

The TarMac Vaporware Gazette

all the news that's fit to download!

A not-so-deeper look at OS X 10.5.8

08.05.09
Rob Griffiths, Macworld.com



Most of the time when Apple releases an OS update, like Wednesday's Mac OS X 10.5.8 release, I'll usually spend that evening examining the update package, trying to find information on what's included in the update that wasn't specifically covered by Apple and its release notes. It's become something of a tradition here at Macworld North—I've written detailed looks at 10.5.3, 10.5.4, 10.5.5, 10.5.6, and 10.5.7.

But no more, it seems—at least not for this update. Apple's own notes do a good job at covering the big details of the items it updated this time out. I did take my usual dive inside the update package's files to see what else might be hiding there. While there is a large list of files that have been updated, the majority of those changes seem to be minor, such as updates to language files.

I did manage to find a couple things that Apple didn't mention that I think are worth sharing:

- The background of the Sharing tab in Address Book's preferences now has striped rows for easier reading. This is big. Huge news. Just remember you read this earth-shattering scoop here first!
- The iDisk icon is now blue, instead of purple. I wasn't too keen on purple, so this is a welcomed change.
- The following Dashboard Widgets were updated: Dictionary, iCal, Movies, Stickies, Stocks, Unit Converter, and Web Clip. I have no idea what's changed, if anything, consider this a challenge!
- There's an updated version of the Apache (web sharing) manual in `/Library/WebServer/share/httpd/manual`.
- The Ruby and Python frameworks were updated, for those of you who work with those languages.

There's also the usual assortment of updated frameworks, changes to time zone files, and minor updates to many Unix programs and/or their help pages. A long list of system extensions are also updated, but trying to figure out what's changed in those would be basically impossible.

Overall, I think Apple struck a good balance between providing too much information and not enough information about the 10.5.8 update; most consumers won't care about the things Apple didn't list, and those who do care probably have the tools to investigate the changes themselves.

I've installed the update on three Macs now, and all three are up and running just fine. If you've noticed any new behaviors, options, or (I hope not) bugs in OS X 10.5.8, please feel free to share.

Sales of cars and homes are foundering but Apple has found steady customers

07.20.09
Brian Caulfield, Forbes.com

Walk into the local Apple store at 10:35 on a Friday morning and you'll notice something different: normal people.

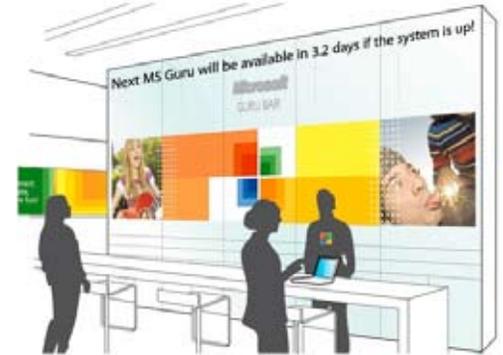
These are not the mutants you'll find trolling Fry's for a new motherboard, a liter of Mountain Dew and packets of beef jerky. These are not the middle-aged potbellied dudes you'll find eyeing the latest big screen television at Best Buy.

These are people like your mom. Among the 20 customers at the store Friday were several older women. One was getting a quick tutorial on how to download digital movies.

What's up with that? I asked my mother-in-law. "There's always someone there to answer your questions," she said of Apple's stores. "I like that."

continued on p.6

Microsoft stores to mimic Apple's with "Guru Bars"



07.24.09
Aidan Malley, Apple Insider

A leaked presentation has exposed Microsoft's tentative plans for its retail stores, and the high degree to which they'll imitate Apple stores, down to their layouts and even the presence of a dedicated "Guru Bar" for help.

A leaked proposal for Microsoft from design consulting firm Lippicott immediately provides hints of an Apple connection with a bright, open layout where the center and edges of the store are dominated by computers showing the "seamless" link between Windows PCs and peripherals. Themed areas would push specific products, such as home theater PCs, netbooks or Windows Mobile and Zune devices.

On closer inspection, though, the influence becomes at times extremely close. The reference store seen by Gizmodo would have a Guru Bar—in some slides labeled as an Answer Bar or Windows Bar -- that would directly copy the Genius Bars at Apple stores and let customers make appointments either for help or just to ask questions. The number of products would be kept to a minimum to avoid the confusion present in stores where most Windows PCs are sold today. Microsoft's outlets would even revive the theater component that Apple has mostly tossed aside: an "event space" at the back of the store would

continued on p.6

Jonathan Ive on the key to Apple's success



07.08.09
Helen Walters Businessweek.com

Jonathan Ive isn't prone to making wild proclamations about design, his boss, Steve Jobs, or Apple, the company at which he's led the design team since 1996. Indeed, he's not really one for speaking in public much at all. So it was with a sense of keen anticipation that a group of 700 or so Londoners descended on the Royal Geographical Society in posh South Kensington to hear Ive in conversation with Sir Christopher Frayling, rector of the Royal College of Art.

During the hour-long chat, Ive touched on many themes and topics. The main takeaway for executives looking to try and copy Apple's success? Don't. Instead, Ive said forcefully and repeatedly, companies need to define their own clear, high-minded *raison d'être*. That should drive the actions and decisions of every employee, from the C-suite down.

For Apple, he outlined, the end game isn't commercial success. "Apple's goal isn't to make money. Our goal is to design and develop and bring to market good products," he explained. "We trust as a consequence of that, people will like them, and as another consequence we'll make some money. But we're really clear about what our goals are." This focus, he continued, has driven Apple to produce only a small number of high quality products. "We try not to bring out another product that's just different," he said. "'Different' and 'new' is relatively easy. Doing something that's genuinely better is very hard."

And while Ive was clearly careful not to point fingers or name names, he was critical of companies that continue to lay emphasis on "new" rather than "better," churning out products simply in order to survive, with no thought of the impact of such rampant production. "It never ceases to amaze me what it takes to develop and bring to mass production a product," he said. "If you don't care, it's just wrong to drag so many resources and so much of people's time through that process."

Ive also had bad news for anyone looking to foster a design or innovation-driven culture within an enterprise that doesn't at

heart "get" it. Unless the disciplines are acknowledged and embraced as core values by every employee, they won't gain traction. "We don't have identity manuals reminding us of points of philosophy for why our company exists," he said of Apple's internal culture. "I'm sure those things are very well meaning, but if you have to institutionalize stuff, you end up chasing your tail." In other words, unless the commitment to innovation or design is authentic and heartfelt, rather than this month's short-term strategy to cater to a hot trend, it will be nigh on impossible to build a true, innovation-led culture (and emulate Apple's success.)

So what does Ive look for when interviewing would-be Apple designers? Belief, passion and a commitment to strive for perfection. "When I'm interviewing people to join the team, the discussions go like this: 'this was my idea, this is how it turned out in manufacturing, and it's rubbish, isn't it? But it isn't my fault,'" he recounted wryly, before becoming serious. "There's a list of excuses and reasons why it was somebody else's fault other than the designer's. Now I understand that, I've been there, I've been frustrated beyond words with other companies when I was working independently. But when you've gone through a whole portfolio like that, at some point you have to say: 'if you really do care about the quality of what ends up getting made, wouldn't you find an answer, some sort of alternative, and somehow figure out a way to take your idea and do something with it?'" It was a great reminder that design is about much more than the studio and the drawing board. Designers need to be fully engaged in a company's overarching mission, and should be resolved to oversee every stage of a product's life cycle, from concept to shop shelf and beyond.

Ive's own commitment to the design process is precisely why, he said, if you don't like Apple products, then you and he have a problem. Well, he didn't put it exactly like that. In delicate Ive speak, this was, "We maybe would have a difference of opinion, but I can say it's that way because that's the way we wanted it to be. There's not an excuse." Now, I know Apple is too often touted as the poster child for successful design-led innovation, but really, how many other corporate design chiefs can make the same claim?

In Browser Wars, The New Firefox Loses Some Edge 2

07.15.09
Walter S. Mossberg
Wall Street Journal



The war of the Web browsers has taken another turn with the release of a major new version of Mozilla Firefox, the No. 2 browser in market share, but No. 1 in the hearts of many of the most knowledgeable computer users.

This new edition of Firefox is the third big new browser release this year, following new editions of Microsoft's (MSFT) Internet Explorer and Apple's (AAPL) Safari. Unlike Firefox, these two browsers come bundled with the two major computer platforms, Windows and Mac. By contrast, Mozilla must convince users to download Firefox, which comes in essentially identical versions for both systems. And it has done a reasonably good job, garnering by most estimates around 23% market share, versus between 60% and 70% for IE, which is by far the leader. Meanwhile, Google, a former Firefox supporter, has joined the battle with its nascent Chrome browser, which so far runs only on Windows, but is due on the Mac one day and is to morph into a whole new operating system next year. And there are other very capable browsers with small user bases, the most notable of which is Opera.

I've been using Firefox since its inception years ago, and have been testing this latest iteration, version 3.5, since it emerged June 30. I can continue to recommend it as a fine way to surf the Web. The new version is improved, and worked very well for me on both my Windows and Mac computers.

But, in this round of the war, Mozilla's product no longer stands out as clearly superior, for two reasons. First, Firefox has lost its traditionally biggest advantage: greater speed than its rivals. While Firefox 3.5 is about twice as fast as the previous version 3.0, and handily beat Internet Explorer 8 in my tests, it lagged behind both Safari 4.02 and the beta edition of Chrome 2.0 a bit in most test scenarios. Overall, Safari was fastest in most of my tests, both on Mac and Windows (yes, Apple makes a little-known version of Safari for Windows).

continued on p.5



Chrome OS may fail even as it changes computing forever

07.17.09

Tom Spring, PC World

Google says it is working on an operating system designed for netbooks that boots in seconds, is impervious to viruses, and is designed to run Web-based applications really well. What's not to like? Plenty—if you're the number one software maker, Microsoft. Expect a showdown. Google faces an uphill battle rolling out its operating system, Chrome OS. The irony is, Google may not care if Chrome OS succeeds or fails. Here's why.

What's amazing about Google's Chrome OS is that, despite what little is actually known about it, its announcement has turned the computer and software industry on its ear. The industry—and consumers—just want to love it. Google says chip makers Qualcomm and Texas Instruments, PC makers Acer and Hewlett-Packard, and software developers such as Adobe are collaborating on designing and building Chrome OS devices.

Google's big bet for the Chrome OS is that it can spur a new market for software, such as Google Docs, that can run entirely in a Web browser. It hopes we will rely on these Web services for storing work files, personal photos, and music on an always-on connected Internet. Want access to your photos or spreadsheets? Easy—just turn on your netbook, and there it is. No longer will we be chained by an ethernet cord to a bulky Windows PC. The Chrome OS future is about lightweight mobile PCs and devices always connected to the Web, giving you instant access to your data and applications in the so-called cloud.

Chrome to ride netbook juggernaut

Chrome OS is hitching a ride on the fast-growing netbook segment of the computer industry. While notebook sales are flat, according to market research firm DisplaySearch, netbook sales are soaring with sales growing by 260 percent worldwide this year alone.

Nothing has been announced, but next year, don't be surprised if HP is selling dirt-cheap Chrome OS netbooks married to a wireless plan from Verizon Wireless.

Sure, netbook makers and wireless carriers are already offering netbook giveaway promotions. But Google will have an advantage because Chrome OS will be free and the hardware requirements for running it are expected to be minimal, letting companies such as HP build ultra-cheap computers.

In this way Google hopes to do for the notebook what Apple has done with the iPhone—revolutionize the wireless industry by creating a Chrome OS device married to a source for apps like the iTunes App Store. Google's next stop after the netbook, it says, is the desktop.

But a lot can happen between now and late 2010, when Google says Chrome OS will be ready.

Chrome OS challenges

First, Google will compete with another operating system, Linux, that has tried fruitlessly to replace Windows on consumer PCs. The Linux camp will give it another go with a Linux variant called Moblin that has the backing of Intel and is headed for netbooks soon. (No specific partners or dates have been announced.) Dell says it prefers Moblin to Chrome OS. Google's Chrome will face another challenge from consumers. Do consumers want bare-bones netbooks tied solely to Web applications? What happens when you're on an airplane or if you can't get a wireless signal at the dentist's office? Privacy issues will also nag Google. How much do we want the company to know about our online and other computing habits?

Next, there's Google's arch-nemesis, Microsoft. Expect Microsoft to lob propaganda grenades at Google's Chrome OS later this year, perhaps with a campaign espousing the virtues of desktop software. That will happen just as it rolls out Windows 7, which Microsoft will be sure to remind us will ship on netbooks as well as desktops. Microsoft won't stop there as it protects its Windows software empire. It will flex its industry might behind the scenes, forcing hardware makers and software developers to reconsider jumping aboard the Chrome OS bandwagon.

Lastly, Microsoft will have its own brand of Web services to push. In July, it announced it would release online versions of its popular Office software to consumers for free. Microsoft is mum on specifics

regarding its Web-based suite of Office apps, stating only that the suite will be available months before Google's Chrome OS is set to launch.

Google's unstated goal

Google's true ambition actually has less to do with building a new operating system and more to do with keeping Microsoft on its toes. By promising to deliver the Chrome OS, the search giant is challenging Microsoft to beat it in a race to a future where online programs can eventually surpass desktop software. Google is also using the threat of the Chrome OS to coax countless software developers to get serious about building Web services that run in the browser instead of the Windows operating system.

Does Google think it can topple Microsoft even on the netbook? It's wishful thinking, but if the company plays its cards right, it won't matter. Even if Google eventually gives up on Chrome OS, it will have forced Microsoft and the rest of the industry to take giant steps toward deploying cloud services. By that time, Google will be just as happy to have us access a Google Chrome Web App Store via a Windows PC or a MacBook as via a Chrome OS netbook.

What we need to ask ourselves is, what's in this for Google? Is Google really trying to make the world a better place with Chrome OS? Maybe, but at the end of the day Google wants to sell ads. Google's Chrome OS allows it to become the ultimate advertiser, owning nearly every aspect of your digital life from the operating system you use to how you search and work online.

Don't expect Google to sulk as it watches Microsoft, Apple, and others attempt to crush the Chrome OS with innovative Web-based services of their own. Google may shed some crocodile tears, but as the obituaries of the Chrome OS flash across browser windows, Google Ad Words ads may just be hawking the latest Web apps.

Windows:
just another pane in the glass.



Time Machine debates: Size of the drive

07.08.09
MacFixit



There are a number of hotly debated topics out there about the use and setup of Time Machine. Before its debut in Leopard, there were relatively few inquiries about backups, but since its inception, all kinds of worries and questions have cropped up about what the best strategy is for using Time Machine. One of the biggest debates out there is the proper size of the drive to use for Time Machine. While there is no doubt that the larger the drive the more you will be able to back up, is having a massive TM drive really necessary?

The questions to ask

There are a couple of questions you need to ask yourself before setting up a Time Machine drive: How much of a backup history do I want, and what files do I regularly manipulate? These two questions then need to be weighed against how you would like to use Time Machine: the options being as a full system backup, or being only as a backup for specified files (by adding undesired ones to the Time Machine “exclude” list).

In answering these questions, you do not need to be specific about calculating sizes of files, but rather give yourself a ballpark figure as to what files you will be backing up. If you regularly manage large media files as a creative professional, for instance, and need a huge history of backups then a large drive will be required. If you are a home-office user and just edit small documents and spreadsheets, then you can get away with a much smaller drive but still be able to have the same number of backups in your backup history as the creative professional. However, if you are not interested in maintaining an extensive backup history and just want to be able to recover the system in the event of a crash, you can get away with having an exceptionally small drive that is just large enough to hold the data on disk and revolve through one backup instance. Granted, this defeats the purposes of Time Machine being able to go “back in time,” but is an option—if nothing more than a temporary one—to get some form of backup going.



If you are unsure about the size of the backup disk to use, the general rule of thumb is to use one that is twice as big as your boot drive and any other attached data drives combined. Despite this, as we just mentioned you can get away with using a Time Machine drive that is only as big as the data on your disks, but remember that if the amount of data on-disk exceeds the capacity of your Time Machine drive at any point, Time Machine will not be able to back up anymore. As such, our recommendation is that you use a drive that is at least the size of your boot disk to avoid this potential error.

Matching your needs to a drive

The key in selecting a Time Machine drive is to note the difference in size between it and your working drives, and then see whether that difference will be adequate for your backup needs (keeping in mind that revolving backups will be dependent on the files you regularly edit, and not the total number of files on your disk). A 250GB boot drive with only 230GB being used (20GB free) and 500GB backup drive will give you 270GB of extra backup space on your Time Machine drive. The same is true for a 750GB boot drive (also with just 20GB free) that is paired with a 1,000GB backup drive: both will have 270GB of extra backup space available. If these two drive combinations are used for identical day-to-day working purposes, they will give you the exact same number of backups.

Considering an example, in our situation here at MacFixit (typing text documents, generating invoices, chatting, e-mail, Web browsing and design, and so on) we have found that it has taken more than six months to fill a Time Machine drive in a setup that has a 160GB boot drive (25GB free) and 250GB TM drive, and have about 90 backup instances on the drive (roughly 24 for the past day, 30 for the past month, and around 36 weekly backups). In this case, for our uses the difference of 90GB between the two drives

is more than enough. If we were to migrate to a 650GB boot drive and a 750GB Time Machine drive (roughly the same difference in size), we would still have adequate room for the same number of backups. Using a 1.5TB Time Machine drive (roughly double our boot drive, as per the “rule of thumb”) would be overkill, and 750GB would be the best option. With the additional space we could store more files (MP3s, movies, and such), but would not need the 90-100GB difference between the two drives to increase for our working purposes.

While this scenario works for office uses, the situation will be different for creative professionals who manipulate much larger files on a regular basis. Each situation will need to be considered differently, but the general rules of thumb for selecting a Time Machine drive may not apply to every user.

Don't have a properly sized disk?

Sometimes people will have several spare drives that they would like to turn into Time Machine disks, but each alone is not large enough to be a properly sized Time Machine disk for their uses. In this case, these people can use Apple’s support of software RAID arrays to concatenate the drives together to make one large drive for use with Time Machine. This is recommended for internal drives because of heat, speed, and stability issues with external drive, but can also be done with external drives if necessary. Read our article on RAID options in OS X for information on setting up a RAID with your drives.

Archive versus Backup

One last thing to keep in mind is that Time Machine is NOT an archive, meaning it is not built for long-term storage of data. Instead, it is a revolving backup solution that will start deleting your old backups once the drive fills up. Despite this, you can take advantage of Time Machine’s “Drive Full” notifications to have it serve as an archive. When it notifies you, if you then replace your Time Machine drive with a fresh one you will be able to start over and store your old Time Machine drive in a safe place. In our 160GB/250GB drive combination, we can replace the drive every six months or so

continued on p.5

Time Machine



as it fills up, and create an archive of TM drives without breaking the bank or having too many drives scattered all over the place.

Setup considerations

Time Machine is built to be a “set and forget” feature of the OS; however, there are instances where general use can cause the drive to be filled up far faster than expected. While it is built to avoid cache file locations and virtual memory files, Time Machine cannot keep track of all temporary file locations, and can inadvertently back up multiple copies of projects, downloads, and virtual machines as small changes are made to them. Here are a few items you may consider adding to the Time Machine “Exclude” list:

- Your “Downloads” folder
- Scratch drives
- Virtual Machine disk images or storage locations
- Temporary or “Incomplete” download folders for Peer-to-Peer connections
- Temporary folders used for DVD burning and ripping

In addition to these, research any temporary file locations for all installed programs and add them to the list.

Rename open files

07.30.09

Rob Griffiths, Macworld.com



What do you do if you’re working on a document, and decide you’d really like to rename it? One option is to use File -> Save As to create a new file with your desired name, and then switch to the Finder and delete the old version of the file. You can also close the file, switch to the Finder, rename the file, and then reopen it.

While both these methods work, in many programs there’s a third option: you can just rename the file while editing it. This trick has worked in the Mac OS for many years, but not everyone knows it’s possible. Note that this trick may not work in every application, so it falls into the ‘try it with a test file first’ category.

For now, try it with TextEdit. Create a new document, put some text into it, and

name it My test file. Leave the file open in TextEdit, and then rename it. You could do this by switching to the Finder, navigating to where you saved the file, then renaming it there. But you can use another old Mac OS trick to simplify the process.

Command-click (in OS X 10.5, you can also use Control-click) on the file name in the TextEdit window title area, and a drop-down menu will appear showing the path to the saved file. Select the folder containing the saved file from the drop-down menu, and that folder will open in the Finder.

Now rename the file and switch back to TextEdit. Notice that the file name in the window title area reflects the new name. That’s all there is to it. If you’re curious as to why this works, it’s because well-written Mac OS applications track files by their reference (a pointer to their storage location) instead of by their path (which would include the file name). A renamed file has the same reference as it did under its previous name, but its path will be different.

While this won’t work in all applications, it does work in many, and can be a nice little time-saver when you need to rename the file you’re currently working with.



Browser Wars

In fact, Mozilla no longer is claiming to be the fastest browser. It now prefers to say it is one of what it calls the “modern” browsers, along with Safari and Chrome, whose under-the-hood technologies make them better at handling a growing breed of sophisticated Internet-based applications that mimic traditional computer programs like photo editors and word processors and spreadsheets.

Second, this version of Firefox has relatively few new features, and some of them are merely catch-ups to those introduced earlier by Microsoft and Apple. Most notable among these is a private browsing mode, first popularized in Safari, and greatly expanded in IE, which allows you to traverse Web sites without leaving traces on your computer to show

what you’ve been doing.

Mozilla says its main goal from now on will be to turn Firefox into the ideal platform for running Web-based applications. It shares the belief, also fervently embraced by Google, that consumers will gradually migrate away from programs stored on their computers’ hard disks to those stored in “the Cloud,” the industry’s term for the servers that run the Internet.

To show this, the new Firefox can do a few new tricks, like streaming video directly from Web pages without requiring plug-ins like Adobe’s (ADBE) Flash. Alas, this works only with obscure video formats little used on the Web at the moment.

Firefox 3.5 does include some new features, in addition to private browsing. It can pinpoint your location, so that any properly configured Web site can serve up locally relevant content. It has a nice option that lets you “forget” any Web page in your history, wiping out all traces you’ve been there, even if you neglected to turn on private browsing mode beforehand. And it can recover your open tabs after a crash.

Also, Firefox continues to lead its rivals in the number and variety of third-party add-ons that enhance browsing in myriad ways, such as adding features to sites like Twitter or making bookmarking easier.

As for speed, I tested Firefox 3.5 against its main rivals by timing how long it took to launch into the same home page, and how long it took to completely load popular Web sites like Facebook and YouTube. I tested how long it took to completely load folders containing numerous sports and news sites simultaneously. I also ran an industry benchmark test that measures the browsers’ speed at handling an important Web language called JavaScript. I did these tests on the same home network on both a Dell (DELL) and an Apple computer.

While Firefox won a few of these tests, Safari and Chrome won more of them. In most cases, the speed differences weren’t large, except in the case of IE, which was dramatically slower than the others. But this is the first new version of Firefox I’ve tested that didn’t win most of the tests.

Firefox is still a great Web browser, and still much faster than its main rival, Internet Explorer. But its edge is being eroded.

A lot of people do. Little wonder analysts expect to see increasing sales--and fat margins--when Apple reports earnings for the quarter ending in June. The report is due out on Tuesday afternoon. Analysts surveyed by Thomson Reuters expect net income of \$1.1 billion, or \$1.16 a share, compared to net income of \$1.1 billion, or \$1.19, during the corresponding period a year ago. Sales are expected to rise to \$8.2 billion from \$7.5 billion.

Earlier this year, Microsoft hired Dreamworks and Wal-Mart veteran David Porter to build its own stores. But there's more to Apple's retail success than just a clean, well-lit space. It's also about a business model with plenty of price points and no loss leaders.

That's why Apple's gross margin is expected to fall just a few tenths of a percent to 34.2% down from 34.8% during the corresponding period a year ago, despite the economic melt-down. It also explains why over the past year, Apple shares have fallen 8.1% to \$151.75 from \$166.29. The S&P 500, by contrast, has fallen more than 25% over the same period.

New products have helped, of course. Apple's latest--the new iPhone 3GS and cheaper, more powerful MacBooks--are selling well, analysts say. On Friday J.P. Morgan analyst Mark Moskowitz said he was raising his estimate for the number of iPhones sold in the June quarter to 4.34 million from 4.0 million, and the number of Macs to 2.5 million from 2.13 million.

Apple, however, is skilled at surrounding customers with products at different--profitable--price points. Just walk into the Burlingame Apple store. You'll find iPhones and iPods on the left, and MacBooks and iMacs on the right. If the \$229 iPod Touch is too pricey, you can try the tiny \$79 iPod Shuffle. The price points may differ, but the Shuffle's margin is fat. That's how Apple can keep chugging away, even as the average selling price of its computers, for example, slid during the quarter ending in March.

Further back you'll find software and accessories such as the Airport Extreme. Then there are the gift cards and accessories from Griffin, Belkin and Nike. Those accessories represent profits piled on top of profits. Not only does Apple sell these gimcracks in its stores, it charges companies licensing fees for the right to design their gear around Apple's products.

Not that it would matter if Apple couldn't put customers in front of all this

stuff. That's where the stores open, airy space works well. Women wander in with dogs on leashes. A middle-aged dude in shorts stops by to ask a question about his phone at the genius bar.

Near the front of the store, a teen in a Def Leopard shirt flexes his bicep as his girlfriend takes a snap with one of the iPhones on display. Time for a little informal market research. Would either of them buy a tablet computer from Apple that is said to be coming? "Not really, for me it's either my iPhone or a laptop," the guy in the Def Leopard shirt says.

"I like something small," his companion, a young woman with a lip piercing says. Who knows though. If Apple were to introduce a tablet, the kids might not understand it. But with a little help from someone at the Apple store, Mom will. She might even buy a few.

"Guru Bars"

continued from p.1

provide a dedicated screen and seating for training sessions or social events.



Lippicott isn't shy about where it takes its cue and shows the positive experiences it sees in other major, if not always successful, retail brands. Apple is held as the best example for its branding, simple layouts, and enthusiastic staff, but others aren't quite treated so kindly. Sony stores are criticized for "uninformed" staff and poor layouts, while AT&T and Nike are also docked for certain weaknesses.

Customers could even set aside parts of the store for paid private events, such as custom group training or, oddly enough, birthday parties.

Where Microsoft would differentiate itself is in the technology behind the shopping experience. Instead of static graphics, a giant store-length display would advertise new products and change with the season or with major launches. Not surprisingly, multi-touch Surface tables would be omnipresent to give shoppers demos of certain experiences, and customers could order computers online or even print custom notebook decals at the store.

As the extensive document isn't necessarily representative of Microsoft's final action plan, it's undetermined just how much of this experience would actually reach the finished stores when they open

in the fall. The slides indicate that the store arrangement may be intended for flagship stores and, by extension, could be scaled back for smaller locations. However, they do corroborate previous reports that the stores will be showcases for Microsoft's ideal vision of computing rather than a store meant to move as much product as possible.

Company executives have previously sworn that the stores wouldn't echo Apple "in the long term" and that the future shops would serve as incubators for ideas other retailers could use to improve their own stores. All the same, the new presentation shows that, at least in the short term, visitors to Apple's shops will find more than a few similarities in what Microsoft plans to offer.



If you can



The **Tarmac Vaporware Gazette**, named in honor of past president Jerry Rowe, is published each month 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.

TarMac "Control Panel"

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

other panel members

- Eleanor Cavin
- Gary Gobel
- Nancy Goldstein
- Cindy Huffman
- Lynn McAlpine

Tarmac By-laws

- If you show up you're a member
- If you speak up you're an officer
- If you stand up you're the president

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