

'Adam's Apple' - NEW monthly columnist Adam shutes

Have any of you seen the advert for Sky Digital TV? If you've got satellite or cable you're almost certainly have seen it. It's the one which, at the end, goes : 'I've seen the future!'.

Well, having watched Steve Jobs' MacWorld Expo keynote, that's just how I feel. I have seen the future and the future is Macintosh. It happened it 1984, and now it's happened again. Apple Computer Inc. are up and running.

It feels good, really good.

I had a variety of things in mind for this month's chat with you, the reader. A variety of topics were candidates; maybe I could talk about the cyclic behaviour of the computer industry we are in the middle of (and the way it's Apple turn to be on the move again); or maybe I could talk about how the new Yosemite G3s are just sensational; or maybe what my hunch is about the Palm/Apple relationship; or maybe the possibilities for the consumer portable.

But, I'll pass over all of these things, because what really caught my eye in the keynote was games. Not the bonus of Open GL, or the new graphics chips. No, it was that \$50 Connectix Virtual Game Station. AKA MacPlayStation. AKA Wow-mama!

n the face of it a PlayStation emulator for the Mac is quite a coup. You can imagine the headlines or blurb sitting next to the purple iMac in PCWorld (ergh!) or John Lewis..... 'Use your PlayStation games on your iMac'. I would guess it probably wouldn't draw many PlayStation-ers into buying a Mac (though it might), but it will definitely get some useful publicity as well as putting Wintel users to shame. Stick that in your Pentium and

smoke it - cheesos!

However, on top of my measured enthusiasm (I ought to state I'm not a huge fan of PlayStation - I feel that I get more feedback and interaction from my Macintosh, whereas the PlayStation truly is a turn-on, tune-in, drop-out, TV-esque machine) I also have suspicions about the emulator itself.

Recall for a moment: OS/2 Warp and Soft Windows (or RealPC) for Macintosh. Which category of these 2 does MacPlayStation fit into?

OS/2 was IBM's OS which was wayyyy ahead of it's time. It was pretty great, but of course, was dwarfed by the Windows monopoly. IBM's way of dealing with this was to develop a top notch Windows emulator for OS/2. It worked brilliantly - Windows programs ran perfectly.

But what happened was that Windows developers looked at the emulator and thought 'Hey this is great! We can sell to this OS/2 bunch as well, without having to actually write for the new OS.'

Windows 1 OS/2 0.

The end result of all this was that OS/2 faded out, and was bought by Microsoft (I think). IBM are now concentrating on other things....

Now look at Soft Windows. It's a solid emulator for the Mac, but I would guess that there are few if any Windows developers who look at the Mac in the same way as OS/2. They either develop for Macintosh or don't (the fools!). This is mainly because the Mac already has a significant foothold in the OS market, whereas OS/2 did not. MacOS has users, developers, evangelists, has proven applications.

OS/2 was pretty thin on the ground with all of these. There's a Mac market and then there's a Windows-emulation-on-the-Mac market as well. OS/2 lacked the OS/2 market, and so there was just no drive in the OS.

So what's going to happen with MacPlayStation? Will it OS/2 the Mac, or will it perhaps interest a few PlayStation developers in fiddling around with the native MacOS?

It is possible that some developers may take the OS/2 route, and say 'Why should we make Mac games when you can just emulate them?'. Basically ignore the Mac, and continue as solely PlayStation. Some however may take a different route, they may be intrigued by MacPlayStation and may take a closer look at the Mac. Perhaps the incredible power of G3s and G4's as well as the new MacOS X and Open GL combination will spur some development in Mac games.

The real outcome will probably be a mixture of both of these, although the major bonus for the Macintosh overall will be publicity. A PlayStation emulator? On a home PC? I can hear the Wintel world's jaws dropping. This combined with the current general good feeling about the iMacs and Pro Macs is going to provide us with one hell of a ride in 1999.

I have seen the future folks, and the future is Macintosh.

 **Comments?:**

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