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WWDC 2002

Tim O'Reilly on the Future of Mac OS X Computing

More than six hundred WWDC attendees listened to noted publisher Tim O'Reilly explain how the rules are changing for software development, and why the open source world and Mac OS X are where developers should be looking in the future.

In a talk titled, "Watching the Alpha Geeks," O'Reilly stated that disruptive innovation is again changing the computing landscape, as innovators and hackers are using the Web, wireless communication and built-in services to push aside the old paradigms. According to O'Reilly, information is being distributed more widely, reused in new ways, and applications are being built into the platform. O'Reilly painted a picture where there is less focus on ownership and more on letting the user determine an evolving "architecture of participation."

The founder and president of O'Reilly and Associates, and a long-time advocate of open source distribution, O'Reilly has become a strong advocate of the new Macintosh operating system, stating, "Mac OS X is a fantastic platform, with the future built-in." O'Reilly admitted he is "thrilled with what I see from Apple," from its (Apple's) commitment to open source software, and Steve Jobs' championing fair use rights for consumers, to the announcements at this conference on the new features included in Jaguar.

As a sign of his company's commitment to the Mac OS X platform, O'Reilly highlighted the upcoming conference on Mac OS X that will be hosted by O'Reilly and Associates in September.

Mac OS X has also been a strong business opportunity for O'Reilly & Associates-their title, "Mac OS X: The Missing Manual," written by long-time Mac advocate David Pogue, has been the best-selling new title for O'Reilly & Associates since 1993.

Quoting widely from his favorite books and personal contacts, O'Reilly confirmed that early adopters and industry leaders are adopting Mac OS X, including leading experts in the world of Perl, Java and bioinformatics. Because Apple understands and practices interoperability, extensibility, adheres to standards, and has learned to cooperate with major players such as Microsoft and AOL, O'Reilly sees Apple as a "next-generation player" in the new paradigm. In addition, he pointed to the new features in the upcoming Jaguar release as promising to strengthen Apple's viability in this new market. He emphasized that the integration of web services, expanded wireless features, and the new components of iChat and Rendezvous are adding to Mac OS X's already large set of services.

With these services as a reference, O'Reilly urged developers to "think platform, not just application" as they move from the shrink-wrapped, stand-alone model of software distribution to open source, interoperability, and web-based services.

Tim O'Reilly recommended the following books for further reading:

Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace by Lawrence Lessig, published by Basic Books

The UNIX Programming Environment by Brian W. Kernighan and Rob Pike, published by Prentice Hall Computer Books

Mac OS X: The Missing Manual by David Pogue, published by O'Reilly and Associates.

The Cathedral and the Bazaar : Musings on Linux and Open Source by an Accidental Revolutionary, by Eric S. Raymond and Bob Young, published by O'Reilly and Associates

The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, by Thomas S. Kuhn, published by the University of Chicago Press.

Building Wireless Community Networks: Building the Wireless Web, by Rob Flickenger, published by O'Reilly and Associates

Learning UNIX for Mac OS X, by Dave Taylor and Jerry Peek, published by O'Reilly and Associates

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