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08.15.07 - Peter Cohen - Macworld

Apple's venerable consumer application suite AppleWorks has finally been laid to rest. Visits to the company's Web site URL for AppleWorks now redirect users to Apple's iWork '08 instead.

AppleWorks — first conceived as ClarisWorks, developed by Apple's software subsidiary Claris — contained word processing, graphics, database, spreadsheet and communications tools. As Claris focused on development and marketing of the popular FileMaker Pro database software (indeed, eventually rechristening itself FileMaker Inc. in the process), Apple subsumed development and called the program AppleWorks.

AppleWorks was ultimately updated for Mac OS X but languished thereafter — no further development was forthcoming. Following Apple's transition to Intel microprocessors, AppleWorks' moribund status became more apparently — the software never received a Universal binary facelift.

Apple debuted iWork in 2005 — a suite of applications that originally consisted of Pages, a word processing and page layout application, and Keynote, a presentation software package perceived as an Apple alternative to Microsoft PowerPoint.

At the time of iWork '05's introduction, Apple senior vice president of Applications Sina Tamaddon said that Apple was "building the successor to AppleWorks." But without a spreadsheet application, iWork was sorely lacking in functionality.

That's changed with iWork '08's release last week. The newest application bundled in iWork is called Numbers, and it offers users spreadsheet calculation capabilities and visual display tools. iWork '08 can import Appleworks word processing, presentation and spreadsheet files, as well.



Google Isn't Always The Best Search Choice

08.09.07 - Rob Pegoraro - washingtonpost.com

Google has turned into a household verb, but that doesn't make it the last word in Web search.

On one level, it can't be: Web searching isn't even 15 years old, and there's no reason to think that somebody couldn't do it better than Google.

On another level, it shouldn't be: The technology used to figure out what pages people want to see also helps companies calculate what products people might want to buy, and therefore what ads to display for them. Do you really want one company controlling that show?

Nobody's going to win any market share from Google -- about 50 percent of the U.S. market for Web search, twice that of No. 2 Yahoo, according to ComScore's latest data -- on pity alone. Other companies will have to win customers by offering something better, and probably less advertising than Google pushes at you.

A test of three other major Web search sites -- Yahoo, Microsoft's Live Search and IAC's Ask.com -- showed that they can, but it's not easy.

The best opportunity for the competition is probably blog searching. Google runs one of the biggest blog services around, Blogger, but using it to find relevant postings can quickly get you lost among "blogspot," or fake sites set up only to advertise unrelated products or services. This gets especially bad if you use Google's "sort by date" option to find newer posts.

Ask's blog search often did better. For example, a search for blogs talking about the possibility of the Metro rail system tunneling through Tysons Corner yielded about the same number of results at both Google and Ask, but Google's list of recent items was dominated by ad-filled phony sites.

Another blog-search site, Technorati, also provided more relevant links than Google. Yahoo and Live don't provide blog-only search.

Another Google weakness could be in video and photo results, some of which were far off the mark compared with the findings of other sites. On the design side, some of Google's competitors also offer novel and interesting ways to get to the data you want.

Ask, which redid its site this summer, is the most creative. It uses a clean, clever two-column layout that keeps your search query and related links visible on the left at all times, instead of having them scroll out of view. It also provides thumbnail previews of many sites it indexes, accessible by clicking on a binoculars icon.

The best feature at Microsoft's Live search, also recently redesigned, is its "search macros." The customizable queries limit a search to a set of sites that use particular terms. One of them, for example, looks for recipes posted at five popular cooking sites.

Microsoft Office 2008 Slips to January

Adam C. Engst - ace@tidbits.com

In what one may perceive as either a major or minor delay, Microsoft's Macintosh Business Unit (MacBU) has announced that Office 2008 for the Mac will now ship in mid-January 2008 in the United States, with worldwide availability scheduled for the first quarter of 2008. That probably translates to a public unveiling at Macworld Expo in San Francisco on 14-Jan-08.



Previously, Office 2008 had been scheduled for release in the second half of 2007, but according to the MacBU, the slip was required to achieve the necessary level of quality. User comments on Microsoft's Mac Mojo blog tend toward the testy, with a number of people expressing disappointment about the delay while simultaneously acknowledging that quality is key.

Don't worry, the whole Nasdaq Computer Index (IXCO) is heading South!



Tonight...

- 7:00 Help desk - Tom Davis
- 7:00 **Magic Time!**
New members - Brian Fountain
Dues (\$3) - Ray Kallman
- 7:15 **Out-of-the-Box series**
System Preferences
Frank Smith
- Wrap-up - Brian

2 Apple Beats Microsoft at Its Own Open XML Game

'Embarrassing' that Microsoft hasn't delivered file compatibility on its own format, says analyst Gregg Keizer

08.10.07 - Computerworld

Apple Inc.'s release of iWork '08 this week is "embarrassing," an analyst said today, not for its maker, but for rival Microsoft Corp.

Tuesday, Apple rolled out a refreshed iWork that added a spreadsheet, dubbed Numbers, to the earlier mix of a word processor/page layout Pages and presentation maker Keynote. But it was iWork's ability to handle the Open XML file format -- the new native format for Microsoft's own Office 2007 application suite -- that Michael Gartenberg of JupiterResearch LLC talked about.

"This was the ultimate insult to injury," Gartenberg said. "Not only has Microsoft not delivered the ability to read and write Open XML in its Mac Office, but at the end of the day, Apple was the one who delivered."

Gartenberg referred to Microsoft's problems developing Office 2008 for Mac, which the company announced last week would be delayed until mid-January. Among the roadblocks, said Microsoft's Macintosh Business Unit (MBU), is the shift to Open XML as Office 2008's native file format. The company has also been slow in releasing conversion tools that let earlier editions of its Mac suite work with Office 2007's Open XML documents.

"This is embarrassing for MBU," Gartenberg said. "It has said that the shift to Intel has caused [its] problems, and changes in development tools, and the file format, too. But every other major vendor has pretty much managed to get their apps over to Intel [on the Mac]. Microsoft is one of the oldest Mac developers out there, so it's not like it doesn't have experience [on the platform]."

iWork '08 applications can open the OpenXML formats churned out by their Office 2007 counterparts -- Pages with Word, Numbers with Excel, Keynote with PowerPoint -- but cannot save in those formats. Currently, Office 2004 and Office v.X users can both open Word and PowerPoint Open XML files and save in those formats using beta converters MBU has issued. No such converter has been released that handles Excel 2007's Open XML files, however.

Ironically, one of those who praised iWork's handling of the Microsoft file format was a program manager for Office 2007. "[iWork '08] reads the Office Open XML files with very high fidelity," said Brian Jones on his company blog.

At the same time, Jones defended his fellow developers at Microsoft in MBU. "The Mac Office folks have a ton of stuff they are working on for the next version, so it's not surprising that you aren't seeing full Open XML support until they reach that point," Jones said in response to a question asking how Microsoft lost the race to Apple's iWork.

"Office for the Mac is just not a real priority for Microsoft," said Gartenberg as he spelled out his take for Microsoft's tardiness creating software on the Mac that can handle what are, after all, its own file formats. "And that's not likely to change anytime soon."

Asked to explain why Microsoft hasn't been able to match Apple, MBU's marketing manager, Amanda Lefebvre, ticked off the development issues that have delayed Office 2008.

"The transition to the new file format is one of several reasons the development cycle is longer with Office 2008," she said. "Office 2008 [for Mac] will run natively on Intel- and PowerPC-based Macs with a Universal Binary [and] this transition necessitated a switch to a new set of development tools as well. The combination of these two technology shifts definitely impacted our schedule."

Not quite, Gartenberg said. "What this really shows is Microsoft's inability to ship software on time these days," he said.

Apple, meanwhile, is doing the smart thing. "They're making sure that they're not dependent on Microsoft for any of the important software [for the Mac]," said Gartenberg.

That strategy, along with the \$79 price of iWork and the window of opportunity because of Office 2008's delay, puts Cupertino in the catbird seat. "It's going to be hard for Microsoft to get those people who try and buy iWork back," he said. "Microsoft's let down its Mac customers."

Apple's Flair For Design Makes A Major Impact On The Supply Chain

08.15.07 - Antone Gonsalves - InformationWeek

Apple's design activity around the iPhone and its hugely successful iPod is exerting a major impact on the global electronics supply chain, a market research firm said Wednesday.

Apple's product design work in the first half of this year drove the largest increase in semiconductor spending among the top 10 electronics equipment manufacturers in the United States, iSuppli said. Product design leads directly to equipment production, which in turn drives semiconductor sales.

"Companies that engage in design of electronic equipment, such as PCs, mobile phones, and televisions, also are responsible for specifying the use of particular chips in the products being developed," iSuppli analyst Min-Sun Moon said in a statement. "Thus, these companies have a major influence on global semiconductor spending patterns."

For the first half of the year, iSuppli ranked Apple fourth overall in terms of design influence on semiconductor spending in the United States, trailing Hewlett-Packard, Dell, and Motorola. Apple, however, had the fastest growth of design influence of any company in the nation.

Apple's work spurred \$3.8 billion worth of global semiconductor purchases, up 27% from \$3 billion in the same period last year. The surge in influence was mostly because of the iPhone mobile handset, which Apple released in late June.

iSuppli predicted Apple would ship more than 4.5 million iPhones globally in 2007, 13.5 million units in 2008, and 21.1 million units in 2009. The researcher also predicted that a second version of the iPhone would be released in 12 to 18 months.

The iPhone line would cause Apple-driven semiconductor spending to continue to grow in the second half of the year, as well as into 2008, iSuppli predicted. Beyond Apple, HP, Dell, and Motorola, other leading design influencers in the United States included Cisco Systems, Kingston Technology, and IBM.

iSuppli ranked the United States as the world leader in terms of design influence in the first half of the year, followed by Japan.



Apple Mac's Growing Popularity Increases Interest from Corporations

08.16.07 - MacDailyNews.com

Computer hardware companies may have more to worry about than just the consumer market when it comes to Apple Inc., Donna Fuscaldo reports for Dow Jones Newswires.

"The popularity of Apple's Macintosh computers is morphing into increased interest from corporations - and not only from the graphic arts departments, where Apple products traditionally have been popular. Apple resellers and analysts say the Cupertino, Calif., computer and entertainment company could make in-roads in the enterprise market that has historically been dominated by Hewlett-Packard Co. and Dell Inc.," Fuscaldo reports.

"Apple has less than 3% of the U.S. corporate market, according to some estimates, and isn't clear if being a player there is a priority for the company. However, corporations appear to be interested," Fuscaldo reports.

"Executives and sales people, in particular, appreciate the cachet that Macs provide," said Andy Hargreaves, an analyst at PacificCrest Securities, noting that having the support of executives makes the purchasing process a lot easier," Fuscaldo reports. "According to a survey conducted by PacificCrest Securities, 65% of companies cited consumer preference for one of the reasons they would be willing to adopt more Macs."

TarMac

Tidewater Area Macintosh Users Group
Apple User Group

The Tarmac Vaporware Gazette, named in honor of past president Jerry Rowe, is published for each meeting by smitty's printshop, a non-existent shop specializing in things of little or no importance to the world at large. Send your comments, good or bad, to smittysprintshop@mac.com.

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