WAMUG

Apple News
Alan Webster

After a slow summer, Apple came out with some new and updated iPods. They even dropped the price on the iPod Touch and added color cases to others. More information is below.

The one thing they did not introduce is new computers. The rumor is October 14th and I hope this is true. Macintosh sale have really jumped. They have been helped by the sales of iPods that have introduced the consumer to Apple products. They also have been helped by the popular TV ads with Mac and PC guys. The Macintosh product line needs refreshing to keep the sales up, especially in tough economic times.

Apple's "App Store", the place where programs are sold for the iPhone and iPod touch, has had more than 100 million downloads in just two months time. Some are for sale, but many are free. The iPod Touch is turning into a first class hand-held gaming platform

iPods Updated
from TidBITs.com

As leaves prepare to take color and drop from trees in the Northern hemisphere, so, too, does Apple release its flight of new iPods. This year's revisions settle on one capacity for iPod classic storage, reformulate the iPod nano, and bring new hardware features to the iPod touch. Pricing remains high, in our opinion, showing Apple's confidence in maintaining

its large product pricing margins.

Slimming the Classic Line -- Formerly available in 80 GB and 160 GB varieties (the latter of which was packaged in a thicker case), the iPod classic now sports a 120 GB drive and gleams either in silver or black; it's $249. The new iPod classic supports Genius playlists, but is otherwise unchanged from the earlier version. This may indicate that the iPod classic, and perhaps the hard drive-based iPod in general, is on the way out. 1.8-inch hard drives may be small, but they're less durable and bulkier than flash RAM, and as RAM capacities increase and prices drop, Apple may be looking to move the entire iPod line to RAM-based storage. The problem there lies in the capacity differences; no RAM-based iPod offers more than 32 GB of storage, whereas the iPod classic goes up to 120 GB. No reason was given for dropping the 160 GB iPod classic; perhaps it simply wasn't selling well enough. (The iPod shuffle, unmentioned at the product launch, remains available in two capacities: 1 GB for $49, and 2 GB for $69. You can choose among silver, blue, green, pink, and awareness-raising (PRODUCT) RED.)

A Snazzier Nano -- The iPod nano, as widely rumored, has returned to a long, skinny form factor to make room for a 2-

inch, 320-by-240-pixel screen with LED backlighting. The new glass and aluminum case is curvier and thinner than the older designs. Surprisingly, the iPod nano now includes an accelerometer (much like the iPhone and iPod touch), enabling it to switch from portrait to landscape and back as you change the iPod nano's orientation. You can also shake the iPod nano to shuffle the song selection, a clever feature that drew cheers during Steve Jobs's presentation. Like the other new iPods, the nano can create Genius playlists. Battery life is improved, with Apple claiming 24 hours of music playback and 4 hours of video playback. The new iPod nano supports voice recording via a new set of headphones with a built-in microphone (as well as buttons for play/pause, track skip, and volume control), which is scheduled to ship in October 2008 for $29. Also coming in October are an armband for the nano ($29) and redesigned in-ear headphones with dual drivers (a woofer and a tweeter) for $79. Apple offers the revised iPod nano in two capacities (8 GB for $149, or 16 GB for $199), and in your choice of nine colors – an entire spectrum including silver, black, purple, blue, green, yellow, orange, (PRODUCT) RED, and pink. The 8 GB models are available immediately, with the 16 GB models expected to ship within days. Overall, the new iPod nano seems like a winner. Most people seem happy about the return to the longer, thinner form factor, and the addition of the accelerometer is truly neat. We expect it to sell like the proverbial hot cakes this holiday season.

Touch of Class -- The iPod touch received a significant overhaul as well. Now featuring a stainless steel back, the updated iPod touch is thinner than before, with curves that resemble those of the iPhone 3G. The iPod touch now has a built-in speaker

(which, Jobs emphasized, is not intended to replace the headphones for music listening), external volume controls, and connects wirelessly to a $19 Nike+iPod sensor without needing the separate adapter that was formerly required. That's a big win for people who use the iPod while running or walking for fitness; the Nike+iPod adapter messed with the clean lines of the iPod, especially when it came to shoehorning it into armbands or other cases. The iPod touch is available in 8 GB, 16 GB and 32 GB capacities, priced at $229, $299 and $399, respectively. Those are significant price drops – $70 for the 8 GB model and $100 for the 16 GB and 32 GB models. All three models are now shipping. In comparing the new iPod touch with the iPhone 3G, the big differences (apart from cellular capabilities, of course) are the iPod touch's lack of a GPS chip and a camera, both of which would be awfully nice to have in an iPod touch. Apple is clearly trying to differentiate the iPhone and iPod touch on more than just the capability to make calls, but the now-subsidized iPhone prices confuse that comparison. An 8 GB iPhone 3G costs $199, or $30 less than an 8 GB iPod touch. The 16 GB iPhone 3G and iPod touch are priced identically at $299, and there is no 32 GB iPhone 3G to compare. Of course, you don't have to factor a $75-per-month (or more) cellular service contract into the iPod touch price.

Another Shade of Green -- Jobs made a point of saying that in addition to the new features, the new iPod nano and iPod touch have become more environmentally friendly by ditching PVC, mercury, and BFR, using arsenic-free glass, and being made with easily recyclable materials. That's good, of course, but we would be remiss if we didn't note that the most environmentally friendly thing you can do with an old iPod is make sure that it stays in use as long as possible even if, horrors, that means holding off on buying one of these hot new models until your old one bites the dust.

Spell-Check on the Fly
MacPro Tip

Mac OS X offers a really quick way to check the spelling of individual words in Pages, Numbers, Keynote, TextEdit, Mail, Stickies, and other text-based applications. In fact, you can check spelling on the fly without leaving the application you're using. Here's how. When you misspell a word — or type one that doesn't appear in the standard Apple dictionary, like the city of Tuscumbia, Alabama — Mac OS X highlights it with a dotted red line.
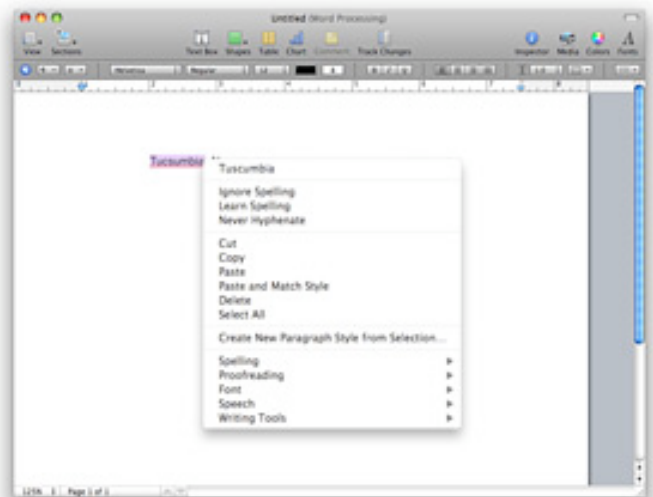
To replace it with the correct spelling, right-click the word with your Mighty Mouse (or select it with your mouse and Control-click the word). A pop-up menu appears, offering a list of possible replacements. Click the correct spelling of the word to instantly update your document. If you know a highlighted term — such as Tuscumbia — is spelled correctly, and you don't want Mac OS X to highlight it in fu-

ture occurrences, choose the Ignore Spelling option from the list. Mac OS X removes the highlighting below Tuscumbia wherever it appears, and won't underline this word again if you use it subsequently in your current document. If you want all text-based Mac OS X applications to know the correct spelling of Tuscumbia, you can customize the Mac OS X dictionary to include this correct spelling of the term. To do so, choose the Learn Spelling option. Mac OS X adds this spelling to its dictionary, and Tuscumbia appears in the pop-up list of correctly spelled terms, whether you're using Pages, Keynote or any other text-based Mac OS X application that uses its spelling dictionary.

By the way, while this shortcut offers a quick way to check the spelling of a single word, you can always check the spelling of your entire document by pressing Command + Shift + ; (semicolon)

The limits of iPhoto slideshows

Reader Barbara Mehlman is underwhelmed by iPhoto's slideshow capabilities. She writes:

I have iPhoto '06 and find that I can create a marvelous slideshow, but I can't do anything with it--cannot post to MobilMe, can't drag to my iDisk, can't drag to my Desktop. If I want to share it, it seems the only thing I can do is export my photos to iMovie and create a mini- movie with my still photos, and then save it and hope my PC friends can see it.

I thought the problem was that I had iPhoto '06, but no. I went to an Apple store and took a free one-hour iPhoto '08 seminar and both the instructor and the Genius couldn't get the

slideshow into a Public folder. I also called Apple Care and they said: Huh? We're not trained on MobilMe. Can't help. Sorry.

Any solutions?

I think it will be helpful to review what iPhoto '08 (since it's the current version) can and can't do with slideshows.

As you suggest, you can't create a slideshow in iPhoto and simply drag the thing to the Desktop. Similarly, when you create a slideshow, the commands under iPhoto's Share menu do you little good. However, getting a slideshow onto MobileMe isn't difficult. You have a couple of options.

The first is to create your slideshow and then choose File -> Export. In the resulting Save As sheet you'll see you have three options for exporting your slideshow as a QuickTime movie--Large (640x480), Medium (320x240), and Small (240x180). The resulting movie will contain all the pictures in your slideshow as well as any music and Ken Burns effects you've added to it. Once you've turned the slideshow into a movie you can do pretty much anything you like with it--and that includes posting it to MobileMe as an iWeb page.

If your main concern is getting your photos online in a way that they can be viewed as a slideshow, you needn't make the slideshow in iPhoto. Instead, create an album of the photos that you'd like do display, click the MobileMe button at the bottom of iPhoto (again, the latest version of iPhoto), and publish that album as a MobileMe Gallery. When people visit that gallery they'll have the option to

view the images as a slideshow. No, that slideshow won't include music nor will it have the Ken Burns effect, but I've found losing both these options no great sacrifice.

Adding 802.11n to older iMac

Reader Frank Blank has drawn a blank in regard to upgrading the wireless connection on an older iMac. He writes:

I have three Macs networked at home through an Airport Extreme Base Station. The MacBook and Intel iMac communicate like greased lightning. Communication with the 2.1GHz iMac G5 is much much slower. Since the laptop, Intel iMac, and AirPort Base Station utilize 802.11n, and the iMac G5 uses 802.11g, is there a way to upgrade the older iMac to the faster wireless speed?

The least expensive way to do this is to eschew wireless on the old iMac and run an Ethernet cable from the Base Station to the iMac. Your iMac's network performance will increase dramatically and its "g" wireless won't slow down the rest of the wireless network.

On the other hand, perhaps you don't feel like completely rearranging your home so that the Base Station and iMac sit near each other. If not, you can upgrade the iMac to 802.11n, but not internally. Apple's n- flavored wireless cards don't work with older iMacs.

You can, however, add 802.11n via USB. For example, Other World Computing sells the MaxPower 802.11n/g/b Wireless USB 2.0 Stick Adapter for $50. Jack it into a USB 2.0

port, install the driver, choose it as the wireless adapter you'd like to use, and your older iMac is communicating at 802.11n speeds.

Senior Editor Christopher Breen is the author of Secrets of the iPod and iTunes, fifth edition, and The iPod and iTunes Pocket Guide (both Peachpit Press, 2005).

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