

## **Apple's new direction takes foothold**

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For anyone who's watched a nature documentary as a mother bird nudges her young out of the nest or a parent who's fielded calls from a nervous child they just sent away to college, the underlying logic is the same: Change doesn't always come easily, and sometimes a polite shove is necessary.

Last week Apple Computer did more than provide a gentle shove for its user base. The new Intel Core Duo-based hardware that was announced Tuesday in Apple CEO Steve Jobs' Macworld keynote speech ended a 13-year commitment to using PowerPC microprocessors designed and manufactured by IBM and Motorola.



The announcement of the iMac Core Duo and Apple's new MacBook Pro laptop begins Apple's transition away from PowerPC processors to Intel hardware. The change is due to run across Apple's entire hardware line and be completed by the end of 2006.

While Apple's announcement and introduction of new hardware doesn't match the rumors and speculations of the models that would be the first to be transitioned over to Intel-based microprocessors prior to Macworld Expo's beginning, many people see the change as a logical next step.

Apple's iMac, arguably the most popular computer in the company's product line, has been seen as a consumer-level machine, while the PowerBook G4, which has been replaced by the MacBook Pro, has been seen as the high-end portable of choice. Apple's transition to Intel processors for both its consumer and professional lines serves as an open message for change across its entire hardware line, affecting both the casual and high-end user communities with further change to come.

While the transition to Intel hardware has been a shock to some, others saw the change as necessary. Despite IBM and Motorola's efforts toward processor research and development over the years, Apple struggled to reassure its users that its PowerPC processors were as fast as or faster than their Intel counterparts on Windows PCs.

With the G5, the fifth generation of the PowerPC processor, Apple chose IBM to create what it believed to be an excellent microprocessor for its computers. Despite an excellent launch and speedy machines, IBM found it extremely difficult to increase processor speeds at the rate Apple would have liked for its future generations of machines. High temperatures made cooling a significant factor in Apple's desktop machines and impossible for incorporation in Apple's PowerBook G4 laptops.



Intel's Core Duo processor promises what Apple couldn't deliver with its PowerPC line of chips: a steady rate of technological growth, dedicated research and development and the fact that while Apple's developer base will have to convert its programs to Universal Binaries to make them capable of running on both PowerPC and Intel microprocessors, it will become easier and cheaper to develop software for both the Macintosh and Windows operating systems.

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