Steve Jobs Gets Cohesive

1.15.08 - Rob Griffiths - Macworld

I attended Tuesday's keynote kicking off Macworld Expo with my colleague Dan Frakes (and 6,500 or so of our closest friends), and afterwards—after we'd escaped from the crowds and could actually hear each other talk—we were both arrived at the same one-word summary of the event: cohesive.

More so than any keynote in recent memory, Tuesday's Apple announcements fit together very well, and seemed to reflect a very solid top-level vision. You might even say that there was something in the air. (Sorry, I couldn't resist! [Next time, please try to resist.—Ed.])

Consider Apple's four major announcements during the keynote. Leading off, **Time Capsule** offers a wireless backup solution for those who live and work on portable Macs. While there's nothing ground-breaking in the product, the price point is competitive with what it would cost to purchase an AirPort Extreme base station and a 500GB or 1TB hard drive. A cynic might question whether the existence of Time Capsule explains the disappearance of Time Machine's AirPort disk feature, but thankfully, I'm not cynical.

The next announcement continued the focus on wireless devices, as the **iPhone** received some nice **software updates**. Most interesting to me is the ability to add icons to the main screen of the iPhone (and support for multiple pages), as well as the GPS-like map positioning feature.

No matter the product being discussed, Steve Jobs seemed to stick to a wireless theme during Tuesday's keynote.

Third up was **iTunes movie rentals**. The big news here, at least from where I sit, is the participation of all the major studios, and the ability to watch the rentals on any device—even transferring them mid-session, if you wish. Again, wireless entered the picture when the updated Apple TV was revealed. No longer is the Apple TV required to live in the shadow of a parent PC or Mac; instead, it's a full-featured standalone device. Using its wireless (or wired) connection, you can purchase songs, and rent or purchase movies, from the iTunes Store directly on the Apple TV. (These purchases can be synched back to a Mac or PC, if you wish.)

MacBook Air

The fourth announcement was, of course, the **MacBook Air**, the ultra-light portable Mac that's priced between the MacBook and MacBook Pro. As with the other devices, wireless plays a major role in the MacBook Air—more so than in any prior Mac. Lacking FireWire, Ethernet, and an optical drive, the MacBook Air is a machine built around wireless connectivity—if you want to get data on or off of the MacBook Air, you'll be doing so over the air. (There is an external USB SuperDrive available for those who need it.)

So there really was something cohesive in the air today—excluding Randy Newman's first song choice, that is—and it's obvious that Apple has a well-thought out product strategy. Take one part movie rentals from every major studio, add in one part new AppleTV, mix with the ability to watch those movies on any device—including the new MacBook Air and improved iPhone/iPod touch—at any time over a 30-day period, shake with the iTunes Store's huge market share, and I think you have a recipe for success. Time will tell, of course, but I think Tuesday's keynote shows that Apple has a solid vision for their product line, and seems to be executing it very well.

IBM to add software for Apple devices

01.15.08 - Brian Bergstein, AP Technology Writer - Yahoo News

E-mail software from IBM Corp. will be available on Apple Inc. iPhones and iPod Touch devices under a new partnership that brings together two big rivals of Microsoft Corp.

IBM plans a formal announcement of the Lotus Notes e-mail package for Apple's portable devices at its Lotusphere conference in Orlando, Fla., next week. The software, which requires use of IBM's Domino e-mail server program, will be free for users who already have a Lotus Web-access license and start at $39 per year for new users.

IBM also plans to release Lotus Notes and the free Lotus Symphony "productivity" package — which includes documents, spreadsheets and other Microsoft Office-like software — for Apple's Macintosh computers.

With these moves, IBM is trying to find more avenues for its software and take advantage of Apple's natural affinity for Microsoft alternatives.

The iPhone already can connect users to Web-based e-mail services and to corporate e-mail sent over Microsoft's Exchange e-mail platform, though businesses rarely enable the setting that makes it possible.

If IBM, which counts 135 million Lotus users worldwide, can get companies to let their employees check Lotus e-mail on iPhones, the partnership could make Apple's gadget more competitive with Research in Motion Ltd.'s BlackBerry and other business-targeted smart phones.

IBM and Apple, competitors in the early years of the PC market, traditionally have not worked closely together but now appreciate that "we have a lot in common," IBM spokesman Mike Azzi said. "We're going to cross-pollinate."

One reason for the distance between the two companies is the small overlap between Mac users and the big corporate customers that commonly buy products from IBM.

Now, Apple hardware has become a broader platform with the popularity of the iPhone and Web-enabled iPod Touch devices. However, Apple has delayed fully opening the devices to third-party applications; a "software developers' kit" to enable that isn't due until next month. Apple and IBM have been working together on their own.

Tonight...

- 7:00 Help desk

7:00 **Magic Time!**
New members - Jamie Lewis
Dues $3 - Ray Kallman

@ 7:15 **iPhoto**
Ray Kallman

Wrap-up - Jamie

Next Meeting - **iCal**

Apple Introduces MacBook Air

During his Macworld Expo keynote address on Tuesday morning, Apple CEO Steve Jobs introduced the MacBook Air, a computer that the company billed as the world's thinnest notebook -- small enough to fit inside an interoffice mailing envelope. It's priced starting at $1,799 and will be available within two weeks.

Sporting a silvery finish, the MacBook Air features a 13.3-inch LED-backlit widescreen display that has a 1280 x 800 pixel resolution. The backlighting saves power and provides "instant on" response from the moment you turn it on, according to Jobs. The device has a slightly wedge-shaped profile. It weighs about 3 pounds, and sports a thickness of 0.16-0.76 inches. It's 12.8 inches wide and 8.95 inches deep.

The MacBook Air also features a built-in iSight webcam and a full sized MacBook-style black keyboard. The keyboard is backlit, similar to MacBook Pros, and has an ambient light sensor that automatically adjusts brightness. The trackpad is also capable of recognizing multi-touch gestures, similar to using an iPhone or iPod touch. As a result, the MacBook Air's trackpad is disproportionately large, compared to the size of trackpads found on the MacBook or MacBook Pro.

The MacBook Air features a 1.8-inch hard disk drive with 80GB of storage capacity standard. A 64GB solid-state disk (SSD) drive is an option. The hard drive is a Parallel ATA (PATA) model that operates at 4200 RPM.

The laptop is powered by an Intel Core 2 Duo chip running at 1.6GHz, with 1.8GHz available as an option. Jobs noted that Intel was willing to engineer a new version of the Core 2 Duo specifically to Apple's specifications -- it's 60 percent smaller than others. The chip operates with 4MB of on-chip shared L2 cache running at full processor speed, and uses an 800MHz frontside bus. 2GB of 667MH DDR2 SDRAM is also included.

Like the MacBook and the MacBook Pro, the MacBook Air features a slimmed down MagSafe connector for power. It comes with a 45 watt power adapter. A flip-down door on one side reveals USB 2.0, Micro-DVI (to connect an external display) and a headphone jack. The MacBook Air also includes 802.11n-based wireless networking support and Bluetooth 2.1 + EDR.

Apple estimates that with wireless networking turned on, the MacBook Air can get about 5 hours of battery life.

No internal optical drive is included, but Apple will offer a $99 USB 2.0-based add-on SuperDrive for users who need it. For users that opt not to get the optical drive, Apple is offering a new software feature on this machine called Remote Disk; it enables you to "borrow" the optical drive of another Mac or PC on the same network as the MacBook Air, to use for installing software, for example.

Apple's frequently been in the crosshairs of environmental group Greenpeace in recent years. Jobs offered information about the environmental goals behind the MacBook Air -- it has a fully recyclable aluminum case, and is "the first" to have a mercury-free display with arsenic-free glass. All the circuit boards are BFR-free and PVC-free, and the retail packaging uses 56 percent less material than the MacBook packaging.

Apple Announces Time Capsule

Apple today introduced Time Capsule, a backup appliance that automatically and wirelessly backs up everything on one or more Macs running Leopard, the latest release of Apple's Mac OS X operating system including the amazing Time Machine automatic backup software. Time Capsule combines an 802.11n base station with a server grade hard disk in one small package. Simply plug it in, then easily set up automatic wireless backup for every Mac in your house to a single Time Capsule with just a few clicks. Time Capsule offers the benefits of a full-featured 802.11n Wi-Fi base station, and comes in two models: a 500 gigabyte model for just $299 and a 1 terabyte model for just $499.

"Bring Time Capsule home, plug it in, click a few buttons on your Macs and voila - all the Macs in your house are being backed up automatically, every hour of every day," said Steve Jobs, Apple's CEO. "With Time Capsule and Time Machine, all your irreplaceable photos, movies and documents are automatically protected and incredibly easy to retrieve if they are ever lost."

Built to work seamlessly with Time Machine, Time Capsule lets users wirelessly back up all of the data on their Macs, find lost files and even restore all of their software. In the event a file is lost, users can wirelessly search back through time to find deleted files, applications, photos and other digital media and then instantly restore the file. If it's ever necessary, Leopard can also easily restore an entire system from the Time Machine backup on Time Capsule.

In addition to being the best way to back up a Mac, Time Capsule is also a full-featured Wi-Fi base station with the latest 802.11n technology. Delivering up to five times the performance and twice the range of 802.11g, 802.11n* is built in to Apple's iMac desktop and the entire Mac notebook line up, including MacBook, MacBook Pro and the new MacBook Air. Time Capsule features a sleek design with a built-in power supply and connections to print wirelessly to a USB printer. With Time Capsule, it's very easy for users to create a secure, wireless network for up to 50 users and set security restrictions such as Internet access limits for children's computers.

At $299 for a 500GB model and $499 for a 1TB model and a fully integrated 802.11n AirPort Extreme Base Station, Time Capsule can serve as a backup solution for multiple computers as well as the backbone for a high-speed, 802.11n wireless network, making it effortless and affordable for everyone at home, school or work to protect their digital files.

Additional Time Capsule features include:
- dual-band antennas for 2.4 GHz or 5 GHz frequencies;
- three Gigabit LAN ports;
- one Gigabit Ethernet WAN port;
- one USB 2.0 port;
- Wi-Fi Protected Access (WPA/WPA-2), 128-bit WEP encryption; and
- a built-in NAT firewall supporting NAT-PMP for features like Back to My Mac.

Time Capsule will be available in February through the Apple Store, at Apple's retail stores and Apple Authorized Resellers for a suggested retail price of $299 (US) for a 500GB hard drive and $499 (US) for a 1TB hard drive.

*Time Capsule is based on an IEEE 802.11n draft specification. Actual performance will vary based on range, connection rate, site conditions, size of network and other factors.

Apple, Fox team up for iTunes Digital Copy

Apple and Twentieth Century Fox on Tuesday introduced iTunes Digital Copy, new technology that enables users who buy specially configured DVD movies with the ability to copy the movie to iTunes, for later playback on the Mac (or PC), iPod and other compatible products.

The first disc to feature this technology is "Family Guy Presents: Blue Harvest," a parody of Star Wars featuring the popular cartoon family seen in the "Family Guy" TV show on Fox Television.

When the movie DVD is inserted into the computer, the user is prompted to enter a unique code into iTunes that they can find in the movie's packaging. iTunes then copies the movie into the user's iTunes library. Each DVD will only transfer its iTunes Digital Copy to one iTunes library, however.

iTunes Digital Copy content can be viewed on Macs, Windows PCs, fifth-generation (video) iPods, third-generation iPod nanos, the iPhone and Apple TV. It's dependent on iTunes 7.6 and QuickTime 7.4, both of which were also released on Tuesday and are available for download through the Software Update system preference.

The new product is an alternative to using software that enables users to "rip" movies from DVDs to the Mac. Such software circumvents copy protection capabilities, while iTunes Digital Copy provides safeguards to make sure the copied movie is where it belongs.

Apple and Twentieth Century Fox did not announce what other titles will employ this protection scheme, but Apple said it's planning to deliver many more DVDs with the technology in 2008.

First Look: Apple TV, take two

01.16.08 - Christopher Breen - Macworld

Lately I've promoted the notion of an updated Apple TV as one of this young year's most significant products. But I can understand how those who'd never used the thing might have been less-than-enamored of the device. After all, it apparently didn't support 5.1 audio, its storage space was limited, there was the general (and incorrect) perception that it couldn't play HD content, and, most confounding of all, it depended on a computer for its care and feeding.

My, how things have changed.

Should Steve Jobs' presentation have blotted the functionality of the "original" Apple TV from your memory, allow me to compare and contrast that original device with the "Take Two" update announced during Jobs' address.

Price: Okay, easily done. The 40GB Apple TV sold for $299 and yesterday Apple shaved $70 from the price tag. The 160GB Apple TV, which those of us who preferred to stream our content thought bore more storage than necessary, moved from $399 to $329; another $70 price drop. (People who invested in the early days of the Apple TV will be rewarded not by a $70 rebate but by receiving the new "Take Two" software update as a free download in two weeks.)

Content: For the most part, you had to move content to the original Apple TV from your computer (streaming YouTube videos and previews from the iTunes Store being the exception). So, if you wanted to play music in your iTunes library, you either copied or streamed it from a computer on the network. Likewise with TV shows and movies purchased from the iTunes Store.

Speaking of content, the selection of movies you could purchase from the iTunes Store was pretty slim. The major studios simply didn't take to the iTunes Store the way Apple had hoped. Rentals, on the other hand, are another matter. The iTunes Store will have movies for rent from all the major motion picture companies, a refreshing change after a year of offerings largely from Disney and its subsidiaries.

The unnecessary umbilical: With the updated Apple TV and enhanced iTunes Store, Apple has cut the cord. In a couple of week you will be able to sit on your couch and, with Apple remote control in hand, rent a movie or purchase a TV episode or hunk of music from the iTunes Store.

5.1 audio: The original Apple TV supposedly didn't support 5.1 surround sound, but that wasn't quite true. If you encoded a video's audio track in exactly the right way, you could get the Apple TV to output 5.1 audio. However, Apple explained that it didn't pass Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround Sound— and audio standard routinely used in commercial movies—through the Apple TV. It now does.

With the updated Apple TV, you can string an optical audio cable between your Apple TV and a digital audio input on your 5.1 AV receiver and videos that include 5.1 soundtracks will play in all their surround-sound glory.

HD: There was also some debate over the original Apple TV's ability to play HD content. If you could find such content and get it onto the Apple TV—an high-def podcast, for example—it would play in a form that fell within the HD specification.

The Take Two Apple TV has the same video specifications. So what's changed? The availability of content. Unlike in the past, the iTunes Store will brim with HD content in the form of rental movies and high-definition video podcasts. Although the Apple TV is limited to displaying 720p HD video at 24 frames per second, guess what? Movies play at 24 frames per second.

Steaming Internet media: Shortly after the Apple TV's release, Apple updated the device so it could stream YouTube content. The updated Apple TV not only continues to stream YouTube videos but can now also stream pictures from a .Mac or Flickr account.

Streaming local media: While you could store media on the Apple TV's hard drive, the device's ability to stream music and audio quickly over a fast broadband or Ethernet connection was impressive enough that savvier Apple TV owners kept their media on their computers and simply streamed it to the Apple TV connected to their television. If you wanted to play media directly from the Apple TV's hard drive, you still had the option by switching sources.

The Apple TV continues to offer the ability to stream media or play it from the device's hard drive, but the updated interface discards the distinction between local and remote storage. Your media is your media—My Movies, for example—and the Apple TV doesn't force you to choose a source. You select what you need and Apple TV plays it—either streaming content stored on a computer or media stored on the Apple TV's drive. Better yet, it can automatically determine which media will work better when stored on the Apple TV's hard drive and sync your media accordingly.

Getting it: Those with strong opinions about the Apple TV fell into two categories—those who had one and loved it, and those who had never laid hands on the thing and didn't understand its appeal. The Take Two Apple TV, with its ability to obtain great looking and sounding content, from the comfort of the couch, is likely to draw many of those from the latter group into the former.

Free Apple Workshops ③

From Jamie Lewis

Mad about movies? Passionate about pictures? Totally into tunes? Our free, hour-long Apple Retail Store Workshops let you extend your knowledge, boost your skills, and meet people that share the same interests. Qualified Mac Specialists present tips, tricks, and advice that'll get you up to the next level.

Check out the website below to see what is available at the local Apple Store located in MacArthur Mall in Norfolk.

www.apple.com/retail/workshops/?cid=CDM-US-Ret-6081B&cp=6081B&sr=em

Why is Hollywood making iTunes Movie customers wait 30 days after DVD release?

01.16.08 -MacDailyNews

All of Hollywood's leading film studios have agreed to sell movie rentals at iTunes, including News Corp.'s 20th Century Fox, Walt Disney Studios, Time Warner's Warner Bros. and New Line Cinema, Viacom's Paramount Pictures, General Electric's Universal Studios, Sony Pictures, Lionsgate and MGM," Louis Hau reports for Forbes.

"Customers at iTunes can rent new releases for $3.99 and older titles for $2.99, with high-definition versions available for an added $1 each," Hau reports. "The rentals are essentially temporary downloads. After an iTunes movie is downloaded, customers have up to 30 days to start watching it. Once they hit Play, they have 24 hours to view the film as many times as they want. The movies can be viewed on video-capable iPods, TVs connected to an Apple TV box and any computer with iTunes."

"To secure the cooperation of the studios, Jobs is demonstrating a level of flexibility that has been noticeably lacking in his prior dealings with media companies," Hau reports.

Before yesterday, "Apple was never able to move on to a full rollout of movie downloads. Disney gave iTunes access to its full catalog of films, but other studios, such as Viacom's Paramount Pictures and Lionsgate, have only been willing to provide some of their titles," Hau reports. "Hollywood's interest in protecting lucrative DVD sales and rentals, as well as revenues from on-demand cable movies, made some studios reluctant to embrace permanent downloads at iTunes."

Apple Shares Decline in Second Day after Anticipated Product Announcements

01.16.08 - Associated Press

Shares of Apple Inc. declined for a second consecutive day Wednesday after the gadget and computer maker made a number of new product announcements, several of which were anticipated.

Apple shares fell $9.40, or 5.6 percent, to close at $159.64. On Tuesday, the stock declined 5.5 percent to finish trading at $169.04.

In the past year, Apple shares have traded between $82.86 and $202.96, passing the $200 mark for the first time in December.

The stock declined Tuesday as company chief executive Steve Jobs unveiled new and updated products and services at the annual Macworld Conference & Expo in San Francisco. New arrivals included movie rentals through the company's online iTunes Store and a new ultra-slim laptop called the MacBook Air.

The movie rental service was widely expected, and the laptop had been speculated about as well.

In a client note Wednesday, Banc of America Securities analyst Craig D. Scott called Macworld "mostly uneventful." The analyst rates Apple shares "Buy" with a $200 price target.

JP Morgan analyst Bill Shope felt similarly, saying in a Tuesday client note that the event was "relatively lackluster" and pointing out that iPhone sales to date came in below his expectations.

Jobs said Tuesday that Apple sold 4 million iPhones in the first 200 days since its release; Shope expected 4.4 million through the December quarter.

"Our expectations, however, were somewhat higher than consensus," he noted.

Shope, who rates the stock "Neutral," increased his fiscal 2008 earnings-per-share estimate slightly to $4.89 from $4.85 but lowered his revenue expectations a bit to $31.02 billion from $31.04 billion.

Goldman Sachs analyst David C. Bailey, who rates Apple shares "Buy" with a $220 price target, said in a late Tuesday client note that the share decline makes for a good time to buy the stock.

Now, focus will shift to Apple's upcoming earnings report, he said, in which he expects upside to his forecast given strong demand for computers, better-than-expected demand for iPhones and solid sales of the company's Leopard operating system.

Apple is expected to issue its fourth-quarter report on Tuesday.

The stock may bounce back a bit after the report, Citi Investment Research analyst Richard Gardner said in a client note, but he said in the first half of 2008 Apple's shares "should be volatile due to iPod seasonality and consumer spending concerns."

"Mac Users: MacBook Air Lacks Features

01.16.08 - Agam Shah - Yahoo News

Steve Jobs wowed the Macworld audience when he unveiled the slim, ultraportable MacBook Air notebook, but users and analysts say its lack of some important features may make it unattractive to buyers.

The ultraportable notebook, launched at the conference and expo on Tuesday, has a 13.3-inch wide-screen display and a full-size backlit keyboard. It uses a 1.8-inch hard drive, also found in the iPod, and a smaller version of Intel's Core 2 Duo processor.

Apple has also developed a program called Remote Disk, with which users can download software from the optical drive of a nearby computer using built-in 802.11n wireless networking. At 3 pounds (1.3 kilograms), Jobs called it the lightest and thinnest notebook on the planet.

Scott Armstrong, a Mac user, was watching the Web for news from the show as Jobs unveiled the notebook, which is .076 inch at its thinnest part and from 0.8 inch to 1.2 inches high, by removing it from a business-size manila envelope. For all its impressive features, it does not meet the needs of Apple's traditional multimedia audience, said Armstrong, who is also president of the Macintosh Users Group in Kennewick, Wash.

One omission is a FireWire communications port, which is necessary to transfer big multimedia files, Armstrong said. Apple has led the effort to promote FireWire, so it's surprising it wasn't included in MacBook Air, Armstrong said. One USB port isn't enough, he said.

The machine lacks storage capacity and, at 4,200 rpm, the hard drive is really slow, Armstrong said. "Most people would like to have features in their laptops. This product is for people who won't need stuff or hook stuff up," Armstrong said.

It may be targeted at students, who could sacrifice features for portability, Armstrong said. "They haven't discontinued the MacBook and MacBook Pro notebook models, so they are doing it for a niche market," Armstrong said.

The Air's novelty value could attract buyers, but the $1,799 starting price tag is too heavy for a machine lacking features.

"They won't stay with this for long, they'll come out with something more innovative with Air," Armstrong said.

The MacBook Air is a mismatch with Apple's price-sensitive customers, such as educators and those who do creative work and require significant storage for music, photos, and video, Citigroup said in a research note on Wednesday. Moreover, ultraportable-laptop users are generally Windows-based PC users, not Mac users, Citigroup said.

While the product could be a long-term success, Apple will produce the laptop in small volumes until more features are added, Citigroup said.

Unlike Asus's Eee PC, the MacBook Air may sell slowly because of its high price point and overlapping functionality with the existing MacBook and MacBook Pro lines, said Shaw Wu, an analyst with American Technology Research, in a research note. However, Apple is adept with product placement, as shown by the iPhone and iPod, where there has been minimal cannibaliza-

tion despite overlapping functionality, Wu said. The MacBook Air may be niche, but Apple could be pioneering the adoption of future technologies such as wireless communication between devices, said Jim Ritz, a Mac user and member of the Apple Pi user group in Rockville, Md.

Users were concerned when Apple got rid of the floppy drive, and now Apple is now betting that the time for wireless networking has come by removing the Ethernet port and including wireless storage, Ritz said.

Adding more wireless features establishes Apple's intent to change the way users look at ultraportable laptops, Ritz said. "I'm curious to see what the notebook looks like a year from now."

Ritz has a plan that will help him afford to buy a MacBook Air, which he wants to try out -- he says he's going to offer to sell his recently purchased MacBook to his wife.

"It's a costly little puppy no doubt, but all new things are expensive," Ritz said of the MacBook Air.

Apple officials could not be reached for comment regarding concerns with the MacBook Air that were raised by Mac enthusiasts and analysts.

Headphone jack — Micro-DVI — USB 2.0

Keynote Speech

Watch Steve wander through the reality distortion field at:

events.apple.com.edgesuite.net/f27853y2/ event/index.html?internal=fj2l3s9dm

Keep your seatbelts fasten!

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