

# Macworld shines without superstar Apple

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Macworld 2011 at the Moscone Center in San Francisco, California. From star-gazing iPad applications to crystal-encrusted iPhone cases, a universe of products spun off of Apple gadgets flourished at Macworld Expo despite the absence of the sun around which they revolve.

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Attendance was on track to hit 25,000 by the time the annual gathering of [Apple](#) faithful ends on Saturday.

The crowd was down from the 40,000 to 50,000 people seen in years when Apple took part and chief executive [Steve Jobs](#) starred in presentations that included unveiling hot new gadgets like the [iPhone](#).

Apple pulled out of the show in 2010, but engineers from Cupertino,

California-based company still make pilgrimages to Macworld to see what fans and entrepreneurs are making of their products.

"The energy is still really high," said Anna-Maria Pardini, who works for Hewlett-Packard tending to its relationship with Apple.

"The nature of the show has definitely changed," she continued, noting she has attended Macworld Expos for more than a decade. "Eleven years ago there was no iTunes, no iPhone, and until recently there was no iPad.

"You've seen Apple expanding and changing markets, and changing the way we do things," she continued. "It is like never stepping into the same river twice."

Computer titan Hewlett-Packard (HP) makes hundreds of monitors, printers, hubs and other products compatible with Macintosh computers.

Interest was high in HP technology that let people wirelessly connect with printers from Apple gadgets.

Offerings on the crowded expo floor ranged from [data storage](#) devices and computer security services to applications for playing or working on Apple devices.



Macworld attendees browse products at the Moscone Center in San Francisco, California.

SouthernStars.com showed off Sky Safari software that essentially turns iPads into windows into the night sky.

A freshly-launched Sky Wire cable lets people use iPhones to command telescopes to automatically find celestial objects.

The array of iPhone cases included Luxmo designs coated with Swarovski crystals glued by hand in tiger, parrot, skull, frog and other patterns. Prices ranged from \$300 to \$350.

Rhinestone covered Luxmo iPhone cases priced at \$75 dollars were available for fashionable but frugal technophiles.

"Apple people enjoy making a statement," said David Fung of Luxmo.

US+U claimed to have the most functional iPad case, with a cuff on the back as a handle so people could hold tablets single-handed in a fashion similar to paint palettes.

A Waterproof Dry Case was crafted to vacuum seal smartphones in plastic while letting users still plug in headsets to listen to music.

"You could be in a sandstorm or out in the water and not have to worry about it," Jordan Messick of US-based Dry Corp told AFP. "If nothing else survives, at least your iPhone is going to."



Macworld attendees walk through the main expo hall at the Moscone Center in San Francisco, California. From star-gazing iPad applications to crystal-encrusted iPhone cases, a universe of products spun off of Apple gadgets flourished at Macworld Expo despite the absence of the sun around which they revolve.

A Boom application that beefed up sound coming from Macintosh or iPad speakers was among ten products awarded "Best of Macworld" honors on Friday.

Another winner was Ten One Design, a startup that invented Fling joysticks that stick onto faces of iPads with suction cups to provide videogame console style controls.

"Once you get your thumbs on it, you will feel the difference," said Ten One chief executive Peter Skinner. "What we really love about Fling is they are transparent, so you can see your enemies coming from all directions."

The company behind Invisible Shield film that protects touchscreen gadgets from scratching took a best-of award for a Zaggmate aluminum iPad case with a wireless Bluetooth-enabled keypad.

"Zaggmate converts iPad into a netbook of sorts," said Jason Melville of Zagg, adding that the company name is an acronym for 'Zealous About Great Gadgets.'

He closed a co-worker's iPad into the case and dropped it to the floor to make a point about the 99-dollar Zaggmate's ability to protect tablets.

Banners reminded people to mark their calendars for next year's [Macworld](#) event in a clear sign that the independently run event was continuing undaunted without Apple.

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