

Apple's new cat on the block



by Ed Cullinan

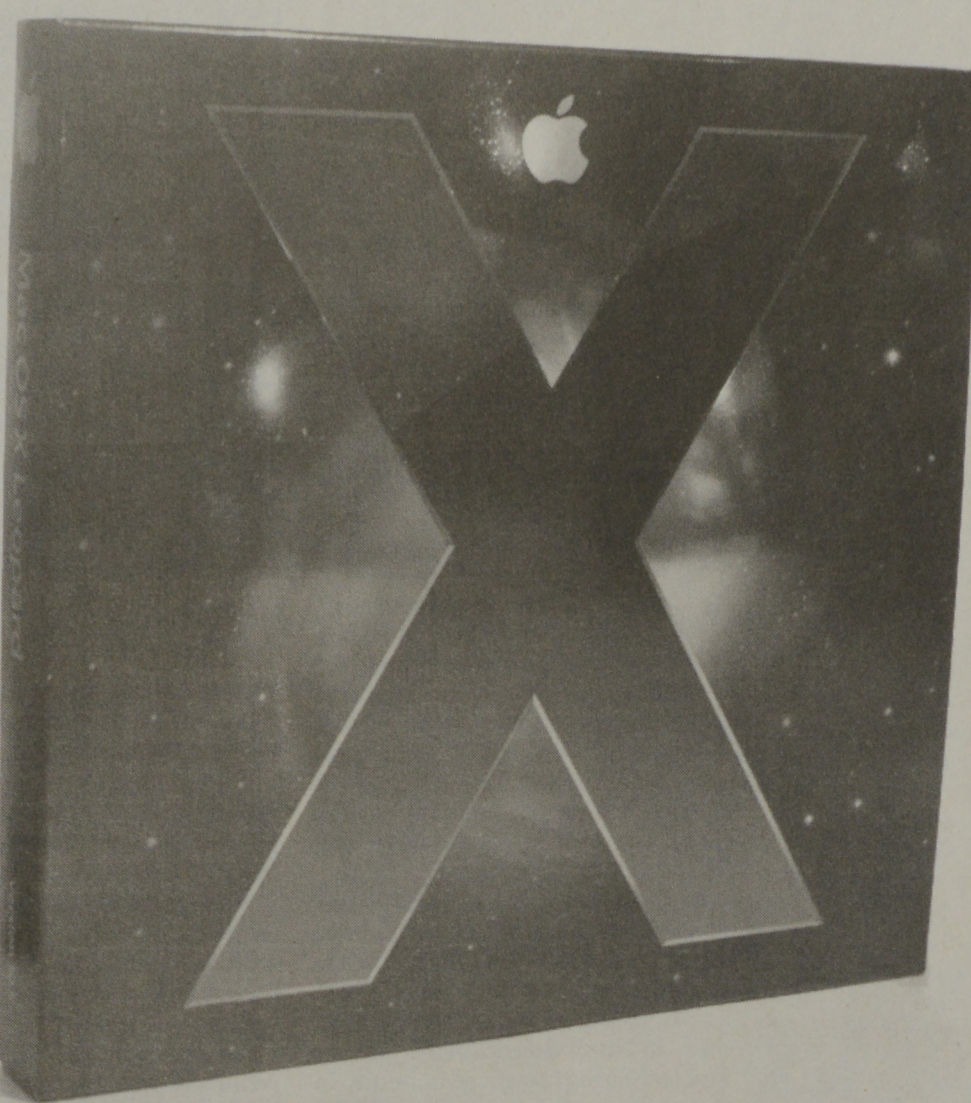
TECHNOLOGY :: a look at Mac OS X Leopard

Six o'clock Friday, October 26, marked the worldwide release of Apple Inc.'s latest operating system, Mac OS X Leopard (v10.5). This is the fifth major installment of the OS X operating system offered by the company in just six years.

Boasting over 300 new features, including tightened security and a fancy new look to the 'Desktop' and 'Finder', Leopard is seen by many as evolutionary rather than revolutionary.

Apple has added a lot of value to its latest release in a way that allows power users to utilize their machines to the best of their ability, while making it simple for the average computer user to enjoy all its features without being overwhelmed. Leopard adds functionality to beauty, and builds on previous applications native to the OS X environment.

Apple reportedly sold 2M copies of Leopard during the first weekend it was available. New features and improvements increase its appeal in the Mac world, as well as to those users looking to make the switch from the Windows platform. With all of the advancements made in Leopard, many wonder whether or not there is room to further innovate. Apple will undoubtedly continue to focus on functionality with style, but when will the next revolutionary jump come?



Andrew Meade / The Brunswickian

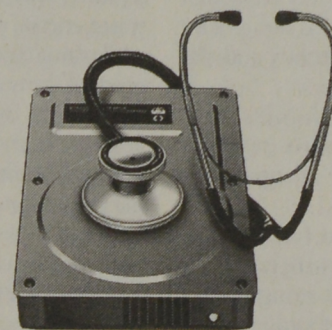
the bad (so far)

BUGS :: early issues and updates

The good most certainly comes with the bad. A few bugs have been discovered within Leopard and the fixes are already on the way. First off, the Firewall has been highly criticized as of late by security experts. It is said that even when activated, the Firewall will allow all incoming connections, trusted or not. This is clearly a problem that eliminates the purpose of even having a Firewall, and Apple has moved quick to regulate problems. After releasing the first Leopard update (v10.5.1) on Thursday, November 15, the company addressed many of the first reported issues with the software, including the Firewall. However, it is not clear at this point how the update holds against the allegations against 10.5.0.

Certain installation issues have

come up over the past weeks since Leopard's availability, including a blue screen freeze-up after installation has completed, blamed solely on 'Application Enhancer', a third party product. This is remedied either through



the terminal or through a clean install of Leopard, disregarding old preferences left behind from the previous OS. The easiest way to avoid installation complications is to perform a clean installation every time, but this

may not be ideal for all users.

Also, Apple has noted that after installing an update called 'Login and Keychain Update 1.0', the computer's AirPort card may not work. The apparent solution is to start up in safe mode (hold the shift key during start up) and then reboot normally.

So what's new?

FEATURES :: inside the box



MAIL

In the past, Apple's own e-mail client, 'Mail', was seen as underpowered and not as capable as third-party applications like Eudora or Microsoft Outlook. In Leopard, Mail has gained stability, speed boosts, and new interfaces that make the whole experience more pleasing. The addition of e-mail stationary; integrated 'Notes' and 'To Do' functions that update into 'iCal', your personal calendar; RSS feeds in your mailbox; and one-step setup brings Mail to the front of the pack. It further interacts with iCal to allow you to create events from your messages, recognizing specific and relative dates like 'Today' or 'next Tuesday'.



SAFARI

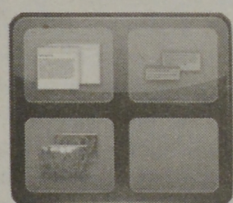
'Safari 3' lets you browse the web at blazing fast speed – twice as fast as Firefox 2 during a fresh launch, and while rendering HTML and JavaScript. Safari includes tabbed and secure browsing and allows you to view your PDFs within the browser. With Leopard, you can use Safari's 'WebClip' to turn any webpage into a widget on your Dashboard that updates automatically, whether on the whole page or just a piece.



FINDER

The new Finder (the Mac equivalent to Windows Explorer) has been given a brand new look that a lot of users are already familiar with from their exposure to iTunes 7. The left-hand navigation system is styled after that of iTunes, making it easily customizable, and very easy to browse. Also added to the Finder is iTunes' stunning 'Cover Flow' view that allows you to flick through your files seeing a fully rendered preview of the document within the Finder.

Shared computers are automatically displayed in the left hand navigation, making it easy to interact with other computers on the same network (with authorization). New to the Finder comes screen sharing, which allows you to interact with a shared computer as if you were sitting right in front of the screen.



SPACES

'Spaces' is a new feature in Leopard that allows you to set up to 16 virtual desktops that can hold any amount of windows for you in any program. Switching between spaces is easy and blazingly fast – very cool for the busy student and very useful for the stressed professional. Although virtual desktops are not new to the computing world, Apple's way of implementing them makes working with multiple windows and/or applications a cinch.



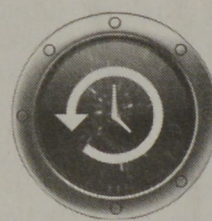
SPOTLIGHT

'Spotlight' search is smarter, faster, and deeply integrated into the entire system. With results that come up as you type, the ability to browse results in Cover Flow, and the power to save specific search queries for future use adds extreme functionality to the search. Spotlight is also in every 'Help' menu, making it easier to find the help you need faster.



DESKTOP

The new Desktop contributes a lot to the look of Leopard and complements the new Finder well. The menu bar has gone from stark white to translucent, allowing your favorite desktop shot to shine through. The Dock now incorporates a new 3D platform look with bright application indicators. The addition of a new wave of folders called 'Stacks' keeps your Dock organized while simplifying the way you get your files. A Stack is a folder that pops open in a fan or a grid and displays the icons and names of your files for you to pick from. All the files go neatly back into order upon closing Stacks.



TIME MACHINE

A new application, 'Time Machine', is a program designed to effectively let you go back in time and restore your files, one-by-one or with a full restore. All you need is an external hard drive with some free space. Apple ruffled some feathers when it nixed a feature it had touted in early builds of Time Machine that allowed a user to back up files wirelessly to a hard drive connected to the company's wireless router, the Airport Extreme.



ICHAT

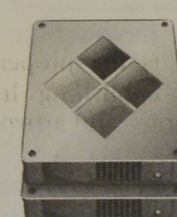
Apple's iChat client is something at which to marvel, but unfortunately, the grip that Windows Live Messenger has over the instant messaging crowd, specifically in this area of the country, will deter its usage in Fredericton. The advantage included in this version of iChat with Leopard is that you can use your Gmail account to chat through the Google Talk platform. iChat's video conferencing is simply amazing – you can chat with multiple people, screen share, share a file in iChat Theatre, and send files much like Messenger. Leopard's internal networking allows you to chat instantaneously with other users on your private network, without having to add them to your list.



QUICK LOOK

Using 'Quick Look', you can launch a read-only preview of your documents in which you can play a movie or slideshow, go through pictures, flip pages in a PDF, scroll through a Word document, or change sheets in an Excel workbook.

Considering running windows?



BOOT CAMP

Of course, we've all heard how you can be running Windows XP or Windows Vista on your new Mac, thanks to the switch to the Intel architecture. With Leopard comes a fully-featured version of Boot Camp that replaces the public beta that was available for the past year. While Boot Camp requires you to reboot your computer to switch drives, it allows for simple partitioning of your hard drive and maps your keyboard and drivers for you. Effectively, it makes it easy enough that anyone can make the installation happen with a little patience. For those who need to run an extensive amount of Windows software, you may consider this option, for others who only want to use one or two programs every once in a while, there is other software that could be more convenient, using virtualization instead of a reboot to get the job done.

CROSS PLATFORM :: windows on your intel mac



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