

Time To Buy a Mac?

By Gregory S. Michaels

As Microsoft Windows continues to evolve the burden of maintaining it keeps getting heavier and heavier. With new security flaws being discovered on a weekly basis we are expected to continuously download and install patches for an already patchy operating system. Viruses, malware, and spyware have reached new proportions forcing Windows users to spend more and more time and money maintaining their computers. In contrast, the Apple Macintosh OS X operating system has been free of viruses since its inception and is just as good or better than Windows for mainstream computing tasks.

The Mac OS X operating system is based on Unix, an industrial strength operating system used predominantly in business, science, and educational environments. Unlike Windows, OS X does not allow hackers to alter its core files and features. Every Mac is shipped with all communications ports closed while Windows leaves some of these ports open allowing hackers to compromise the system. In addition, Macs constitute such a tiny share of the overall world market making them an unattractive target for virus writers and hackers. To do damage to a Mac, malware writers must construct malware specific to the Mac. The Windows viruses they create will not run on the Mac even if received via email by a Mac user. Neither can spyware or Trojan horse programs written for Windows.

Apples new version of its OS X referred to as “Snow Leopard” can easily network with Windows computers and comes packed with lots of features that Windows cannot match. So, you can sit tight, apply your Microsoft updates, and hope that will solve most security issues without breaking something else. Or, if security issues are important to you, you can just buy a Mac.

Mac users still cannot avoid two of the other scourges in today’s computing environment: spam mail and pop-up ads. However, unlike Windows, the Mac’s mail program named Mail has a built in spam blocker while Microsoft’s Outlook Express and Vista’s mail program do not. The new Windows 7 does not even include a mail program. Like Microsoft, Apple does issue security updates. However, they are much less frequent than Microsoft and many times are required to repair flaws in Microsoft programs written for the Mac.

Macs have long been a favorite of the artistic community and anti-Microsoft crowd. However, the big gap in security and malware susceptibility has altered the balance between Windows and the Mac and has made the Mac a viable mainstream alternative to the Windows platform. You will pay as much as 2 to 3 times more for a Mac. But if you’re tired of fighting viruses, malware, and hackers, it may be worth some serious consideration. Of course, if we all go out and buy a Mac tomorrow, the hackers may take notice.

By Line:

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