

# 'Mac' turns 30 in changing computer world

January 23 2014, by Glenn Chapman

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Steve Jobs introduces the iMac personal computer in San Francisco in September 1, 1998, 14 years after the release of the first Mac

Decades before changing the world with iPhones and iPads, Apple transformed home computing with the Macintosh.

The friendly desktop machine referred to as the "Mac" and, importantly, the ability to control it by clicking on icons with a "mouse," opened computing to non-geeks in much the way that touchscreens later allowed

almost anyone get instantly comfortable with smartphones or tablets.

The Macintosh computer, introduced 30 years ago Friday, was at the core of a legendary rivalry between late Apple co-founder Steve Jobs and Microsoft mastermind Bill Gates.

Thousands of Apple faithful are expected for a birthday party this weekend in a performing arts center in Silicon Valley, not far from the company's headquarters in the city of Cupertino.

"The Mac was a quantum leap forward," early Apple employee Randy Wigginton told AFP.

"We didn't invent everything, but we did make everything very accessible and smooth," he continued. "It was the first computer people would play with and say: 'That's cool.'"

Prior to the January 24, 1984 unveiling of the Mac with its "graphical user interface," computers were workplace machines commanded with text typed in what seemed like a foreign language to those were not software programmers.

Credit for inventing the computer mouse in the 1960s went to Stanford Research Institute's Doug Engelbart, who died last year at 88.

"The Mac's impact was to bring the [graphical user interface](#) to 'the rest of us,' as Apple used to say," Dag Spicer, chief content officer of the Computer History Museum in Silicon Valley, told AFP.

"The Mac GUI was picked up by Microsoft, who named it Windows."

The man remembered today as a marketing magician was a terrified 27-year-old when he stepped on stage to unveil the Mac, then-chief

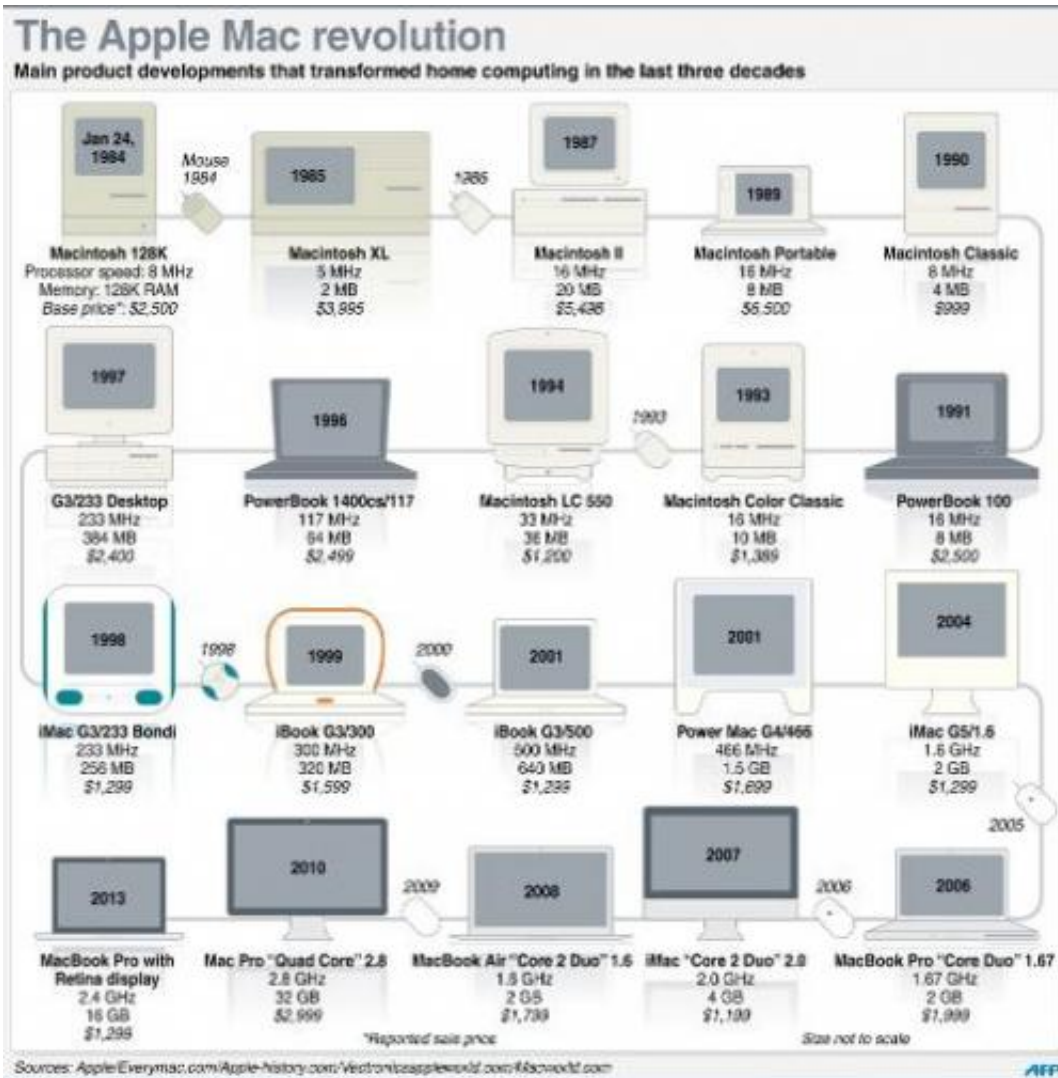
executive John Sculley said of Jobs in a post at the tech news website CNET.

"He rehearsed over and over every gesture, word, and facial expression," Sculley said.

"Yet, when he was out there on stage, he made it all look so spontaneous."

Apple spotlighted the arrival of the Mac with a television commercial portraying a bold blow struck against an Orwellian computer culture.

The "1984" commercial directed by Ridley Scott aired in an expensive time slot during a US Super Bowl football championship in a "huge shot" at IBM, Daniel Kottke of the original Mac team told AFP.



Graphic on the evolution of Apple Macintosh computers since January 24, 1984, when the first Mac was introduced.

"In the Apple board room, there were strong feelings that it was not appropriate; there was a big battle," Kottke said.

"Fortunately, Steve Jobs and his reality distortion field won the day and it left a strong memory for everyone who saw it."

There was a drive to keep the Mac price within reach of consumers in a

market where computers costing \$10,000 or more were typical.

While clicking an on-screen icon to open a file appeared simple, memory and processing demands were huge for the computing power of that time.

"Every time you move that mouse, you are re-drawing the screen," Kottke said. "It is almost like video."

The original vision of launching a Macintosh with 64 kilobytes of RAM and a \$1,000 price gave way to introducing one with 128 kilobytes of RAM at \$2,500.

"Steve really was crazy about details," Wigginton said. "He wanted everything to be just right. Compared to the IBM PC of those days, it is just gorgeous."

Macintosh also arrived with a new feature called "drop-down menus."

"The Macintosh brought a new level of accessibility for personal computing to a much wider market in the same way the iPad did 25 years later," Kottke said.

Mac prowess at page layouts and photo editing won the devotion of artistic types. The release of "hypercard" is credited with inspiring fanatical loyalty to Macs.

"It was the idea that you could create a page on your screen and create links to other pages," Kottke said.

"You could have all your computers networked to share data; it was like a private Internet."



Interim chief executive of Apple Computer Steve Jobs the Power Mac iBook G3 in Paris on September 15, 1999

Macs sold decently out of the gate, but Windows machines hit with a low-price advantage for budget-minded buyers. Microsoft released the first version of Windows in late 1985.

The ensuing rivalry is the stuff of Silicon Valley legend and coffee shop smack talk.

"I think Steve Jobs cultivated a sense of Windows versus Mac," Kottke

said.

"Steve Jobs was always taking swipes at Microsoft, but it really heated up when Microsoft released Windows. He would say they copied us."



Apple Senior Vice President of Worldwide Marketing Phil Schiller announces the new Mac Pro during an Apple announcement at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts on October 22, 2013 in San Francisco

Microsoft took the lead in the home computer market by concentrating on software while partners cranked out Windows-powered machines at

prices that undercut the Mac.

"Really, Apple could well have gone out of business in the late 1990s," Kottke said.

"That would not have surprised people."



Microsoft chairman and chief software architect Bill Gates addresses the media about Windows XP, on February 13, 2001 in Seattle

The rivalry between Microsoft and Apple has yielded to the mobile age, with Google and its Android operating system targeted as the new nemesis as lifestyles center on smartphones and tablet computers.



The original boxy Macintosh with a mouth-like slit below the screen for "floppy" data disks has evolved into a line that boasts slim, powerful laptops and a cylindrical Mac Pro desktop model.

"I am thankful to have been a part of it," Wigginton said.

"Once you go through an experience like that, and it was extremely painful, you look back and every sacrifice is absolutely worth it. It is when Apple leapfrogs in technology that they succeed."

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