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Apple Tops J.D. Power's List for Smart Phone Customer Satisfaction

04.30.09
Jonathan Seff
Macworld.com



It's easy to be blasé about Apple winning another yet award for the iPhone, but happy customers are never something to take for granted.

And that why it's good news that research company J.D. Power and Associates on Thursday ranked Apple number one among manufacturers of smart phones. In its 2009 Wireless Consumer Smartphone Customer Satisfaction Study—Volume 1, J.D. Power gave Apple 791 points out of 1,000, 40 points ahead of the industry average, and 19 points ahead of LG, Apple closest competitor. Research in Motion, maker of the BlackBerry smart phones, scored 739 points.

The study lists the key factors for residential smart phone owners were ease of operation (30 percent), operating system (22 percent), features (21 percent), physical design (18 percent), and battery function (9 percent).

J.D. Power also found that smart phone users reported sending and receiving an average of 17 e-mails per day using their phones, and 82 percent of owners said they regularly use personal information management features such as address books and to-do lists to stay better organized.

The company conducted its study between July and December 2008, with 2,648 smart phone users who have owned their phone for less than two years.

In November 2008, J.D. Power also ranked Apple number one among business smart phone users.

The Smartphone Wars

04.10.09
Walt Mossberg
Wall Street Journal



The handheld computer is the new PC—the most exciting, promising new platform for running software and connecting to cloud-based services. What do I mean by a handheld computer? Well, it could be one of the new generation of super smartphones, like Apple's iPhone—which pioneered the new generation—or phones powered by Google's Android operating system, or the latest BlackBerries from Research in Motion. Or, it could be a small tablet powered by the iPhone's OS and user interface; by Android; or by other competitors, like Palm's new webOS.

What I don't mean to include in this new class of devices are netbooks running Microsoft Windows, which are just fine, but are really merely small, cheap laptops. Nor do I mean to include the tens of millions of older, less capable, phones labeled "smart-phones," which can be a slippery term.

These devices, like the Palm Treo, older Windows Mobile phones, or older-model BlackBerries, were breakthrough products in their day. But they use wimpier operating systems and less capable hardware than today's new class of smartphones. They do run third-party apps, but these look primitive compared with, say, an iPhone app.

A battle is shaping up in the next few years to see who will dominate this new handheld platform—who will attract the most users and third-party apps?

So, here's a quick snapshot of the strengths and weaknesses of the main combatants in the war for the handheld platform.

Apple

Strengths: Having defined this new class of handheld computers, Apple has a huge head start, with 30 million modern

devices running a powerful and attractive operating system. That includes 17 million iPhones, plus Apple's secret weapon: 13 million iPod Touches, which do almost all that an iPhone does, except connect to the cellphone networks. Apple (AAPL) also has an easy-to-use app store, which is now estimated to hold over 30,000 apps that have been downloaded over 900 million times in just about nine months. The iPhone also offers wireless synchronization via MobileMe and Microsoft Exchange, and has had terrific marketing. And rumors persist that Apple is working on a cheaper iPhone, and/or a larger iPod Touch, in a tablet format.

Weaknesses: Apple has three key vulnerabilities. First, there are millions of people who prefer a physical keyboard, which the iPhone and Touch lack. Second, at least in the U.S., the iPhone is tied to a single carrier, AT&T (T), whose 3G network is still lousy in some major areas. Finally, while the iPhone's \$199 price has been good enough to make it a hit, people in a deep recession might respond better to a lower price, even if it was for a stripped-down lesser model.

Research in Motion

Strengths: The BlackBerry is an icon, beloved by many, with a large installed base estimated at over 50 million. The company has made progress in migrating the BlackBerry to consumers from corporate IT departments. It understands the importance of software, and has launched its own Apple-like app store, with a decent initial selection. It has a robust marketing campaign and is available from multiple carriers. Most models have physical keyboards.

Weaknesses: The new BlackBerry app platform leaves out much of the installed base; it only works on BlackBerry models introduced after the fall of 2006. RIM (RIMM) stumbled with its first touch-screen BlackBerry, the Storm. And its app store, and the apps themselves in many cases, are clumsier and less polished than the iPhone's. Most of all, the BlackBerry

2 desperately needs a major user-interface overhaul. Email addicts who know lots of shortcuts love the UI, but it's very dated for a world where the device must do more than email. There are way too many clicks, steps and menus, and the browser is still weak. RIM has just hired a new user interface guru who worked at Apple and Microsoft, so it apparently gets this problem.

Microsoft

Strengths: Windows Mobile has a large installed base, with many developers who created lots of apps for older versions of the software platform. Microsoft (MSFT) also plans an app store. The company has also launched a wireless synchronization service for consumers, called My Phone. Unlike Apple or RIM, Microsoft has a horizontal strategy, which places its platform on the hardware of numerous handset makers and carriers. The operating system can work with or without a physical keyboard.

Weaknesses: Windows Mobile is old. It is less powerful than the iPhone OS or Android, and has a user interface that needs a major redo. The company laughed off the iPhone phenomenon, and is now late in catching up. A minor new release is planned for this year, but Microsoft is racing to do a complete overhaul of Windows Mobile, called version 7. Unfortunately, that won't be out till 2010. The new app store won't work with current versions of Windows Mobile.

And, currently, Windows Mobile lacks a killer hardware device. The best Windows Mobile phones today are models from HTC that feature HTC's own software, which works to hide as much of the hide-bound Windows Mobile user interface as possible. It isn't clear that apps built for the HTC user interface will work properly on regular Windows Mobile phones, and vice versa.

Google

Strengths: Android is modern and powerful—different from, but in the same class with, the iPhone OS. It has an app store, and excellent wireless synchronization with Google's calendar and contacts. Like Windows Mobile, it's a horizontal product, which can be used on numerous handsets and even tablets or netbooks, some of which are rumored to be in the works. It will

be available on multiple carriers, and can work with or without a physical keyboard.

Weaknesses: The first Android phone, the T-Mobile G1, was clunky and didn't set the world on fire. The Android app store has so far attracted surprisingly few apps compared to Apple's at the same stage. Some users might balk at the tight tie-in with Google (GOOG). Handset makers can build Android phones that aren't tied in to Google services, so it will be important to see how these variants fare. Another problem is that, as versions of Android diverge among handset makers and carriers, app developers may face a compatibility challenge.

Palm

Strengths: With a slug of venture capital money, and the leadership of an ex-Apple exec, Palm has reinvented both its software and hardware, after allowing them to grow stale. The new Palm Pre and its new webOS, which will launch this spring, have impressed those who've seen them, and appear to have a real shot at competing with the iPhone and BlackBerry. The new platform is built for wireless synchronization and third-party developers, and, unlike the iPhone, and some planned Android models, the Pre combines its touch-screen features with a physical keyboard.

Weaknesses: Even if the phone and OS are hailed once reviewers test them, there are many business issues for Palm (PALM). The company is running on fumes, financially, and its launch carrier, Sprint (S), is hemorrhaging as well. That could make it tough to subsidize the Pre enough to compete on price with the iPhone and BlackBerry, especially if Apple does a cheaper iPhone. In addition, Palm will have to mount a costly marketing campaign to match the advertising machines of Apple, RIM and Microsoft. And it may need financial incentives to tempt developers to write apps for the Pre.

Nokia

Strengths: Nokia is the world-wide leader in cellphones, including smartphones (by the loose definition of that term.) It understands that software and cloud services are key, and has launched an online service called Ovi. There are many older apps already for the Symbian operating system that powers most Nokia models, and Nokia (NOK) is working on an app

store. The company is good at hardware, and has huge brand loyalty, at least outside the U.S. And its best known smartphones have physical keyboards.

Weaknesses: Nokia's software has been inferior to Apple's and Google's. To fix this, the company has handed off Symbian to an open-source consortium with a complicated structure. That could make Symbian, and thus Nokia, less nimble than Apple, RIM or Google. Some of Nokia's competitors will also be using this new Symbian, attempting to differentiate their products with user interface and feature differences. Thus as in the case of Android, there's a danger that, if variations of Symbian diverge too much, application compatibility could become a problem. The company also has historically been only a minor player in the very important U.S. market.



Virginia to Use iTunes U in New Education Initiative

04.13.09

Jim Dalrymple, Macworld.com

Last week, Virginia Governor Timothy Kaine launched a series of new K-12 education initiatives that includes Virginia on iTunes U and a program to develop new mobile education apps to help students learn math.

Virginia will use iTunes U—a learning-focused area of the iTunes Store—to share digital content that supports the Virginia Standards of Learning. All material will have to be submitted to the Virginia Department of Education, where an evaluation will ensure the content “maintains the highest standards of quality, accuracy, and relevance.”

Having an evaluation process to ensure quality content doesn't necessarily mean that it will positively affect learning for K-12 students. Virginia's Secretary of Technology Aneesh Chopra told [Macworld](http://Macworld.com) that the initiative calls for follow-ups to

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see how the program is working, as well.

Chopra explained that Virginia is refining the ability to measure individual learning objects, such as content on iTunes U, against the state's assessment framework. He said that school districts will be able to look at why some students are doing better than others and evaluate what is going right and what needs to be addressed.

Governor Kaine has visited every school district in the state, gathering feedback and recommendations on how to improve the education system. iTunes U is part of the initiative, as is a mobile math application challenge.

Led by Chopra, the Learning Apps Development Challenge is seeking developers to submit iPhone and iPod touch apps focused on middle school mathematics standards of learning. Apps that deal with fraction computation, proportions, and the relationship between fractions, decimals, and percents are examples of what the state hopes to get from developers. The application winners will be announced in late June during the National Educational Computing Conference.

"It all starts with a Governor that sets the bar high," said Chopra. "The Governor's challenge allowed us to see what were doing well, and where we needed improvement. This is part of the 21st century learning platform that could have a tremendous impact—we have high expectations for this program."

RESEARCHER FINDS POSSIBLE BUG IN IPHONE

04.16.09
Jeremy Kirk IDG News Service

Famed Mac hacker Charlie Miller has found another possible security vulnerability in Apple's iPhone.

Miller, a principal security analyst at Independent Security Evaluators, is known for his prowess in hacking Apple products, winning the CanSecWest security conference hacking contest two years straight.

Miller detailed his latest find, just discovered a couple of days ago, on Thursday at the Black Hat Europe security conference. The finding refutes what was a commonly-held belief about how an unmodified iPhone works.

Most security researchers thought it wasn't possible to run shellcode on an iPhone. Shellcode is code that can run from a command line, but the iPhone was thought not to allow it for security reasons.

The ability to run shellcode is important, as it would let a hacker do all sorts of malicious actions, such as peeping at a person's text messages or call history of an iPhone from a remote location.

Earlier versions of the iPhone software didn't have many protections to prevent people from tampering with its memory to run other commands, Miller said. But the latest version of the iPhone's software strengthened the overall security of the phone, Miller said.

Miller said he's found a way to trick the iPhone into running code that enables shellcode. To run shellcode on an iPhone, however, an attacker would first need a working exploit for an iPhone, or a way to target some software vulnerability in, for example, the Safari Web browser or the mobile's operating system. Miller said he doesn't have one now.

But if someone did "this would allow you to run whatever code you want," Miller said in an interview after his presentation.

In 2007 Miller and some of his colleagues did find a vulnerability in mobile Safari that would allow an attacker to control the iPhone. Apple was immediately notified and later issued a patch for the problem.

The significance of Miller's find is that it works with unaltered versions of the iPhone as the devices are sold in stores. Researchers have shown a greater ability to manipulate iPhones that are "jailbroken," the term for phones that have been modified to allow installation of applications not vetted by Apple. Those jailbroken phones have fewer protections on the device's memory, Miller said.

Miller said he isn't sure if Apple is aware of the latest issue. Miller stopped short of calling the problem a vulnerability, saying instead that Apple engineers may have overlooked the issue. Apple also has never come out publicly and said it is impossible to run shellcode on an iPhone, he said.

APPLE SNAPPING UP CHIP DESIGNERS



It has hired two former
CTOs of graphics products
from AMD, and has almost
20 lower-level chip design jobs open

04.30.09
Peter Sayer
IDG News Service

A year after buying low-power processor designer PA Semi, Apple is looking for yet more chip design expertise.

The company has been recruiting at a very senior level for its chip design team, and also has almost 20 lower-level jobs related to semiconductor design open, some of them posted to its Web site in the last few days.

In January the CTO of the graphics product group at Advanced Micro Devices, Bob Drebin, left the company to join Apple, where he is now a senior director. (Apple's job titles give little away.) And only last week, reports suggested that his successor as CTO for graphics products, Raja Koduri, had also left the company to join Apple.

The first signs that Apple wanted to beef up its semiconductor design capabilities came with the news last April that it had acquired PA Semi, a company specializing in low-power microprocessor designs based on the PowerPC core used in a previous generation of Apple Macintosh computers. (Today's Macs are based on x86 processors supplied by Intel.) While PA Semi's designs were considered energy efficient, their power consumption was more suited to lightweight laptops than smartphones, which must run for days on a single charge.

Apple is now seeking a range of other silicon design skills to complement the energy efficiency expertise it gained through its purchase of PA Semi.

While desktops and laptops have room for separate processors, graphics chips, memory and chipsets, smaller devices such as smartphones or Internet tablets often combine the processor and the other circuitry on a single piece of silicon, a technique known as system-on-chip (SOC).

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Do you always **double-click**? There might be a better way to take on this task.

You may content yourself with double-clicking on files to open them, but depending on what you're doing, there may be a quicker or more convenient option. Here are 19 different ways to get the job done:

1. Double-click on a file.
2. Select a file and press command-down arrow.
3. Select a file and press command-O.
4. Click on a file in the Finder sidebar.
5. Drag a file onto a program icon in the Finder, in the sidebar, in the Finder toolbar, or in the Dock.
6. Open a file using an Open dialog box by selecting the file and then clicking on Open or OK.
7. From an Open dialog box, drag a file onto a program icon in the Finder, the sidebar, or the Dock.
8. Drag a file, or a file's proxy icon (in the title bar), from the Finder to an Open dialog box, and then select it and click on Open or OK.
9. Control-click, or right-click, on a file and then choose Open or Open With. In the contextual menu, select an application. This is a good way to open a file with a program you don't usually use (for example, with Adobe Acrobat instead of Preview). This works for files in Finder windows or in the sidebar.
10. If you have a stack in the Dock, click on the stack to display its contents, and then click on a file to open it.
11. Select a file in the Finder, press command-I, and then double-click on the file's preview. (You may need to expand the Preview section of the Info window.)
12. If you're in Column view, double-click on a file's preview in the Preview column, if it's visible.
13. If you're in Cover Flow view, double-click on a file's Cover Flow preview.
14. If you're viewing a file in Quick Look, double-click on it, and then press command-O or press command-down arrow.
15. Search for a file in the Spotlight menu (press command-space bar to activate it, and then type your search term), select a file in the list, and then press return or enter.



16. If you've used a file recently, select Apple menu: Recent Items: filename..

17. In Terminal, run the following command: open filename. Make sure to include the path to the file with its name, for example: /Users/kirk/Documents/my_file.

18. In Terminal, run the following command to open a file with a specific application: open applicationname filename . With this command, include the path to the application and the file—for example: open /Applications/TextEdit /Users/kirk/Documents/my_file.

19. In Safari, type a file's path using the following format, and then press enter: file:///Users/username/Documents/file-name.

When to Reset the PRAM and SMC/PMU

04.09.09

MacFixit

PRAM

The Parameter RAM is a small amount of “nonvolatile” RAM (NVRAM) that holds various settings that the system can use before the operating system loads, and maintains these settings even when the computer is turned off. There is a small battery on the computer's mainboard that helps maintain the PRAM settings when power is off.

Many times when people's computers get bogged down and they are experiencing problems, advice will be given to “Reset the PRAM.” In certain situations this can fix things, but many times people just blindly throw that advice out there. Resetting the PRAM may sound like an exotic fix that somehow may magically cure something; however, many times doing this is just a shot in the dark. As such, it's not necessarily bad for the computer, but may lead to customized settings such as alternate boot devices and speaker volumes being put back at default values. If

you have problems with any of the following then a PRAM reset might help you out:

- Volume changes or won't stick.
- Video resolutions not sticking or not all available
- Time zone information and clock settings
- Boot volume isn't set (question mark shows briefly before booting)
- Keyboard repeat rates
- Mouse input rates (click and tracking speeds)
- Default system fonts

Prior to OS X, the PRAM held information for networking, but that has been removed so any network troubles should not be affected by PRAM settings. Sometimes there have been odd problems that have been cured by PRAM resets, including one reported on recently by MacFixit regarding spell-checking not working. It is possible that settings in the PRAM may indirectly affect various system functions like the spell checker, but knowing this is anyone's guess.

If these settings constantly get reset even when you have not manually reset the PRAM, the computer's logic board battery may need replacing.

To reset the PRAM, reboot the computer and hold the **options-command-P-R keys** at the same time. The computer will chime, and then continually reset and chime while these keys are held. Allow it to cycle a couple of times and release the keys and allow the computer to boot normally.

NOTE: Resetting the PRAM may require you to set some settings such as mouse speed and keyboard rates again.

The SMC/PMU

The System Management Controller (Intel Macs) or Power Management Unit (PowerPC Macs) is a chip that manages the power for various system components such as the fans and backlights, as well as the circuits that initiates power to the whole system when you turn on your computer.

Like the PRAM, many people readily offer suggestions for resetting the SMC or the PMU. However, there are specific behaviors that will benefit from SMC/PMU resets, and others that won't. For the most part, the power management in the computer should only be reset if

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you experience problems with seemingly “stuck” settings, or nonfunctional indicators, especially any on the hardware itself (power adapter indicator, or battery life for laptops). The following list of situations are some instances where a SMC/PMU reset can be beneficial:

- Battery isn't charging properly
- Display brightness won't work properly
- Keyboard backlight won't work
- Fans blaring all the time
- Power button not functioning properly
- Closing/opening laptop lid doesn't sleep/awaken the computer
- External ports not receiving power
- External devices not recognized
- Internal components such as Airport or Bluetooth not starting up
- Unexpected shutdown

Disable Favicons in Firefox and Safari



04.24.09
Rob Griffiths, Macworld.com

If you've used a web browser for any length of time, you're probably familiar with favicons—those small 16-by-16-pixel images that appear to the left of the site's address in the URL bar. While many people, myself included, like this little touch of personalization in the URL bar, others would prefer not to see them. Perhaps these users find them ugly, or notice that they can slow down the opening of the bookmarks menu. But whatever the reason, if you dislike favicons, today's tip explains how to disable them in both Safari (3 and 4 Beta) and Firefox.

To disable favicons in Firefox, open the browser and type `about:config` into the URL bar, then press Return. You may then see a warning about how modifying advanced settings may void your warranty; click the “I'll be careful, I promise” button to proceed anyway. You'll now be looking at a long list of preferences, along with their status, type, and value. In the Filter box above the list, type `browser.chrome`; this will greatly shorten the list of preferences.

In the resulting list, double-click on `browser.chrome.favicons` to change its value from true to false. Then double-click on `browser.chrome.site_icons`, to set that preference to false, too. That's it; you're done. From now on, you'll no longer see favicons as you surf the net.

To reset things to normal, just reverse the process—go back into `about:config` and double-click the same two preferences again to set them back to true.

For Safari, first quit the browser, then open Terminal (in Applications -> Utilities), and type this command:

```
defaults write.com.apple.Safari WebIconDatabaseEnabled -bool NO
```

Relaunch Safari, and you'll be browsing favicon-free. To undo this trick in Safari, quit the browser, open Terminal again, and repeat the above command, but replace NO with YES. I've tested the solutions in both Firefox and Safari, and they work as described—though I did reverse the settings after testing, as I really do prefer to see the favicons.

Thanks to `macosxhints` readers `bdash` and `dangil` for these tips.

HOW TO GET AROUND DISK UTILITY'S DIMMED REPAIR DISK BUTTON

04.27.09
Ted Landau
Macworld.com



The First Aid feature in Apple's Disk Utility (`/Applications/Utilities`) represents one of the oldest and most helpful repair utilities available for your Mac. But before you launch the application, a word of advice: To get it to repair your current startup drive, you'll have to jump through some hoops first. First Aid cannot repair an active startup drive. This is why you won't be able to click on the Repair Disk button when you select your startup drive for repair. There are several ways to deal with this issue.

Click on Verify Disk

The Verify Disk button usually works even if Repair Disk doesn't. Click on it if you can. If the results say that everything is OK, you can bypass Repair Disk. Unfortunately, using Verify Disk for the startup

drive is still a bit buggy; you may find that the program stalls and never gives results.

Start up from another drive

Start up from the install DVD that came with your Mac (or a more recent version, if you've purchased one). Select Utilities -> Disk Utility. From here, you can choose Repair Disk for your normal startup drive. Alternatively, you can start up from a secondary bootable drive if you have one with Disk Utility installed.

If First Aid reports that it successfully made repairs, run the utility again. Occasionally, a successful repair uncovers yet another problem requiring a fix. When the results indicate that no further repairs were necessary, you're done.

Use single-user mode

If you can't locate an install DVD and don't have a second bootable drive, you can attempt to start up from your default drive in single-user mode.

To do so, hold down Command-S at startup. If all goes as expected, the Mac enters a command-line mode that looks as if you're running an odd version of Terminal. Happily, you needn't know any Unix to get your job done. All you have to do is type `/sbin/fsck -fy`. The resulting output will be similar to what you see when running Repair Disk from Disk Utility. If the utility reports that your drive is OK, or that it successfully made repairs, type `reboot` and you're back in business.

Kristofer Wildholm's free AppleJack makes single-user mode a bit more user-friendly. If you've had the foresight to install it, type `applejack` at the prompt. From the menu of options that appears, select repair disks. Its other menu choices offer additional repair options.

Try Safe Boot

When you hold down the Shift key at startup, your Mac does a Safe Boot. The directory check this routine performs is essentially the same as running Repair Disk, except that you don't get any feedback as to the results. That means you can't confirm whether your Mac needed repairs or whether repairs were successfully made. Still, as long as performing a Safe Boot cures your Mac, that probably doesn't matter.



If nothing works

If one of the utilities reports a problem but can't repair it, it's time to move up to a more robust repair program, such as Alsoft's \$100 DiskWarrior 4 or Micromat's \$98 TechTool Pro 5.

Skip repairing permissions, most of the time

Disk First Aid includes an option to Repair Disk Permissions. This is a different and entirely separate procedure from Repair Disk. Essentially, Repair Disk Permissions restores to their default values the Unix permissions for all files Mac OS X installs. This can remedy cases where you can't open, move, or delete files because of insufficient authorization. Otherwise, it will likely have no beneficial effect. I rarely bother with it.

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR MAC:

GRAB

MacFixit
04.30.09



In this installation of Getting to know your Mac, MacFixit editors will take a look at a little utility called Grab. Grab lets you take screenshots of your Mac in a variety of different ways. This can be helpful if you are a blogger doing a tutorial or need to show someone an issue you are having for troubleshooting purposes.

Grab features

In the Preferences window you can select which type of pointers (if any) you would like to show when capturing your screenshot. The first box is blank (no pointer). The rest of the boxes can be set to be sure your pointer is telling the viewer what you want them to see.

Enabling the sound (a check box at the bottom of the Preferences window) will confirm your screen capture with a camera-like snap sound.

Grab has four essential types of screen capture:

- 1. Capture a selection.** Using this feature of Grab, you can click and drag a box around the portion of the screen you would like to capture. This is particularly useful if you would only like to highlight a particular part of the screen.
- 2. Window capture.** If you only need a particular window screen captured, this selection is for you.
- 3. Capture your entire screen.** As simple as it gets, capturing your entire screen will give you an image of all your windows just the way they are.
- 4. Capture your screen with a Timed Capture.** This feature is particularly useful when wanting to show parts of a menu. Select the Timed Capture option from the Grab menu bar > Capture, and highlight the menu you would like to have captured. When the timer goes off, your menu will be captured (along with your pointer selection).

You can activate the Image Inspector by press (Command + 1) or by selecting the Grab menu bar > Edit > Inspector. The Image Inspector will provide you with details about your screen capture.

Once you choose your capture method, you can name the resulting image file and place it in a directory. If you would like to change the file format (the default is TIFF) you may do so by opening the image in Preview and selecting "Save As..." from the Preview menu bar > File. Change the file type in the Save as... dialog box and select where you would like to save the new version.

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APPLE CHIPS



Over a quarter of the chip-related vacancies at Apple are related to SOC technology, some of them emphasizing the need for experience in power management.

There are clearly new wireless products in Apple's future plans, although not all the wireless chip design work will be done in-house. The company is looking for a mobile silicon program manager with experience working with multiple vendors as well as internal teams. The post, like

most of the others, is based near Apple's headquarters in Cupertino, Calif.

Apple is also seeking two senior wireless systems engineers in Shanghai to work on integrating wireless technologies into its products. While those two posts list Wi-Fi as the primary wireless technology, they also emphasize the importance of experience with Bluetooth, 3G, UWB (Ultra-wide Band), WiMAX, GPS and Mobile TV systems, and of making multiple wireless systems coexist within a single product.

Making new chips work reliably can be difficult, and a significant proportion of the vacancies Apple is advertising are for verification, testing and quality control positions. Less than a week ago, it advertised for two design verification engineers to ensure the correctness of a high performance chip design.

It's not all chip-chip-chip for Apple's human resources department, though. On Wednesday, the company posted a vacancy in Paris for a programmer with experience of cryptography to work on its DRM (digital rights management) technology.

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR MAC: DIGITAL COLOR METER

MacFixit
05.05.09



As the world becomes more Web savvy, the importance of design is tagging along. It is no longer enough to simply have a Web site, but rather an Internet identity—one that speaks with your (or your company's) voice and tells a story. One of the more important aspects of great design is sensible color selection. To assist your artistic aptitude, Apple has included a simple, yet extremely useful tool to match and replicate colors: the DigitalColor Meter.

The basic function of this tiny utility is to find a color on your screen with your mouse and give you an appropriate color number (or percentage) that you can use in other programs (like Adobe's Photoshop or Illustrator) or in HTML code.

Options include changing the magnification factor of the cursor, the aperture of the sample area, and how the application reads the color you are pointing to. The DigitalColor Meter also offers the capability to copy your color directly to the pasteboard as a color or a text representation of that color.



CNN.com

SciTechBlog
05.04.09

Nature lovers are known for stopping to take way too many pictures. I once got completely lost in a rain forest, for example, when my group crossed a river while I was snapping pics of flowers.

But, if technology has anything to do with it, such trigger-happy photography could result in a boon of scientific information that will help researchers study climate change and biodiversity loss.

Scientists and computer gurus at the Smithsonian, the University and Maryland and Columbia University are developing an iPhone app that would automatically identify plant species from photos of leaves. The app then would shoot that data up to the Internet, where scientists could access it and use it for research.

If it works and catches on, researchers soon could have a robust, global database of plant information. Perhaps that sounds likes a yawner, but think about how much that would help us understand what's happening to the natural world, which is undergoing substantial change. (E.O. Wilson has said we're headed into the "age of loneliness" because so many species are going to die off.)

The app also would encourage everyone to learn more about the natural world, the researchers say.

"The first thing you need to know about any spec is what is its name," said John Kress, a botanist with the Smithsonian. "Once you know its name, it opens up a whole world of information about that organism."

Kress and others plan to start the app with plants from Central Park, and then the northeast U.S. Eventually, as cell phone technology continues to spread,

he hopes the technology will spread to the tropics, where the biology is diverse, but where relatively little is known about plant life.



MACBOOKS SWEEP CONSUMER REPORTS LAPTOP RATINGS

05.04.09
Dan Moren, Macworld.com

Apple's scored itself a trifecta with the release of the June issue of Consumer Reports. If it weren't for the magazine's legendary reliability and highest ethical standards, we might have gone so far as to say that CR had a little crush on the Infinite Loop folks. The venerable publication gave the company top rankings in three of its notebook categories: 13-inch machines, 14-inch to 16-inch laptops, and 17-inch models.

The MacBooks bested their competitors, despite the lower cost of many of the Windows machines rated. The \$2,000 15-inch MacBook Pro, for example, scored a 75 out of 100 compared to the runner up, a \$700 Toshiba Satellite that scored only 64 points.

The 13-inch category in particular was dominated by Apple's laptop line, topped by the unibody MacBook and followed by both the MacBook Air and the white, polycarbonate MacBook. The 17-inch MacBook Pro also got the highest rating of any notebook reviewed by Consumer Reports, scoring 80 points out of the magazine's 100 point scale, and nabbed "Excellent" or "Very Good" in every tested category.

Apple's desktops didn't fare quite as well, but both the Mac mini and iMac took home silver medals in their respective categories, falling behind an Hewlett-Packard Pavilion and a Dell XPS One, respectively. The company also earned the highest marks for computer tech support in both the desktop and notebook categories.

Last month, Apple topped Forrester Research's list of computer companies in customer support and came in first for J.D. Power's list of customer satisfaction in smart phones. The Consumer Reports review gives Apple yet another notch in its belt and ceratinly seems to make it the company to beat in the consumer arena.

REPORT:

FTC PROBING APPLE/GOOGLE TIES



05.04.09
Jonathan Seff Macworld.com

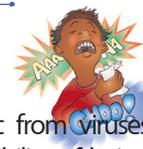
The Federal Trade Commission is investigating whether the close ties between Apple's and Google's boards of directors violates anti-trust laws, the New York Times reports.

The Clayton Antitrust Act of 1914 prohibits a person's presence on the board of two rival companies when it would reduce competition between them.

The story goes on to say that the so-called "interlocking directorates" provision of the Clayton Act, is rarely enforced, but that the FTC has already notified Apple and Google of its interest in the two companies.

Schmidt has been on Apple's board since August 2006, while Levinson has served on the board since 2000.

H1N1



While you protect your Mac from viruses protect yourself from the possibility of being infected with the H1N1 flu virus with info.

The CDC website offers flu information Go to: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu

Medical.nettop20.com links you to 20 websites, from Dr. Koop to the Merck Manual. Get the views of various health experts! Stay informed, stay healthy!!!



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Tom Davis, president
Ray Kallman, vice-president
Jan Cook, treasurer
Brian Fountain, user group ambassador

other panel members

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