

As Seen On:



## Ten Reasons To Love Mac OS X

By Khan Klatt

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**The OS X operating system has a lot to offer - to experts and novices alike.**

Although we are only seven months into the release of OS X, Mac users have a lot to be excited about. For the benefit of those new to or considering the new platform, here's a Top 10 list of reasons to love OS X.

### 1. Cocoa

Cocoa is a rapid application development environment inherited from Apple's purchase of NeXT. OS X naturally inherits these roots, which have a loyal following with former NeXT developers. Some excellent Cocoa apps include WebObjects, Apple "Mail" client and the OmniWeb browser.

### 2. Classic

Classic enables almost all (with a few notable exceptions) software for the Macintosh written since 1984 to run in a compatibility environment in OS X. Performance for Classic apps is about on par with running the applications in their native environment, since no processor emulation is really occurring.

You could run, for example, Netscape 4.7 or old copies of IE to test a Web site with various Web clients for compatibility. Investment into old software therefore is not lost.

### 3. Photoshop, Illustrator, ImageReady, etc.

Thanks to Classic, you can run best-of-breed graphic software such as Photoshop, Illustrator and ImageReady.

The strong legacy the Mac has enjoyed in the graphic design industry is carried over to this new operating system, extending the capabilities of many OS X users who come to the platform because of its other merits.

### 4. Carbon

Of course any OS X user would prefer that their favorite OS 9 application be "Carbonized." This means that an application would be re-written to "play nice" with the new Operating System, which effectively means that it benefits from the full multitasking and protected memory features of OS X.

The above applications mentioned are in the process of being Carbonized, but many titles have already joined the Carbonized ranks, such as Freehand 10, Netscape 6, BBEdit 6.1 and Virtual PC.

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## **5. Virtual PC**

Having been Carbonized to work under OS X, Virtual PC is an x86 emulator, enabling multiple PC instances to run under Mac OS X. If you wanted to, you could have Windows XP running in one window, Linux in another, and BeOS in yet another, all simultaneously emulating three Pentium processors.

The only limitation to how many PCs you can have running simultaneously is how much RAM, disk space and CPU you have to spare.

## **6. Microsoft Office v.X**

Microsoft's core software for the Mac -- Internet Explorer and Office -- has played a game of leapfrog with the company's Windows versions. When it ships, it looks like Office v.X is a better office than Office for Windows. Ironically, the best Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Entourage money can buy runs on the Mac.

## **7. BSD/Unix/Open Source**

As a full-fledged flavor of BSD, OS X benefits from the stability and rich libraries and technologies common on Unix and Unix-like systems. OS X can fully take advantage of technologies such as Java SE.

## **8. Java SE**

Mac users have never been too excited about Java due to its inferiority on MacOS 9. Thanks to its Unix underpinnings, the Java on OS X is not substantially different from that on Solaris. This means that the promise of "write once, run anywhere" of Java is fully realized on the Mac.

Software such as Forte for Java written "for Solaris" run unmodified and flawlessly on OS X. This opens up thousands of Java applications to the new OS, including (one of my favorites) LimeWire.

## **9. The Open Source Library**

OS X ships with popular open source software such as ipfw, ssh, apache, and perl. But all of this is nothing compared to the wealth of applications that have already been ported to OS X thanks to its Unix heritage.

This ranges from simple utilities such as "wget," a command line ftp/web client, to heavyweight database software such as mysql.

## **10. X Window System**

Traditional Unix systems have relied upon the X Window System or just "X" (the letter, not the number) for their GUI. With software called XFree86/XonX (freeware, pronounced eks-on-ten) or Xtools (commercial), not only do OS X users get the wealth of applications for Classic, Carbon and Cocoa, they get the X environment. This means that all of the great software for Linux and Unix systems is all one recompile away from running on OS X.

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## OS X on Top

It all comes down to an astounding choice of applications and platforms. There's only one OS that allows you to simultaneously run and use software such as Excel, MySQL, GIMP, Photoshop, iMovie, iTunes, and play a DVD player.

Windows XP can't run MySQL, GIMP, iMovie, nor use high-end MP3 functions that iTunes can. Linux can't run Excel, Photoshop, iMovie, nor easily and legally play DVDs. Just about anything that can be done on a computer can be done with OS X, as this list demonstrates.

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