Apple systems for a few more months.

"January would be good—the timing for that would work out pretty well," Rubin said. "It comes down to the introduction cycle, but we would see it in desktops first, no doubt."

Behind the format feud

Blu-ray and HD DVD are competing optical disc formats aimed at storing large amounts of high-definition video. The competition between the two standards pits some of the biggest companies in the technology industry against one another.

Blu-ray is supported by consumer electronics vendors Sony and Panasonic as well as PC vendors Dell and Apple. HD DVD is backed by Toshiba, NEC, Intel, and Microsoft.

The Apple supported H.264 technology is part of the technical specification for both Blu-ray

and the competing HD DVD format that hopes to beat out Blu-ray as the industry standard.

For the winner comes the spoils of being the industry standard and having acceptance from movie studios and suppliers—which translates to bigger sales. And since the formats are not compatible the loser could easily drop out of the consumer market, much like what happened to the Betamax video cassette format when it lost out to VHS in the 1980s.

Toshiba began selling two HD DVD players in North America in April, beating rival Blu-ray Disc to market by about two months. Speaking in late May, a Toshiba executive said sales in North America were above 20,000. Samsung began shipping its Blu-ray writer in mid-June and BenQ has said it will ship its Blu-ray writer in August.

The impact on Apple

One drawback of the current format war between HD DVD and Blu-ray for the supporting companies is the confusion it causes in the market. Many people may hold off on buying products sporting either format until a clear winner has been found.

For that reason, Technology Business Research senior analyst Tim Deal believes Apple will shy away from adding a Blu-ray optical drive to any of its consumer Macs. "[The format war] will cause confusion in the market which will ultimately mean slow acceptance of the technologies in the consumer market," he said.

But that doesn't mean Apple will avoid adopting Blu-ray until after the smoke clears in the format battle, analysts add. "Apple is an active participant in the Blu-ray consortium, and they didn't let the last format war between DVD- and DVD+ stop them from moving ahead with the drive," NPD Group's Rubin said. "I don't see them rushing to support both—typically Apple supports one and they support it well."

Look for Apple to follow the same playbook it used in adding DVD-burning SuperDrives to its hardware lineup: pro-level machines first, followed by consumer offerings. The reason for that strategy, Rubin said, has much to do with minimizing the cost of adopting new technologies.

"One reason Apple been able to introduce new technologies at relative low cost has to do with cost reductions," Rubin added. "In DVD writing they were very good at timing—they made a volume purchase play and introduced the drives at a relatively low cost compared to what had been available. I see them taking that approach with Blu-ray."

Apple: Avoid Death -- Integrate iPod with Your Car

July 17, 2006 - C-Net

Can you imagine a more impressive podcessory than the very thing that will ultimately deliver global environmental apocalypse: the glorious motorcar? Although there's reportedly been an overall slump in car-stereo sales, iPod-enabled automobiles are very popular. Sales of iPod car accessories are expected to reach £163m



globally this year -- more than enough to cover Steve Jobs' \$1 salary.

Crave met with Apple last Friday to discuss their plans for the car. Bob Borchers, senior director of iPod worldwide product marketing, told us he was delighted by the efforts of Mac users to retrofit the Mac Mini into cars. Some in-car entertainment fans noticed that the Mac Mini is a similar form factor to a car stereo head unit, prompting modifications like this. It's interesting that Apple is keeping an eye on what these hackers are up to with their Macs.

Borchers explained how Apple wants to steer consumers away from the inelegant mess of cassette adaptors and wires, which is currently the most popular way to rig an iPod into your car stereo. Apple itself has no interest in producing a car stereo, says Borchers, but is working with third parties to improve iPod integration in new cars.

We suggested to Borchers that Apple should allow drivers to use their car steering wheel as a giant Clickwheel interface, so that you can change tracks by changing lanes. Borchers foresaw certain safety problems with such a device and rejected the concept.

Borchers sees add-ons as passé. What Apple really wants you to buy is a car that's designed from the ground up to interface with the iPod. The 30-pin connector on newer iPods can transmit all the information displayed on the iPod screen to a remote display. This lets car manufacturers display track information on the dashboard. Companies such as BMW have taken this to heart, including iPod interfaces on all its models. Enterprising hackers without a trust fund and a flat in Chelsea could try examining the pinouts and rigging up their own interface.

Crave related to Borchers the story of a driver who nearly killed us recently by reaching into the footwell of his car to retrieve an iPod nano at around 90mph. The driver considered skipping tracks on his iPod more important than the lives of multiple humans. Borchers told Crave that this was "exactly the sort of problem that properly integrating the iPod with cars can avoid". So there you have it -- iPod integration may well save your life.

Parallels Virtualization Software Coming to Apple Stores

July 18, 2006 - AppleInsider Staff

Apple Computer and several other retail store operators will soon carry Parallels' virtualization software, which allows Intel Mac users to run both the Windows and Mac OS X operating systems simultaneously.



Parallels on Tuesday said it has entered into an agreement with Nova Development to bring its Parallels Desktop software to thousands of retail stores nationwide by next month.

In addition to Apple's retail stores, Parallels Desktop for Mac will be available at CompUSA, Staples, Office Depot, Fry's Electronics, Amazon.com, and numerous other software outlets.

Canadian Businesses Ban iPods



July 18, 2006 - MacNN

iPods, digital music players and other portable storage devices are being targeted by a larger number of companies, according to a new survey. A new Ipsos Reid poll, conducted on behalf of Sun Microsystems of Canada, says that Canadian businesses are trying to minimize business risks by monitoring and managing the portable storage devices their employees bring to work.

The survey found that almost half (49%) of senior leaders in mid- and large-sized businesses across Canada have established policies to prevent personal laptops and USB keys from entering the workplace and nearly 30 percent have banned MP3 players, such as iPods. The companies appear to be wary of employees stealing customer information, with forty-two percent of surveyed executives saying that the greatest negative impact a security breach will have on their operations is theft of customer information.

"But while many of the companies polled are probably taking measures to prevent the risk of data loss due to security breach or theft, only 32 percent of the executives interviewed believed that their businesses perform at optimum levels to prevent and manage potential attack," according to the study. Of those polled, approximately seven out of ten executives believe there is room for improvement for preventing risk among a mobile workforce.

The report also found that seventeen percent admit that they have a very poor understanding of the risks associated with remote or wireless access, while approximately one in ten believe that they are doing a poor job of mitigating risks (13%) and are not applying proper procedures to successfully deal with security breaches (11%).

Autism in Britain Linked to Personal Electronics



July 18, 2006 - Jeff Gamet - iPod Observer

A recent study in the U.K. indicates that batteries and other components in old electronic products are linked to an increase in autism. It cites several examples of devices, including old mobile phones, televisions, and iPods, according to TMCnet.

The report says the toxic metals in rechargeable batteries are seeping into the environment when products are discarded improperly.

Dr Richard Lathe, a molecular biologist who specializes in autism and brain disorders, said "Think of iPod batteries, computers, television sets and mobile phones - thousands of them tossed aside without any thought to their proper disposal."

The mercury in batteries leaks into landfills when it rains, or goes into the atmosphere if batteries are burned.

Unfortunately, the iPod is being singled out thanks to its popularity. Although an easy target for sensationalized headlines, iPods are no more likely to pose a health risk than any other device mentioned in the report.

To help with the safe disposal of iPods, Apple offers a free recycling program at its retail locations. Many cities also offer programs for safely disposing of old batteries

Study: Flash Drives to Challenge Hard Disks for Laptops

July 17, 2006 - Jim Dalrymple - MacCentral

A new study by market research firm In-Stat concludes that Flash-based solid state drives (SSD) will pose a real challenge to traditional hard disk drives found in portable laptop computers.

"The HDD industry has done a phenomenal job of driving areal densities; however, it is clear that there are user segments for which drive capacities far exceed the user's need," said Frank Dickson, In-Stat analyst. "When one examines the declining cost trends for Flash,



the user's need for storage and the premium that consumers place on the benefits provided by SSDs, it is easy to see that there will be a clear demand for SSDs."

In-Stat's research has led them to believe that Flash-based drives could make up 50 percent of the market share in Mobile computers by 2013.

Of all the benefits users get with Flash-based drives, respondents to In-Stat's survey singled out power savings as the most important. With this in mind, two-thirds of the respondents also said they would be willing to pay more for the drives than they are currently paying for hard disk drives.

Apple Posts \$472m Profit!

July 19, 2006 - MacNN

Apple today posted revenue of \$4.37 billion and a net quarterly profit of \$472 million, or \$.54 per diluted share for its fiscal 2006 third quarter ended July 1st, 2006 -- the second highest quarterly sales and earnings for the company. The results are just shy of analysts' estimates of \$4.4 billion in revenue, but ahead of profit estimates of 44 cents. The results compare to revenue of \$3.52 billion and a net profit of \$320 million, or \$.37 per diluted share, in the year-ago quarter. Gross margin was 30.3 percent, up from 29.7 percent in the year-ago quarter. International sales accounted for 39 percent of the quarter's revenue. Apple shipped 1,327,000 Macs and 8,111,000 iPods during the quarter, representing a 12 percent growth in Macs and 32 percent growth in iPods over the year-ago quarter.

"We're thrilled with the growth of our Mac business, and especially that over 75 percent of the Macs sold during the quarter used Intel processors. This is the smoothest and most successful transition that any of us have ever experienced," said Steve Jobs, Apple's CEO. "In addition, iPod continued to earn a US market share of over 75 percent and we are extremely excited about future iPod products in our pipeline."

"We're very pleased to report the second highest quarterly sales and earnings in Apple's history, resulting in year-over-year revenue growth of 24 percent and earnings growth of 48 percent," said Peter Oppenheimer, Apple's CFO. "Looking ahead to the fourth quarter of fiscal 2006, we expect revenue of about \$4.5 to \$4.6 billion. We expect GAAP earnings per diluted share of about \$.46 to \$.48, including an estimated \$.03 per share expense impact from non-cash stock-based compensation, translating to non-GAAP EPS of about \$.49 to \$.51."

Apple also announced that a special committee of the company's outside directors has hired an independent counsel to perform an investigation on the previously announced irregularities related to the issuance of certain stock option grants made between 1997 and 2001, saying that it expects no material change from the already discovered irregularities to its financial results for the June quarter; however, the company said that any additional discoveries may affect the releases.





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