

Macworld taking off without Apple on board

February 7 2010, by Glenn Chapman

A Macworld conclave devoted to all things Apple gets under way this week without the technology sun around which the annual event has revolved for years.

Long a centerpiece of the cult-like gathering, Apple has opted out of the event and will not be giving a keynote presentation this year that was so popular people queued around the building for seats.

"I am still very excited about it," said Jed Seifert, executive vice president of MusicSkins which makes hip vinyl coatings for personalizing iPhones, iPods, MacBook computers and other gizmos.

"Macworld is all about finding the hottest coolest new stuff out there."

A conference portion begins Tuesday with seminars on succeeding in an Apple "ecosystem" ranging from software applications to cases, ear buds or other accessories for the California company's popular devices.

An expo at which companies show off Apple-oriented creations opens Thursday and continues through the end of the conference on Saturday.

"This will be a thrilling time," predicted Jeannie Mullen of Zinio, a global 'digital newsstand' for Internet Age magazines and books delivered to a wide array of [electronics devices](#) including iPhones.

"The recessionary period, if nothing else, led to a lot of innovation for survival and a pretty great explosion of ideas."

Macworld organizer IDG enhanced the conference line-up in an apparent move to fill the void left by Apple.

Actor and film-maker Kevin Smith will be a "feature presenter," sharing views on using technology to tell stories and create art. Smith's films include "Clerks" and "Chasing Amy."

The list of Macworld speakers includes long-ago Apple employee turned venture capitalist Guy Kawasaki, New York Times technology columnist David Pogue, and John Gruber of Daring Fireball blog.

"Macworld 2010 is an ideal venue for an in-depth discussion about how revolutionary products are still being conceived, designed and delivered for Apple product users," Kawasaki said.

The star presenter of Macworlds past was Apple chief executive Steve Jobs, who wowed crowds by introducing innovations such as the iPhone with a trademark "one more thing" line.

Apple hosted its own event just weeks ago a block from the Macworld venue to unveil a touch-screen tablet computer called the iPad.

"We want to kick off 2010 by introducing a truly magical and revolutionary product," Jobs said during the iPad debut.

Macworld on Saturday will have an iPad Special Event to preview the tablet, which begins shipping worldwide in March.

"Our special event will help demystify the iPad and give users an in-depth look into the future of this product and what it might mean to them," said Macworld general manager Paul Kent.

"End users can learn how the product works and whether it's a buy-now

or wait decision."

Macworld will be a showcase for products built for iPads, according to Mullen.

MusicSkins, which just inked a deal with Cartoon Network to feature characters from popular television shows such as "Aqua Teen Hunger Force" and "Family Guy" on gadget "skins," has the iPad in its sights.

"We are absolutely making skins for the iPad," said Seifert, whose company will be at Macworld. "We are ready to have the skins the second it is released."

The iPad has a 9.7-inch (24.6-centimeter) color screen and resembles an oversized [iPhone](#).

The cheapest iPad model, with Wi-Fi connectivity and 16GB of memory, is 499 dollars while the most expensive -- which includes 3G connectivity and 64GB of memory -- costs 829 dollars.

About 35,000 people are expected to turn out for Macworld, and veteran attendees note that the exhibition floor appears to have shrunk.

Storyist chief executive and former Apple engineer Steve Shepard plans to attend Macworld out of personal interest but his company will not be among the exhibitors for the first time in four years.

"[Apple](#) not being there played into our decision," Shepard said.

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