November 2005

Apple Releases New PowerBooks

October 19

Apple today released updates to the 15" and 17" PowerBooks which feature a number of enhancements but still use the same 1.67 Ghz G4 processor. Both models feature improved battery life, brighter screens with higher resolutions (1440x960 and 1680x1050, respectively), the new Intrepid 2 chipset which supports faster DDR2 memory, slot-loading 8x dual-layer SuperDrives and a number of hard drive options, including 7200 rpm drives for those who need the highest performance. The new PowerBooks start at $1999 and $2499, respectively.

The 12" PowerBook remains the same, although Apple eliminated the combo drive model, and moved the SuperDrive model to the $1499 price point.

Visit www.apple.com/powerbook for more information.

Apple Introduces Aperture

October 19

Reprinted from www.apple.com

Designed from the ground up for professional photographers, Aperture provides everything you need for after the shoot, delivering the first all-in-one post-production tool for photographers. Featuring a RAW-focused workflow, Aperture makes RAW as easy as JPEG, letting you import, edit, catalog, organize, retouch, publish, and archive your images more effectively and efficiently than ever before. From capture to output, you work directly with your RAW files, never having to first convert them into another format before viewing, adjusting, organizing, or printing them. And with the most powerful image processing in the world, Aperture is fast — whether you're working with RAW, JPEG, or TIFF images.

Aperture supports the RAW formats from all leading digital camera manufacturers (including Canon and Nikon) and provides optimized support for such market leading cameras as the Canon

EOS 1Ds Mark II, Canon EOS 20D, and Nikon D2x as well as the highly popular Canon Digital Rebel and Nikon D50. It also supports the Adobe DNG format.

Whether you're a fashion, wedding, sports, portrait, fine art, commercial, or editorial photographer, Aperture's color-managed workflow and flexible design tools will help you easily create stunning prints, customized contact sheets, elegant books, and web pages as beautiful as the images you capture.

How A Mac Veteran Spent Veteran's Day

The Tale Of Moving Friends from Windows 98 To A G5
iMac Revision 3 (iSight)

By Bill Davies

Friends of ours recently decided to change from their Sony Vaio desktop computer running Windows 98 to a G5 iMac (Rev 3) running Tiger. Although I did not preach
this change to them, I certainly wanted to do everything I could do to facilitate it. And so I thought it would be interesting to write an article about what I went through trying to make it semi-painless for them.

First, let's talk scope. The lucky couple owned a Sony Vaio desktop PC and wanted to move to a Mac-based laptop with a wireless network in their house. After
reviewing what they wanted and what Apple currently had to sell, I convinced them to wait on the laptop and start with the new iMac G5 revision 3 (iSight). The husband owned an HP-branded iPod but had never put music on the Sony Vaio computer. Instead he would go to his brother's house and buy his music on his brother's Powerbook, so I did not have to worry about getting his iTunes library off the Sony computer, because it wasn't there.

These folks have a fairly tall stack of receivers, Tivos, DVD players, speakers, etc., and so knowing that they wanted to be able to use their future laptop in their back yard, and that they would have digital music, I made a shopping list for them that consisted of the following items:

iMac G5 20" screen

Revision 3 with 1GB of RAM

 Apple Airport Extreme Base Station

Apple Airport Express Base Station

Airport Express stereo connection kit

AppleCare

 Canon Pixma 5200 printer

If you're considering the iMac G5 Rev 3, I would echo other sentiments that I've seen which state that this is not a revolutionary machine, but for those who need
to conserve space or who may be young at heart, the machine is a lot of fun. The screen real estate is utterly gorgeous, and the machine seems plenty speedy for web browsing and e-mail tasks. The white plastic which surrounds the machine is somewhat more pliable than I would like, and smelled like plastic. The Mighty Mouse drove me crazy, although Stan Lunetta tells me that if I had one, I'd love it. I do not like that all the ports are on the back of the machine, and I do not like that this machine is not user serviceable like previous iMac G5 models. So if you're considering this machine, my advice is to load it up the way you'll want it two years from now, because it is going to be a royal hassle to add RAM or a larger
hard disk later. This machine does not cry out "professional" to me, nor does Apple intend it to be professional. It's basically a $2,000 consumer machine, which remains at the high end of the margin, but if you figure the display is worth $700 of that, it is not too bad of a deal. And, I might add, the little remote control that is the size of an iPod shuffle was just a boatload of fun. (A comparable Sony
Vaio desktop, which included a printer, 17" monitor, a built-in TV tuner allowing the user to watch TV, and a full remote control, was in today's BestBuy
advertisement for $1,559. It's not nearly as elegant as the G5 iMac, and takes up more space. I priced a 17" G5 iMac at Apple's online store, and it came out
to $1474 without a printer, and no TV tuner is available pre-installed.)

Heat may be an issue. The machine vents a constant stream of warm air out of the top. On a sixty-five degree Fall day in Davis, we had to open a window after being in the computer den for a couple of hours. If you have a drafty room that needs a space heater, this computer may be the perfect addition!

Enough about the machine. How did the setup go? For those of you who don't want all the bloody details, suffice it to say I arrived at 10am, the Airport base station was connected to their SBC-Yahoo DSL account by 10:30, the new iMac was connected wirelessly by 11:00 (I could not plug it into the Airport base station because the Sony Vaio was connected into that), and I spent roughly the next 4 hours trying to
get the Vaio and the iMac to connect to one another. If you care how I finally got it to work, read on.

Initially I figured that since Macs can connect to Windows shares easily on most networks, I would turn on file sharing on the Windows machine and see if it showed up over on the Mac. I set the workgroup name on both the PC and the Mac to the same name, knowing that Windows likes that. I should add that the reason the people were dumping this machine was that it was randomly crashing, would not recognize its own CD drive, and would not recognize a thumb drive. So let's just say it was messed up before I got there. The Network Properties box appeared to have lots of duplicate stuff there (left over from several Windows installs, Enternet PPPoE software, etc) so it was not entirely clear whether I was even working on the correct adapter or port. To make this long story short, the Windows computer could not see the Mac (with file sharing enabled on the Mac), and the Mac could not see the Windows computer.

We decided to run over to OfficeMax and buy a little ethernet switch, so that both computers would literally be plugged in next to each other and not have to send packets through the Airport base station to see one another. That didn't help.

While we were getting ready to go, and while we were at OfficeMax, I set the Mac to go about importing two years of digital pictures that our friends had never been able to import onto their Windows PC. So I went through three 512MB SD cards and just let iPhoto import away. The pictures looked gorgeous on the screen, and even more amazing was how nicely one of them printed on the new printer. We easily used the little remote control to start up a slide show from across the room.

Back to moving the data from the old computer. Getting desperate, I went back to the Mac's sharing control panel and enabled FTP access. I then launched Internet Explorer on the Sony Vaio, and presto, I was told that anonymous login was not allowed. I then researched the property syntax for formatting an FTP connection with an embedded user name (ftp://user@192.168.1.5 if you care), and once I did that, a box popped up asking for a password. I typed in the password for the Mac home directory I was trying to get to, and the next thing I knew, Internet Explorer on the Sony was displaying a web page with links for Desktop, Documents, Movies, Pictures, and Music. So I was in!

Now I had to actually try to move some data. The problem with Windows is that you won't really know where it all is. I launched their Outlook Express and saw a ton of mail there, but these people said they didn't care if I got their mail to move across. That was probably a stroke of luck most installers won't get. I then went to their contact list and they had 133 e-mail addresses there. I tried to export them as a group as vCards, but Windows popped up a dialog box telling me I had to do one at a time. I did not bring my sleeping bag with me, so I had to find a better way. Finally what I did was to compose a blank message in their Windows Outlook Express program, address it to their account on the new computer, and dragged the 133 contact names into the message body. That worked, and seconds later, the Mac had an e-mail from the Sony containing 133 vCards. I then did "Save all" from the little pop up in the Apple Mail program and saved

them onto the desktop. Finally, I launched OS X Address Book and dragged them into the window, and they instantly imported into the Mac's address book.

The remaining data to be copied was some MP3 files (not from the iTunes store) and some old tax returns and book lists. Fortunately for me, these people did not keep their entire life on the computer, or else they have no life! It was not clear to me whether I could upload to the Mac via the Internet Explorer FTP web page showing the Mac directories, but I clicked on Desktop and Internet Explorer re-drew the screen and showed me the desktop. I then opened a second window behind using the Windows desktop file manager, found a folder of old tax documents, and dragged the entire folder onto Internet Explorer's window. I was nothing short of amazed when the contents of the folder began transferring via FTP and a progress box appeared on the Sony Vaio's screen. Once I determined that this could work, I repeated this process for the remaining tax folders and the MP3 folders. And I wrote down what
I did, so that if they found more things to transfer after I left, they might actually be able to do it themselves.

Now, you might ask, could they open their Word and Excel documents once I got it across? I didn't really get into that. I had suggested they buy Office 2004
for the Mac, but they had declined due to the large purchase they were already making, and said that if they needed to edit one of their Word or Excel docs,
they would just e-mail it to work and do it there. But watching how foreign this machine was to these refugees from Windows, it occurred to me that if they did have Word or Excel installed, they would have something on the computer that was at least familiar to them. Say what you will about Microsoft, but I think when you're going to a totally foreign operating system there is going to be something comforting about seeing Word or Excel on your screen, because you know how those program work, and you know where to find things. Obviously Apple is not going to give away free Microsoft software on their machines, but I think there is a compelling reason to suggest that "switchers" buy some software on the machine that will be least be vaguely familiar to them.

On the iMac itself, I made a few other observations. First of all, if Apple expects a non-techie person to accomplish something like this themselves, they're woefully mistaken. Given the very messed up condition of the Windows installation on the Sony Vaio, in my opinion it was a crap-shoot at best to wonder if I would ever get the two systems to talk, and I wasn't going to sit there and reinstall Windows 98 for them. I could not connect a USB drive, because the computer was so messed up it wouldn't recognize one. My point is that the documentation provided by Apple to do this sort of thing is wholly inadequate, not to mention that the documentation provided with the new iMac for these people, who had not touched a Mac since 1992,
was also completely inadequate. Literally everything on the screen was unfamiliar to these Windows refugees.

On the software side of the Mac, I was interested to note that Apple no longer preinstalls Stuffit Expander or the now-discontinued Internet Explorer. So when I

went to download Firefox or some other application that I wanted to add, I found the Microsoft Word Trial Run launching when I had a .sit file that needed to
open, because Stuffit Expander was not on the machine. Shades of DOS! So if someone were really green and trying to figure out how to decompress some .sit file they just downloaded, they would have a hard time unless they had someone knowledgeable to call. Perhaps Apple's model customer is one who just runs Software Update and doesn't install a bunch of non-Apple stuff on their beautiful new machine?

The Canon Pixma 5200 printer was a breeze to set up and printed beautifully the first time. Much better than my old Epson 980N. The only glitch with the Canon
printer is that no USB cable was provided, but we had purchased one of those on our trip to OfficeMax, so I was ready.

I ended up installing Firefox 1.5 on the machine and making it the default browser, as I like the way that Firefox can now update itself and the end-user doesn't have to do anything except click the button that says "let Firefox update itself" and the rest is automatic. I also found a little RealBasic program that puts the
current IP address in the menu bar. Most people would have no use for this, but as these people may shut down or reboot their two machines, my instructions on how to send files from the Windows machine to the Mac were dependent on the customer knowing the Mac's IP address, so this was why I took that precaution. I also installed Acrobat Reader 7.05 since there is some stuff out there that won't open in Apple's Preview application, but will open with Acrobat Reader. It also gives you the ability to fill out PDF forms embedded in web pages, such as many online job applications.

The iTunes integration with Airport Express was pretty much flawless. I was expecting the Airport Admin utility to detect the Airport Express and ask me if I
wanted it to join an existing network, but to my dismay, the Airport Express added itself as a new, randomly named menu in the Airport menu bar icon, and I couldn't find it until I switched to that network, at which time I could tell it to merge itself with the existing airport network. Nothing terribly hard to do, but if a person weren't paying attention they could have futzed with that setup for a couple of hours. I was also annoyed, and this is something that appears limited to Tiger, that every time I rebooted the G5 iMac, I would need to manually go to the Airport icon in the menu bar and re-join the wireless network. This was after I had typed in the WPA password and told the Mac to remember the password in its keychain. So when I get a call asking me why iTunes can't send music over to the home stereo, the first question I'm going to ask these folks is whether the Airport icon in the
menu bar is black or grey. I think Apple has dropped the ball a bit on this one.

The standout program on the new iMac is Photo Booth, which is a completely silly little application that simulates one of those photo booths at the carnival. A
person could easily waste several hours a day screwing around with this photo-morphing program. Photos are somewhat grainy, and of marginal quality for

enlargement, but even a complete novice will be able to sit in front of the computer, activate the iSight, and shoot a bunch of silly photos of themselves.

All this work left me about 15 minutes to give the happy couple a quick tour, and I felt a little guilty that there wasn't a DVD or something in the box they could watch to find their way around the system. (Wouldn't it be nice to find Terry White's MacOS X Training for Windows Users DVD in the box, or a coupon to get it for $10?) It has been thirteen years since they had a Mac. These are forty-somethings, so they'll figure it out, eventually, but I still think Apple doesn't do much to facilitate switching. I'll probably need to give these folks a Missing Manual book as a homecoming present.

At the end of it all, I asked these people why they had switched back to the Mac, and was told that husband's brother had a Powerbook and an iPod, and the combination was just too irresistible. Husband wanted to be like his brother and join the clan, and sit on the couch with a glass of scotch and a small laptop and surf the web. Which is where it will all end up, although I have recommended waiting until after January 2006 to get a laptop since there's fairly good intelligence that the Apple laptops will be getting slimmer and cooler by February of next year.

How has it gone since I walked out the door? Apparently the Sony Vaio shut down completely and they haven't turned it back on. The Mac locked up once when
they launched FrontRow when iTunes was already playing, and they didn't even know where the reset button was. They called AppleCare, only to find it wasn't a 24-hour operation. They agreed with me that the lack of documentation or getting started tutorials was rather glaring. Other than that, they've already sent me distorted pictures of their faces taken with Photo Booth, and an Amazon gift certificate as a
thank-you present. On the whole, not a bad way for a Mac veteran to put his skills to work.