

## iche This!

The other day, while ripping around the digital autobahn, I stumbled across an article which jerked me to an abrupt halt. It was a most curious article. Unfortunately I wasn't on my own computer at the time. When I tried to locate the article from home, I had no luck. I wish I could have so you could see this jewel for yourself. The bottom line was that some "journalist" alleging to cover the computer industry claimed that Apple's comeback "is overestimated" because when all things were considered "they only have a niche market." Hmmm...

I tried my hardest to understand his logic, but failed - miserably. Shortly thereafter, a cattle-ranching friend gave me a clue as to what might be going on here - "straight-line" breeding. Yes, straight-line breeding. My friend informed me that straight-line breeding is sometimes desirable in cattle ranching. I was surprised to find that straight-line breeding involves the mating of family members to emphasize certain characteristics. Straight-line as in "there are no branches in the family tree." Holy Deliverance, Batman!

Historians point to straight-line breeding as manifesting itself in a number of negative fashions. The British royal family leaps to mind. I'm reminded of Prince Charles and those high coefficient of lift appendages on the sides of his head which would make a TR-1 envious. Something about the fact that he cheated on a babe like Diana with some android named Ludmilla or Cadaver is most certainly a manifestation of genetic deficiency. Straight-line breeding would certainly explain this.

## ew Wave Journalism?

Since the product of porking your relatives is desirable in the beef and Windsor industries, I thought that the journalism industry might be experimenting with it themselves. This would explain the "niche market" comment, right? I posed the following question to a number of authorities in the field: "Hey, do you dolts sleep with your sisters?" They wouldn't give a direct answer, but the panicked looks swiftly told me that I was on to something here.

At the same time this modern-day Nostradumbass (shamelessly purloined from Dave Every's excellent MacKiDo site <http://www.mackido.com/> ) was demonstrating his mental prowess, the following information was being published: The iMac was the number-one selling computer in the second quarter of 1999.

That little statistic alone doesn't begin to capture the essence of the phenomenal numbers that Apple's racked up lately. One can find various figures for Apple's market share, sliced or diced one way or the other. The bottom line is that they're now scoring around 12% of new computer sales. Or in other words, roughly 1 out of every 8 computers sold are have "Apple" written on them. Nice niche, eh? In fact, this is so good that I keep pinching myself.

Aside from these raw numbers, it's important to recognize that Apple is a special case when comparing sales against the Wintel crowd. Microsoft may have 80% of the OS market (or whatever it is today), but they have exactly 0% of the hardware platform market. Brand X may have 1.3% of the hardware market, but exactly 0% of the software market. It's dangerous, if not out-and-out moronic, to compare Apple's market share without keeping this in mind.

## ouble Your Pleasure, Double Your Fun...

Apple's making money in two different places - hardware and software. When you buy that new Compaq PC (which fewer and fewer people seem to be doing, since Compaq is losing money hand over fist), you're pretty much done with Compaq until you decide to buy another computer from them - if they're still there, that is. But with Apple, they make money from you when you buy a new monitor. Then they come back for more every time you buy a new version of the Mac OS. They make money off you when you buy Final Cut Pro. At the same time Apple's getting better at reducing their costs, so they keep more of every dollar they get from you. You get the picture - one heck of a niche. Throw me in that briar patch!

While it hardly seems possible, the picture just gets rosier from here. Consider this - Apple posted unit growth of over 40 percent. To review: Apple's got the number-one selling computer and is growing at over 40 percent which, by the way, is roughly double IDC's worldwide industry growth rate forecast of 21 percent. I want this niche!

"MacZone," publishers of catalog Multiple Zones, announced that second-quarter 1999 Mac unit sales have increased more than 70 percent over second quarter 1998. This is simply phenomenal, unless you are the result of straight-line breeding. Apple could have sold more had they been able to push products out the door to satisfy demand.

It's a freakin' steamroller, baby!

## i Ho, Hi Ho, It's Off to Sears We Go

I recently accompanied my friend Bob Aldridge to the local Sears store he's supporting as an Apple rep. That store reports good sales of iMacs, the only Apple product they carry. The iMac specialist I talked to told me that he believed sales would be even better if Sears carried software for the Macintosh, or, heck, any software for that matter. They've been burned before by having to write off software that wouldn't move. The young gent told me they only wish Sears would stock the iBook when it's shipped.

Speaking of iBooks, rumors are rampant that pre-sales are simply out of this world. I believe it. The iBook will rewrite portable computing the same way that the iMac changed the desktop paradigm. If anyone doubts that the iMac totally changed the way we approach computers, witness the number of cheap Wintel knock-offs. After much wailing and gnashing of teeth, the same companies will rush to copy the iBook - and every bit as clumsily too. Apple's just hitting their stride and they'll stay two or three steps ahead of the Wintel crowd.

## ake That a Double

From the best I can make of it, this is the first time in Apple's history that they have an actual marketing strategy that doesn't involve hallucinogens. The results will be a huge harvest. Apple CFO Fred Anderson projects that unit numbers will increase in "strong double digits."

"Niche market," eh? I'm dying to see a picture of the "journalist" who came up with that. I bet he's got ears like Prince Charles.

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<http://www.mackido.com/>

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