

# Apple fans greet new technologies

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Step into the Moscone Center on the third day of Macworld Expo and it'd be hard to argue that this computer platform controls only 5 percent of the overall computer market. Throngs of users, sometimes three to five deep, line up in the Apple Computer booth to go hands-on with Apple's recently introduced iMac Core Duo desktop and MacBook Pro laptop, both based on Intel microprocessors.

Wander throughout the show on Thursday and the scene is pretty much the same. Users pack into booths to see demonstrations and ask questions, eager to find personal gems or find something completely new and useful.

When Apple released the iPod video and video content through its iTunes Music Store, it proposed a great idea but a strange reality. The new iPod is a terrific device and its video playback is as smooth and clear as most users could ask for, but despite Apple's sales of hit television episodes through the iTunes Music Store, most people would think twice about watching a full television show on a 2.5" screen.

Enter the Myvu Personal Media Viewer, manufactured by MicroOptical, a firm that specializes in custom electronic eyewear for technical and medical fields. The Myvu glasses, which caught people's attention as they walked by, seemed to be virtual reality glasses people were promised years ago. Small, slim and including small earphones, the glasses function as a full size screen for the iPod video and can connect to other video devices via NTSC cables.

For users needing glasses, the Myvu is designed for long-term wear and offers prescription inserts for people who would otherwise have to remove their glasses to wear the unit. The Myvu, which was introduced on Jan. 10, will be available later this year. Final prices have yet to be determined.

One of the breakout pieces of shareware software for the Mac OS X platform in 2005, Delicious Monster's Delicious Library, became an overnight hit when it allowed users a means of organizing all of their digital and print content via a Mac and a barcode scanner.

Any piece of media with an ISBN number (such as a book, CD-ROM, DVD-ROM or magazine), once scanned, is sorted through Amazon.com. Relevant information such as full title descriptions, reader reviews, bibliographic information, retail price, resale value and quick links to Amazon's seller tools are retrieved, allowing the user to sort media and sell it at his or her discretion.

Delicious Library is scheduled for a free downloadable upgrade at the end of the month that will make it a Universal Binary (compatible with both Apple's older PowerPC processors and Intel's Core Duo processors, which the company is switching its hardware line over to throughout 2006). The upgrade will also include an algorithm that will allow the program to read ISBN labels that would ordinarily be too blurry for a digital camera or barcode reader to recognize. Delicious Library retails for a \$40 software registration fee that allows the user to scan and organize an unlimited number of items.

Sometimes a program becomes more useful than its programmers originally intended it to be. Comic Life, a program developed by Plasq and published for the Macintosh by Freeverse Software, is a good example. Originally developed as a page-layout program for comics, users found the program was excellent for standard page layout.

Extensive support for multiple image formats allows Comic Life to export to Apple's QuickTime movie format, HTML for Web-page development and the more popular file types used in graphic design. A drag-and-drop interface allows users to easily port in any content they may have such as sound, movie and image files into their documents with almost no configuration. Users can also import additional content through an Apple iSight camera or any digital video camera they may already own.

Full integration with Apple's premium .Mac accounts and RSS technology allows users to easily upload their work as functional Web sites while built-in RSS code informed interested users when content was uploaded. Comic Life is available for a \$24.95 software registration and will be bundled with future Apple computers this year.

User feedback to this year's Macworld Expo has been overwhelmingly positive and many attendees have applauded smaller innovations that Apple and other companies have announced. A magnetic power adapter on Apple's upcoming MacBook Pro has drawn accolades as a clever idea, especially if it follows through on its promise of cleanly detaching from the laptop should the unit's power cable become snagged on an edge instead of causing the machine to topple to the floor.

Others felt positively about the show, but felt as if the iPod's presence monopolized some of the event's focus.

"What I've seen here is that they're really selling the iPod and that seems to be their biggest cushion," said Don Coots, a California native and expo attendee. "I think the number one hot item here is all the accessories for iPods and that's what everybody's pushing more than anything else."

Others focused more toward what they saw as positive ends.

"The MacBook Pro, I can't wait to get my hands on one," said Rasheed Hassan, a support technician for the Adler Planetarium in Chicago. "It's my first time here on the west coast. I enjoyed the conferences and picked up a lot of things to bring back to Chicago."

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