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## Developers cope with Leopard adopting similar features

Aug 10, 2006 - Jim Dalrymple - MacCentral



For the people who create Mac software, there's nothing quite as exciting as a Worldwide Developers Conference keynote that previews the features slated to appear in an upcoming OS X overhaul. And there's nothing as terrifying for those same developers as waiting to see if those new features do similar things to the software they're already selling.

Such is the nature of third-party software: meet an unfulfilled need with your software one day, watch that same need get addressed by an operating system update the next.

Consider the case of Karelia Software and its popular Watson shareware application. At the 2002 Worldwide Developers Conference Steve Jobs previewed OS X Jaguar, which featured an updated version of Sherlock that pulled down information from the Web without using a browser—the same functionality offered by Watson. Or take the Tiger preview at the 2004 conference that introduced Dashboard and its concept of mini-apps known as widgets; more than a few attendees noted the similarities between Dashboard and the third-party application Konfabulator.

History repeated itself at this year's WWDC where Apple previewed Leopard. The next major version of OS X, scheduled for a spring 2007 release, includes several built-in features that replicate capabilities offered by existing third-party apps.

But if developers whose apps are similar to these upcoming Leopard features are feeling uneasy, they're doing a good job of hiding it. Most still see a place for their software, even as OS X 10.5 adapts similar capabilities.

Take Time Machine, the built-in backup technology that will debut in Leopard. The feature could conceivably make third-party programs such as the cloning and backup tool SuperDuper unnecessary. But Dave Nanian, president of SuperDuper maker Shirt Pocket Software, says the program is alive and well.

"Time Machine was totally expected," Nanian said. "We've been waiting for someone to come along and offer an application like that. Our plan is to complement Time Machine."

Nanian points out that SuperDuper has a bootable disk, an important feature for many users. With a bootable disk, users can reboot even after catastrophic failures. And that's the sort of functionality that Nanian believes will

keep customers coming back to Shirt Pocket.

"We take care of catastrophic situations, so there is still room for us," Nanian said. "It's a matter of utilizing what Apple has introduced and provide the extras to the consumers—that's what we have."

Nanian has a realistic view of what Apple's Time Machine means for his product. But he also thinks a built-in backup feature in OS X has the potential to provide more business for him as well.

"People that had no solution would often come to us," he said. "Now a certain percentage of those people will go to Apple. However, as their needs grow, we expect to see more business too."

Another OS X application getting a major overhaul in Leopard is iChat. The new version of the messaging and chat software adds special effects capabilities similar to Photo Booth, the software Apple currently includes with Macs that have built-in cameras. iChat users will also be able to place themselves in front of any photo or video as the backdrop for their chats.

Those features are very similar to Script Software's ChatFX utility. Like Nanian and SuperDuper, Script Software's Julian Miller plans to continue offering and developing ChatFX. An update to the application is coming relatively soon that will be much faster and add more compositions. After Leopard arrives, Miller plans to take advantage of new features in that operating system.

Miller's plans for ChatFX go well beyond iChat. In the future, he said, there are plans to provide support for Skype, Yahoo, Google and video conferencing.

Writing on the Script Software blog, Miller struck a philosophical note about the updated version of iChat slated for Leopard.

"In our case we had a leg up in creating what we did through the use of numerous Apple technologies that we put together in a creative way," Miller wrote. "ChatFX relies on Quartz Composer which is brilliant and created by Pierre-Olivier Latour, Apple gives it out free to developers. Also iChat was necessary and is free from Apple and part of the OS. We may have inspired Apple, but Apple definitely inspired us."

### Tonight's Agenda

Help desk until 6:45 with Tom

6:45 **Magic Time!**  
 New members - Lynn  
 Dues (\$3) - Ray

7:30 Tonight's demo:

**Digital Photography**  
 with Kent Queman

8:00 Wrap-up - Lynn



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## Hot Tip

for the geekily inclined



An easy way to test your laptop battery's life.

**Open Terminal** and enter the following command:

lower case "l" "bar"

**ioreg() -w() -l | grep() Capacity** (= space and press [enter])

You will get the info on your battery. Capacity, which is first, "should be above 3500 on a normal, functioning battery. If you see a number below 1000, your battery is probably only lasting for one-half hour to one hour under normal operating conditions."

(From MacFormat Magazine (April 2006))





## Dell recalls 4.1 million notebook batteries

August 15, 2006 - Damon Darlin - New York Times

Dell is recalling 4.1 million notebook computer batteries because they could erupt in flames, the company said Monday. It will be the largest safety recall in the history of the consumer electronics industry, the Consumer Product Safety Commission said.

Sony, which affirmed on Monday that its batteries were responsible, said it was "financially supporting" Dell.

Dell, the world's largest PC maker, said the lithium-ion batteries were made by Sony and were installed in notebooks sold between April 2004 and July 18 of this year.

The recall raises broader questions about lithium-ion batteries, which are used in devices like cell phones, portable power tools, camcorders, digital cameras, and MP3 players. The potential for such batteries to catch fire has been acknowledged for years, and has prompted more limited recalls in the past. But a number of recent fires involving notebook computers, some aboard planes, have brought renewed scrutiny.

Dell has reported to the safety agency that it documented six instances since December in which notebooks overheated or caught fire. None of the incidents caused injuries or death. Dell said the problems were a result of a manufacturing defect in batteries made by Sony.

The safety agency said the batteries were not unique to Dell, meaning that other companies using Sony batteries might also have to issue recalls. Sony has sold its batteries to most of the major computer makers.

The recalled batteries were used in 2.7 million Dell computers sold in the United States and 1.4 million sold overseas. The total is about 18 percent of Dell's notebook production during the period in question.

Dell said it would notify affected customers by mail and online, or through corporate sales representatives, arranging to send a replacement battery and advising owners to use a power cord in the interim.

Dark Side

## Windows Five Times the Cost of Mac OS X?

Aug. 15, 2006 - Remy Davison - Insanely Great Mac

We've all heard of total cost of ownership. But here's an interesting perspective from Roughly Drafted. Here, the author develops a lengthy comparison of the cost of upgrading Mac systems with the various OS X releases, compared with the price of doing business with Windows 2000 through XP. The article examines the 2000-2006 period, which takes in the original OS X 10.0 release through to the current Tiger 10.4.x OS. Here are the key points:

Dark Side

1. **Mac OS X releases cost less than Windows.** If you buy retail, OS X usually costs around \$129 retail, versus XP Pro's \$300 or thereabouts. Score one for Mac.

2. **Windows viruses cost.** Without even including downtime, the author has – somewhat controversially – added the software and labor costs associated with removing viruses and spyware. The estimate for "Spyware and security cleaning by Geek Squad" over 7 years at \$200 per annum equals \$1,400. Then add 7 years' worth of Norton Anti-Virus at 50 bucks outlay for the 2000 edition plus \$30 per year for an annual update. Grand total = \$230.00 for virus protection. By contrast, you could – but most likely don't need to – spend money on anti-virus software. Most likely no serious Mac user has done this since 1989 and System 6. TCO for the OS software? Estimated at \$1,800 for Windows and \$400 for Mac. That's near-as-dammit 5x more expensive.

Dark Side

Or 4 and a bit, anyway. Quite apart from the fact that Apple doesn't restrict you from loading OS X onto as many Macs as you want, although legally it does. A 5-user family OS X license is most likely cheaper than a multiuser license for Windows as well. Even if you got either OS with a new box, you still need to factor in A-V software and spring cleaning. Yes, we all know people who entirely abandon their PCs after 18 months when they're so riddled with spyware and viruses. Are these figures realistic?



## Intel-Xserve cluster node due in Oct.

Aug. 16th 2006 - MacNN

Dark Side

Apple plans on shipping a Xeon-based Xserve cluster node variation of its Xserve server line along with the previously announced Xeon-based Xserve, according to a new report. It is expected to ship in October – alongside the Intel-based Xserve, which was introduced earlier this month at Apple's developer conference. The cluster node variation of the Xserve, which has been used in variety of top 500 supercomputer projects, does not have all of the standard computing parts such as an optical drive and video ports

## Apple II is the 'Greatest PC of All Time'

August 14, 2006 - Remy Davison - Insanely Great Mac

As it's the 25th anniversary of the IBM PC, there's an item over at PC World which polled its editors to find the greatest 25 PCs ever built.

*Topping the list is the venerable Apple II.*

Released in 1977, the Apple II scored 4K RAM, expandable to 48K. No disk drive - cassette only. Cost? \$1,200.

But it also offered color, cool and production went on forever, with the IIe derivative lasting all the way through to 1993 (!). Two million Apple IIs were produced, including the very Mac-like IIGs (my first Apple computer, just by the way).

They're still around in dusty closets. Some people won't let them go. But most are now in landfill.

Also cracking the Top 25 were Apple's Mac Plus (# 4), the PowerBook 100 (# 10), the 2nd-gen Luxo iMac G4 (# 19) and the eMate 300 (# 23), the latter being super-cool, as I recall. Frankly, we'd have put the original Mac 128K (true, the Mac Plus was a better computer, but still), but the 128 nevertheless did succeed where the Lisa failed, even though it never had enough memory to be a truly usable computer. If pushed, we think the G4 Cube deserves special mention, as does maybe the iMac G5. We could go on...



to conserve costs. CNET News.com reports that "the 1.75-inch-thick cluster system is designed to be used in high-performance computing applications that are farmed out across a group of computers. They therefore lack features such as video ports and DVD drives that business server customers prefer and that are in regular Xserve models." All of the Xserve's will use the "Woodcrest" Xeon chip, which was introduced by Intel in June and ships in Apple's professional Mac Pro systems.

*'Reprinted from MacNN.com with permission'*

# Meet the Xeon: Inside the Mac Pro's Processor

Aug 10, 2006 - Rick LePage - MacCentral

Although Intel has been using the Xeon name since 1998, the dual-core Xeon 5100 processors that power the Mac Pro and Xserve lines are entirely new chips, based on Intel's 64-bit Core architecture platform. This platform was initially introduced to the public late in 2005, with chips continuing to roll out throughout this year; it includes the Core Duo and Core Solo processors used in the Mac Mini and the iMac, as well as some other chips that haven't shown up in Macs—at least not yet.

Code-named "Woodcrest," the Xeon 5100 debuted at the end of June, and was designed to offer top-speed computational throughput with better power efficiency than Intel's previous high-end processors. The company terms it a "server" chip, although most hardware vendors, Apple included, will use it in professional systems like the Mac Pro. That's due to the fact that the chip was designed to excel at the processing of huge amounts of data, like those found in real-world applications like movie production with Final Cut Pro, or image editing in applications like Aperture or Adobe Photoshop (once Photoshop is Intel-native on OS X).

The Xeon 5100 comes in three speeds: 2.0GHz, 2.67GHz, and 3.0GHz. Like the Core Duo and IBM's PowerPC 970MP used in the current Power Mac G5, the 5100 has two micro-processor cores built into each chip. Both cores run at the same rated speed, with a 1.33GHz frontside bus (which connects the processor to the rest of the system) and share a 4MB Level 2 cache, which helps keep the processors humming during compute-intensive tasks.

Unlike the cache in the Core Duo and PowerPC 970MP, either processor core can utilize the entire cache if necessary, which gives a performance boost in crucial data-processing tasks, especially with legacy, non-multithreaded applications that aren't designed to take advantage of multiple processors.

One other reason, aside from performance, that the Xeon 5100 was the perfect chip to use in Apple's flagship Mac was because it is the only Core chip that can currently be used in a dual-processor configuration similar to the Power Mac Quad G5. The 5100 can only be used in single- or dual-processor configurations, so we won't see any Xserves with four Xeons in it, although Intel is expected to announce a quad-core successor to the 5100 series some time in 2007.



## How much better than a G5?

In synthetic tests, Apple claims that the 3GHz Mac Pro, with its twin Xeon processors, offers more than twice the integer performance of the previous top of the line, the 2.5GHz Power Mac Quad G5, and 1.6 times the floating point performance. Of course, real-world benchmarks will tell the true story of the Mac Pro as it compares to its predecessor, but the Xeon 5100 should have a distinct performance edge over the older PowerPC chip, as we would expect in any more modern chip design with a faster front-side bus and larger and more flexible cache. (Each core in the PowerPC 970MP chip has 1MB of dedicated Level 2 cache.)

But, with the Xeon 5100, Intel claims that it has eliminated one huge performance advantage held by the PowerPC architecture: vector processing. Known to Mac users as AltiVec, or the Velocity Engine, this technology increased vector-based processing significantly on the PowerPC machines, and was one of the reasons that applications like Photoshop were able to manipulate such large image files with ease, even when other parts of the Mac subsystem weren't as fast as comparable Intel-based PCs.

In the Core architecture, Intel has a feature called Advanced Digital Media Boost. That may not roll off the tongue as cleanly as AltiVec, but Intel claims that it achieves the same end. For Mac users, the important thing to note about Advanced Digital Media Boost is that it executes 128-bit vector-based instructions in one clock cycle, instead of the two clock cycles taken by previous Intel designs. This theoretically doubles the performance of vector operations, and brings Intel to parity with AltiVec. It also should provide enhanced performance of native graphics applications, especially when working with large amounts of data. (If you would like a much more in-depth (i.e. geekier) explanation, check out ArsTechnica's excellent analysis of the Core architecture, written by Jon Hannibal Stokes.)

Intel and IBM don't use the same metrics or nomenclature when discussing power efficiency, so it's hard to compare the true power efficiency of the Xeon 5100 series with the Power Mac G5's PowerPC 970MP processor. The fact that Apple has been able to eliminate so much of the Power Mac's cooling apparatus says quite a bit about the power requirements of the 5100, however. Apple told us that the Mac Pro system as a whole only pulls 980 watts, versus 1,000 watts for the Power Mac Quad G5, and a lot of that power is routed to the PCI Express bus.

## The 5100 is only the beginning

The last two years have seen chip manufacturers push away from the "speeds and feeds" mentality of the previous decade, largely a result of the fact that, as chips have increased in speed, their power consumption has increased as significantly. The result is that companies like Intel, Advanced Micro Devices, and IBM have moved to multi-core designs that



don't offer huge jumps in raw performance speed (as measured in gigahertz), instead providing tangible increases in performance (through multiple processor cores on a single chop) without linear increases in power consumption.

One of the great things for Mac users is that the Xeon 5100 used in today's Mac Pro is only the beginning of a line of high-performance chips that will be released in the next year—as noted, we should see quad-core chips, as well as chips better tuned to run in portable systems, and chips that offer notable increases in performance for low-end desktops.

## Apple ranks No. 10 in global Web traffic

August 14, 2006 - MacNN

Apple.com was the tenth most-visited website during June, while Microsoft, Yahoo, and Google, eBay, and Time Warner, the parent company of AOL, were among the top five, according to a new report. comScore World Metrix on Monday released a report that found that Microsoft's sites were the most-visited global property in June of 2006 with approximately 500 million global visitors, followed by Yahoo! (481 million visitors), and Google (454 million visitors). Yahoo! Sites led all global properties with 116 billion page views during June, followed by Google (84 billion), and Microsoft (75 billion). Apple, with over 92 million unique visitors, was also behind Amazon (129 million), Wikipedia (128 million), Ask Network (112 million), and Adobe (96 million). It was ahead of Lycos, CNET, Monster, Real.com, and MySpace.

comScore's report revealed that 713 million people—above the age of 15—used the Web around the world from all locations in June. Visitors from the U.S. accounted for 21 percent of all worldwide unique visitors, while 11 percent originated from China and 7 percent originated from Japan.

"The 'big three' properties continue to aggregate the largest worldwide audiences, dominating the rankings," said Bob Ivins, managing director for comScore Europe. "MSN, Yahoo! and Google ranked as the top three respectively, each drawing more than 450 million visitors in June, approximately 200 million more than the next closest property. While the established Internet players grabbed the top spots in the worldwide rankings, several upstarts have quickly found their way into the top 15 properties. Wikipedia Sites ranked 8th on a worldwide basis in June with 128 million visitors, while MySpace ranked 15th with 66 million visitors worldwide."

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Tonight's demonstration

# Digital Photography

with Kent Queman

**References:** [electronics.howstuffworks.com/digital-cameras](http://electronics.howstuffworks.com/digital-cameras)  
**iPhoto2**, O'Reilly Press [www.oreilly.com/catalog/iphotomm/](http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/iphotomm/)

**Features:** Megapixels- resolution/detail/size, consider display  
 Lens quality  
 Zoom- Variable focal length- Optical/Digital  
 Memory types-  
 Compact Flash - CF  
 Secure Digital - SD  
 SmartMedia - SSFDC  
 MemoryStick  
 ... many more  
 How much memory?

**Level:** Photography expertise/personal requirement  
 Point & Shoot  
 Advanced amatuer  
 Professional  
 Allow room to grow

**Additional features:** Picture quality- RAW, TIFF, JPEG  
 White Balance  
 Burst mode

**More gear:** Tripod  
 Flash

**Transferring data to camera:** Easiest to import with iPhoto, can still be manipulated with PhotoShop  
 Use card readers (faster)  
 Proprietary software





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