

From AP Technology

Apple Set to Launch Online Music Service

By Rachel Konrad, AP Business Writer

SAN JOSE, Calif. - Apple Computer Inc. and major record labels are expected to launch an online music subscription service within several weeks, entertainment industry sources said.

The service would allow Apple users to buy and download digital music for their Macintosh computers or iPod portable music players, the sources said on condition of anonymity.

Apple spokeswoman Lynn Fox would not confirm whether the company was preparing to launch a music service, which was first reported Tuesday in the Los Angeles Times. Fox characterized the story as "speculation."

More than a dozen recording industry executives have seen a demonstration of the service by Apple chief executive Steve Jobs, the newspaper said. The service will use a high-fidelity format called Advanced Audio Codec, which delivers higher quality sound than the MP3 format and prevents copying between computers.

Phil Leigh, a digital music analyst at research firm Raymond James, said a subscription service was a

logical step for Apple, given the popularity of its iPod portable players.

None of the three major subscription providers — pressplay, Listen.com and MusicNet — work on Macintosh computers. That leaves iPod users going to free or advertising-supported music services.

It's unclear how much Apple would charge for its subscription, or whether all five of the major record labels would participate in the service.

Pressplay charges a flat fee of \$9.95 a month to listen to an unlimited number of songs from all major labels. Consumers who want to purchase the songs to store them on their hard drive or burn them onto a CD pay an additional fee of 98 cents per song.

"If there's a sticking point with the Apple service, it probably has to do with price and the complexity of the technology," Leigh said Wednesday.

A subscription service endorsed by the record labels

Con't on page 2, Music



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iChat from 30,000 feet

by David Schloss

Here's a riddle. What's more than thirty thousand feet in the air, moving at hundreds of miles an hour, eating a gourmet meal, drinking a glass of Riesling, and is downloading files to his PowerBook at more than 50k/sec?

If you guessed me, you're right.

With the pervasiveness of the Internet these days, there's almost nothing more frustrating than spending a long flight without connectivity. Held captive in a flying cigar tube for hours at a time (in many cases far longer than one would spend at their desk during a work day) it's all a business traveler can do to draft a few emails, and maybe polish a presentation. And what if you forget to download the latest financial data off the company's VPN, or read that last-minute email from the boss canceling the meeting in Berlin.

Relief is in sight thanks to a pilot program that is part of a joint venture between Boeing, Hughes and

Con't from page 1, Music

would mark a major departure from Apple's popular "rip, mix, burn" campaign, which touts the ability of Macintosh computers to easily copy songs and record them to CDs. The recording industry says the campaign promotes piracy.

Online music companies said they would welcome Apple to the growing niche of paid subscription providers. Analysts say as many as 500,000 consumers pay for digital music, but millions more download songs from unauthorized file-sharing networks.

Pressplay, founded by Universal and Sony, has long been interested in a service that supports Macintosh users, company spokesman Seth Oster said. But Apple has refused to use digital rights management technology, which prevents consumers from downloading music and making CDs, Oster said.

Lufthansa called FlyNet. Other air carriers will also work with the Boeing and Hughes venture called "Connection By Boeing" but will have different names for their in-air service.

I was invited aboard Lufthansa's flight 419 from Washington DC to Frankfurt to experience what is bound to be the biggest revolution in air travel since the invention of the single serving liquor bottle. Flight 419 -- and its inbound sister flight from Frankfurt, 418 -- are the first to feature broadband Internet access for the duration of the flight.

This experimental project, which is scheduled to run until April, utilizes a network of Ethernet jacks at each seat in business class (along with a 110V power supply in the armrest), and a Wi-Fi connection throughout the plane. Currently the FAA (news - web sites) has only approved the Wi-Fi cards installed in the loaner laptops that Lufthansa is providing business class customers for the flight, but when the experiment becomes a reality any Wi-Fi equipped laptop should be able to access the Internet.

I decide to spend the flight working on my own laptop -- a new 12" PowerBook -- and forgo the wireless connection rather than use the loaner Windows machine. Before we take off though I turn on my airport and check out the signal, which is strong and clear all over the enormous 747 aircraft. The access points lock out any Wi-Fi card that doesn't have a registered MAC address, so it's impossible to even log on with an unapproved card.

The service is activated about thirty minutes into the flight, so I plug in my PowerBook, and I'm suddenly online. Well not exactly suddenly. The connection to the Internet is made by a proxy server, and requires leaving a pop-up window open. But I'm running Safari with popup blocking enabled, and at first I can't get online.

Once I resolve that, I sign onto iChat (and if you're reading this during my return flight on February 18, you can look for me online at the AIM address "davidinair" starting about an hour after my 1300

Con't from page 2, iChat

departure. That's 7:00 am EST.) and confirm that I'm online. I kick open a connection and start downloading some updates, pulling consistent 50k/sec connections from Apple and some other high speed servers.

There's a slight lag between hitting a page and getting a response, although that's not really surprising since my connection is traveling through the floor (and three miles of cabling) to an onboard Linux (news - web sites) server, which in turn is routing my request to a Hughes satellite orbiting above the earth. And that is getting its connection from terra firma, spinning below me.

And then I'm surfing websites, checking email, transferring files, updating my iCal calendars -- basically I'm doing everything I would while on the ground, just higher up.

The connection only encounters two blackout spots as communications are handed over between satellites, but neither time is it more than five minutes.

It is, I must say, a bit unnerving to be Imming your loved ones during turbulence. I'm pretty sure I upset my wife after I write "aargh. Bummphy fleigfht, canyt typed" or something to that effect, which is the best I can manage as I am jostled about the cabin.

Still the connection runs smoothly despite the rough air, and it is a bit reassuring to know that we aren't moving around so much that we lost contact with the satellite. I spent a good eight hours online but it's impossible for me to tell. I was so lost in chatting

and watching QuickTime trailers that I forgot to be annoyed by the length of the flight.

All throughout the airplane flight attendants and passengers mingled with laptops in hand, surfing from all over the plane. I remember my first flight to Europe years ago where everyone stood around smoking cigarettes instead.

It might be a bit premature to start booking your travel (unless it's for flight 419, which will only have the service until April) if you're looking for broadband. Lufthansa, who is way ahead of other carriers in the roll out process, won't begin to equip their fleet until the beginning of 2004. The process of transitioning the fleet won't be completed until 2005.

There's no reason other domestic or international carriers couldn't roll out a similar service, in fact Lufthansa is encouraging other partners. Each new partner lowers the overall cost of deployment for the satellite services, making it more affordable to those involved.

British Airways will be the next carrier to experiment with the service, and will reportedly be using the in-plane setup developed by Lufthansa.

Connectivity won't come without a price, albeit a rather modest one. Lufthansa executives estimate the service will roll out for something around \$35.00. At that rate the airlines are likely to rake it in hand over fist.

Airport Extreme, indeed.

Technology - MacCentral

Jobs Leads in Tech CEO Approval Ratings

by Dennis Sellers

Recently MacCentral reported that Apple CEO Steve Jobs was among the company leaders being evaluated in Forbes.com's CEO Approval Ratings survey. Currently, the leader of our favorite computing company has the best approval rating of

any CEO in the technology division of the survey, which is admittedly not scientifically or statistically sound.

The survey lets visitors to the ratings Web site vote

Con't on page4, Jobs

Coming soon -- the 'Chameleonic' Mac?

by Peter Cohen

The shape of things to come perhaps: An iMac that glows in a variety of different colors depending on what you like or what's happening in the box. The United States Patent & Trademark Office has noted Apple's application for a patent for something the company calls an Active enclosure for computing device. As described, the technology might make future Macs change their appearance using a light effect.

Published today (Jan 2, 2003), the patent application was filed by Berkeley, Calif.-based Beyer Weaver & Thomas LLP, a law firm that specializes in intellectual property. The firm lists Apple, Sun, Nikon and other major industrial manufacturers as clients. The patent application number is US 2003/0002246 A1, and the inventor's name is listed as Duncan Kerr -- Kerr is a member

Con't from page 3, Jobs

on CEOs' job performance -- and even post a note with their comments. Among the other company heads being evaluated in the technology division are Steven Ballmer of Microsoft, John Chambers of Cisco Systems, Larry Ellison of Oracle, and Carleton Fiorina of Hewlett-Packard.

For February, Jobs had an 84 percent approval rating. Chambers was second with 59 percent, followed by Ellison (53 percent), Fiorina (41 percent), and Ballmer (31 percent). The only CEOs with higher ratings than Jobs were James Parker of Southwest Airlines, who had a 90 percent approval rating in the Airlines division, and Warren Buffett of Berkshire Hathaway, who had 89 percent approval in the Finance division.

Voting is now underway for the March rankings.

of Apple's industrial design team, working with Jonathan Ive and others. According to the record, the patent was filed on February 13, 2002.

With the introduction of the original iMac in 1998, Apple led the way for computer users to customize the appearance of their computers by offering iMacs in different color schemes. With each successive model of CRT-based iMac, Apple offered colors inspired by nature -- first the original "Bondi Blue" models, named after a popular surfer's locale in Australia, then to fruit colors, then to colors named after gems, pigments, and herbs. With the introduction of the flat-panel iMac, Apple returned to a white chassis color alone. This patent could lead the way for Apple to provide iMacs or other computers tinted using light itself -- either in a single color or "a plurality of colors."

Through dense technical and legal language, the requested patent apparently calls for what Apple calls "chameleonic" computers to be built using "an illuminable housing," using a light source comprising Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs). The housing would also contain "a light pipe" used to distribute illumination to spots within the computer's chassis.

The invention goes beyond just changing your iMac's color to suit its surroundings, however. Apple also describes a potentially useful application for its "active enclosure:" Showing you what's going on inside the box. Apple said that its technology could adapt to display input and output, for example. Or, the chameleon Mac could change color to let you know that a specific task or event was taking place.

It's more than just colors, too. Apple said that "dynamic light effects," are possible too, like rainbows, stripes, dots, and flowers, for example. You could turn your Mac into a lava lamp

Gartner Warns Against Buying Uncertified Wi-Fi Devices

By Paul Roberts, IDG News Service

Research firm Gartner Inc. is warning companies to hold off on making investments in 802.11g wireless LAN technology until products can be properly certified by the nonprofit Wi-Fi Alliance.

Jumping on the 802.11g bandwagon may result in interoperability problems with other 802.11g devices, as well as older 802.11b wireless LAN technology, Gartner said.

Like Wi-Fi devices that use the popular 802.11b standard, 802.11g wireless devices operate in the 2.4GHz band. However, 802.11g devices support much faster data transfer rates than those using the 802.11b standard, 54Mbps as opposed to 11Mbps, making them better suited for enterprise network environments.

In February, the Wi-Fi Alliance announced that it would begin certifying 802.11g products after the Institute for Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) approved the final standard for 802.11g later this year, according to a statement released by the organization. The alliance is in the process of developing an 802.11g interoperability test program based on the most recent draft of the standard, it said.

When finalized, Wi-Fi Alliance certification will test both mandatory and optional components of the IEEE 802.11g standard, including the ability to support the 54Mbps rate. Backward interoperability with Wi-Fi certified 802.11b products will be tested, as will performance in mixed 802.11b / 802.11g network environments, the Alliance said.

Compliant products will feature a new element on their capabilities label indicating support for the 54Mbps rate in the 2.4GHz band, the Alliance said.

Despite the lack of a firm 802.11g standard, competition for the high-growth wireless LAN market has prompted hardware vendors to push 802.11g products to market. Those products might not meet the certification criteria for 802.11g operation when those criteria are finalized, leading to interoperability problems, especially in networks using products from more than one vendor, Gartner said.

Certified 802.11g products should be available in the fourth quarter. Until then, Gartner analysts recommend that companies stick to using certified 802.11b devices. Companies intent on purchasing uncertified 802.11g wireless devices or devices that support both standards should pay no more than they would for 802.11b devices, Gartner said.



Palm Adopts New Handwriting Software

by Rachel Konrad, AP Business Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) - Palm Inc. (PALM) will dump its homegrown handwriting software for a system similar to one used on Microsoft handhelds, potentially easing a long-simmering legal dispute and making the machines easier for beginners.

Palm announced Monday that devices shipped later this year will come with a new handwriting recognition system, called "Graffiti 2 powered by Jot."

The Sunnyvale, Calif.-based company developed the new system with programmers at Redwood Shores-based Communication Intelligence Corp.

The original Graffiti, still used on the majority of Palm handhelds, requires users to learn an alphabet developed specifically for entering data into a small screen. To write a "t," a user must write an upside-down "L." An "f" is the mirror image of that upside-down "L."

The system, although efficient in its use of one-stroke letters, often infuriates new users.

The new system will use two or more strokes for

some letters, similar to natural handwriting. For example, "t" will be two crossbar strokes.

"It's more natural, especially for someone who's never picked up a handheld," said Michael Higashi, a director of marketing at PalmSource Inc., which builds Palm's operating system. "That's good because we see this market in its young state, and ... by removing that barrier, people can be immediately productive on a Palm handheld."

Microsoft also uses a handwriting system created by Communication Intelligence Corp. for its PocketPC handhelds.

Graffiti 2 may get Palm out of a six-year legal battle. Xerox sued Palm in 1997, claiming Palm derived Graffiti from a Xerox patent for computerized handwriting. A federal judge dismissed the case, but Xerox won a reversal. A federal appeals court heard the case Jan. 6 but has not yet issued a ruling.

The lawsuit prompted Palm to seek alternative handwriting systems, but the company picked Graffiti 2 because people in focus groups liked it more than Palm's original, Palm spokeswoman Marlene Somsak said.

Technology - MacCentral

Apple releases Mac OS X 10.2.4

by Jim Dalrymple

Apple Computer Inc. on issued an update for its Mac OS X operating system. The 10.2.4 update addresses issues related to reliability for built-in applications and services, and more. It's available for download through the Software Update system preference pane.

According to Apple, the Mac OS X update enhances Address Book, Classic compatibility, Finder, FireWire, graphics, OpenGL and Sherlock all feature improved functionality and reliability under this new release. AFP and Windows file service improvements have been made, and audio,

disc recording, graphics and printing improvements abound as well.

Apple currently has approximately 5,000 native Mac OS X applications available for the reported 5 million Mac OS X users that have switched to the operating system. Apple CEO Steve Jobs said during last months Macworld keynote that the company is hoping for 9 - 10 million users by the end of 2003.

Several applications have been recently released specifically for Mac OS X, including iLife, Keynote, Final Cut Express and the company's newest Web browser, Safari.

Mac Tips from MacWorld

by Chris Breen

FireWire Target Disk Mode

One of the most oft-neglected (and most useful) features found in modern-day Macs is FireWire Target Disk Mode -- a technique for mounting another Mac's hard drive via a FireWire connection. To employ FireWire Target Disk Mode first string a 6-pin-to-6-pin FireWire cable between two compatible Macs (the Blue & White Power Mac G3 and Power Mac G4 [PCI] are not compatible). The "target" Mac (the Mac that contains the hard drive you want to access from the host computer) must be switched off.

Switch on the target Mac and hold down the T key on its keyboard. In short order a FireWire symbol will appear on its screen and the target drive will mount on the host Mac's Desktop as a local hard drive. Once mounted you can copy files between the two Macs or troubleshoot the target drive from the host computer.

A few notes: For target disk mode to work the target drive must be an ATA hard drive set at ATA bus 0 and an Open Firmware password on the target drive must not be enabled. Also, to establish contact between certain Macs via Target Disk Mode, you may need to unplug and replug the FireWire cable when both Macs are running

The Update on Updates

Occasionally Apple is a little cagey about what its OS X updates update. If you'd like to get the low-down on exactly what an update has installed, download the update from Apple's website (rather than using Software Update) and install it. Before you quit the Installer (to restart your Mac, for example), select Show Files from the Installer's File menu. In the resulting window you'll see a list of the files installed on your Mac.

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This month's newsletter editor was Joe Williams



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