# MyApple

**1**

Available on the
**App Store**

## Apple Museum
### in Prague

## Why Apple
## will have to fight?

# Hello
# iPhone SE,
## my old friend

## Dear Steve,

After a few months of absence we are back, now with the MyApple Magazine app in the App Store. The app is universal, so we finally have an iPad version with different layout for smaller screens like that on the new iPhone SE. It was a long struggle to get the app accepted into the App Store. We know that there are a lot of developers complaining about how the App Store approval process works, and our story is just the tip of the iceberg. Anyway, winter passed, spring is here and we are back on track.

In February I covered one of the biggest trade shows focusing entirely on mobile technology - the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona. Of course, Apple didn't exhibit. All of Apple's competitors were there, including Samsung, and wanted to show off their new smartphones and other solutions. Unfortunately, I couldn't find anything exciting and innovative. Mobile World Congress 2016 may have signaled the end of innovation in this market. This is a problem not only for Samsung, HTC, Huawei and other manufacturers, but also for Apple. The iPhone SE, putting aside its up-to-date tech specs, is something we have seen before. Do you think we are about to hit the wall with the big sign "The end of innovation" on it? With Apple's 40th anniversary just past, this question is quite important as is the answer to it.

**Krystian**

## Hi, Krystian!

I am envious of your world travels the past few months! First you were in Las Vegas for CES, then in Barcelona for MWC. I hope you'll be able to make it to Macstock 2016 in July.

I'm not sure if innovation is coming to an end, or if tech writers are just becoming jaded by the amazing things we see every day. If Apple or the other big tech manufacturers aren't coming out with new and magical devices, then at least there are other companies that still do some amazing things.

DJI's new Phantom 4 drone pretty much flies itself thanks to integration with an app that allows it to identify targets to fly to or follow. Elon Musk teases the new Tesla 3 and racks up billions of dollars worth of potential orders in a few days. And Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin New Shepard spacecraft is about to make suborbital space travel a reality.

But I have to agree; it seems like in terms of mobile technology, we've come to a standstill. What we need soon is something that "wows" everyone, whether it's a new Apple Watch that doesn't need an iPhone nearby or designer Apple glasses that have augmented reality displays built into them. An updated version of the iPhone 5s (otherwise known as the iPhone SE) isn't very exciting anymore, but maybe the iPhone 7 will wake us all up. I hope so!

**Steve**

MyApple magazine

Starting in 1997, Apple asked you to "Think Different".
At that time, two bloggers had already been "thinking
differently" for several years about personal and mobile
computing, and writing about Apple and its products.
Today those same two writers, Steve Sande and Dennis
Sellers, bring you daily news, reviews, and how-tos about
the world of Apple at Apple World Today

We do "think different", in that the site is predominantly
supported by readers through monthly pledges
and some sponsorships. Apple World Today hopes
to do away with any and all advertising this way,
providing site supporters with such benefits as their
own Slack channel for real-time communications
with the blogging team.

You have many choices of websites for your daily
fix of everything Apple. We hope that you find the
experience and insight provided by Apple World Today
to be to your liking.

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# MyApple
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**MyApple**
magazine

# Hello iPhone SE,

## my old friend

Krystian Kozerawski

When Apple introduced the iPhone 6 and 6 Plus over a year and a half ago, I was of the opinion the company should introduce not two, but *three* new models with different screen sizes: 4.7, 5.5 and 4 inch. I even thought of a name for the latter - the iPhone 6 Minus (the opposite of the 6 Plus with its larger 5.5 inch screen).
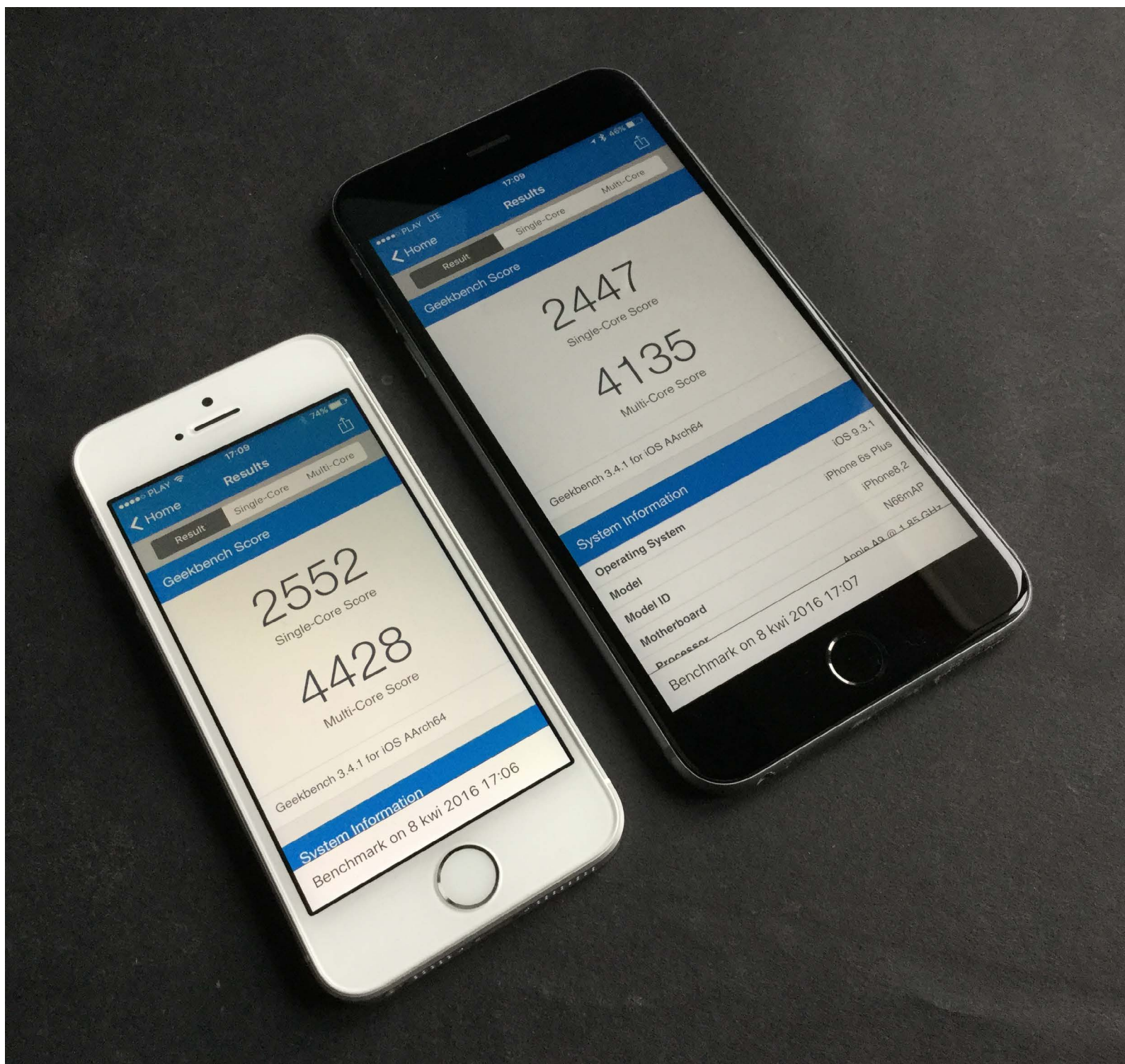
the biggest shortcoming of a 4-inch screen compared to the bigger ones is the limited number of information or text displayed on the screen. After well over a year of using the new iPhones (6 and 6s Plus), I really started to appreciate their bigger screens.

Since the release of the bigger models, I've watched a number of my fellow iPhone users. Many of them were unhappy with the bigger sizes and some of them avoided upgrades as a result. That made me think that Apple would have to release a 4-inch model at some point.  Finally, the dreams of many iPhone users came true. However, it is not the iPhone 6 Minus with the same sleek rounded design as the bigger models that comes back in glory, but our old friend the iPhone 5s reincarnated with new internals and a new name — the iPhone SE. It's almost like Gandalf The Grey being reincarnated as Gandalf The White in Tolkien's Lord of The Rings

- the same old wizard, but with new super-powers.

The new iPhone with the 4-inch screen looks and has the same hand feel as the iPhone 5s. The only visible difference between the two models is the size of the letters of the communication certificates on the back, a less reflective iPhone name and the "SE" sign below it.

Coming back to a 4-inch screen is an impressive experience. It is hard to overestimate the convenience of being able to operate the device with only one thumb.

Coming back to a 4-inch screen is an impressive experience. It is hard to overestimate the convenience of being able to operate the device with only one thumb. The entire screen is within the reach of my thumb without giving up a firm and steady grip. To be able to use one thumb on my iPhone 6 or 6s Plus, I had to put it on my fingers as if it was on a shelf, without holding it tight. On the other hand, the biggest shortcoming of a 4-inch screen compared to the bigger ones is the limited number of information or text displayed on the screen. After well over a year of using the new iPhones (6 and 6s Plus), I really started to appreciate their bigger screens.

Sadly, there is no 3D Touch. I must admit I got used to this technology and I'm using it on a daily basis on my iPhone 6s Plus, especially to get to my favorite contacts, re-

cent messages or even to check in on Swarm. However, the lack of 3D Touch on the iPhone SE isn't too much of a pain thanks to the convenience of the 4-inch screen size, and I can live without it.

There are some complaints about the old design of the iPhone SE. Indeed, it's been over three and a half years since Apple introduced the iPhone 5. However, I am of the opinion that it's been one of the best iPhone designs so far. There is only one thing I don't like about it - the iPhone 5, 5s and SE warm up faster than the 6/6s/Plus models. Download a few apps from the App Store and the phone will warm your hand. I've never experienced this on my iPhone 6 or 6s Plus. Yes, they can get warm as well, but only when playing CPU-intensive games.

> The iPhone SE has the same A9 processor and 2GB of RAM as the iPhone 6s and 6s Plus, and it is as fast as either of those phones. Performing the Geekbench benchmarks, the new 4-inch model scored a bit higher than my 6s Plus.

It's not only the design that makes the new iPhone interesting, it's the internals as well. The iPhone SE has the same A9 processor and 2GB of RAM as the iPhone 6s and 6s Plus, and it is as fast as either of those phones. Performing the Geekbench benchmarks, the new 4-inch model scored a bit higher than my 6s Plus. I'm pretty sure that the smaller screen has something to do with that.

I am also impressed with the battery life. Usually I'm able to survive over 24 hours on a sin-

gle charge without switching on Low Power Mode. That's even better than my iPhone 6s Plus, and once again I am sure it is due to the much smaller screen.
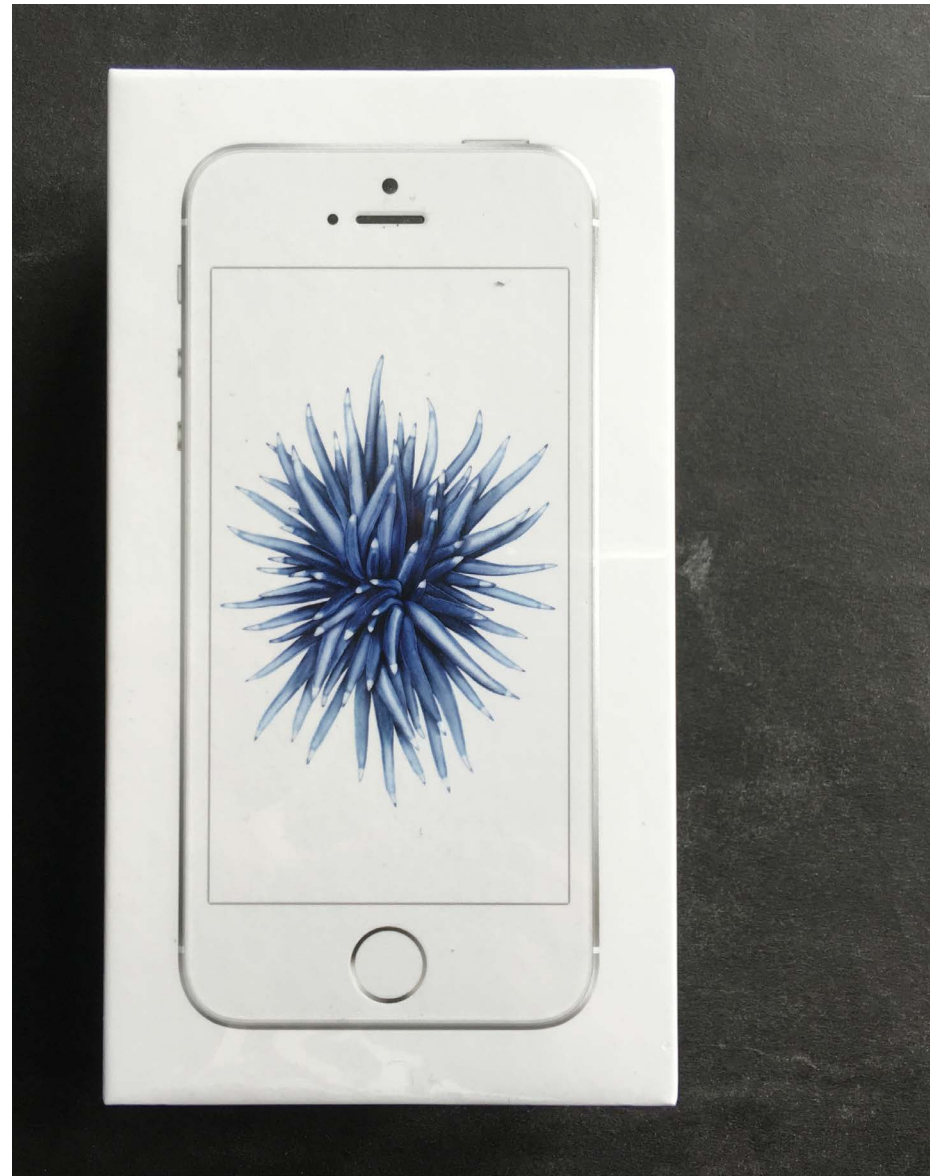


The one thing I am really not impressed with is the Home button. I have nothing against first-generation TouchID, which has been working quite well so far. It is how deep I have to push the new Home button that I really dislike. Not having 3D Touch forces me to use the Home button to switch between apps. The longer button travel on the iPhone SE makes it more difficult to push than on the iPhone 6 and 6s Plus.

I've only had a few days with the new (and old at the same time) iPhone SE, but so far, so good. I wonder what I will say about it after a few months of using the SE on a daily basis.

Photos: Krystian Kozerawski
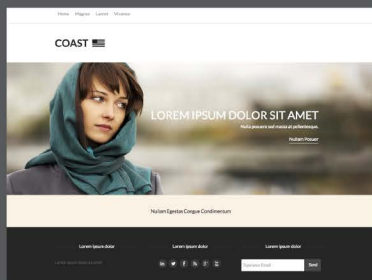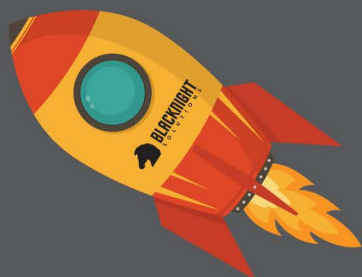
# Apple Museum in Prague

Krystian Kozerawski

In almost every issue of MyApple Magazine you can find our stories about the past; old computers, accessories, and not just Apple products. In fact, in the history of computers there have been many interesting devices, but a lot of them are rather rare and the only place you can spot them is in a museum.
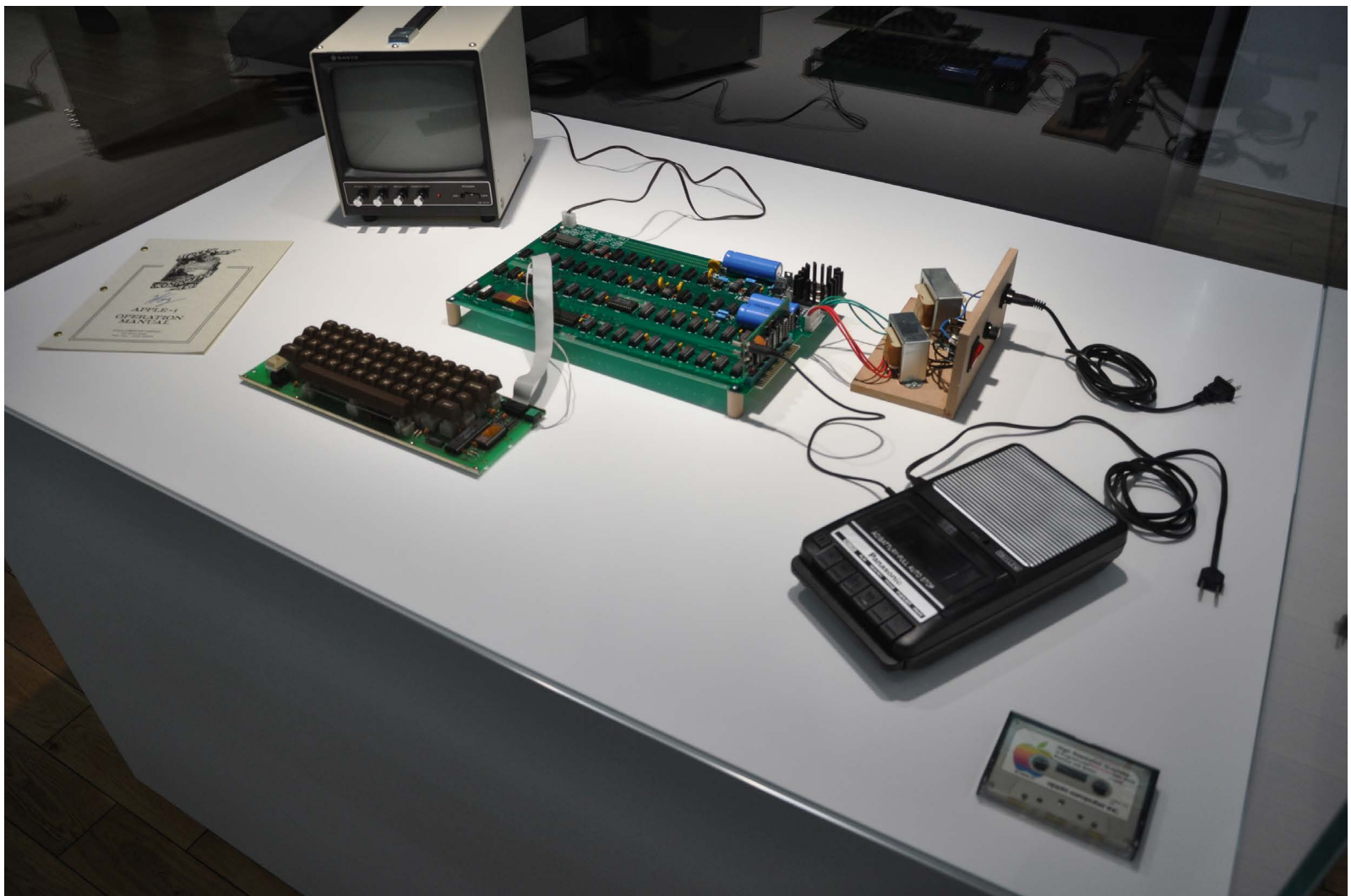
MyApple magazine

… in Prague one can trace the history of Apple from the founding of the company by Jobs, Wozniak and Wayne to 2012 and the death of Jobs. They even have one of the copies of the original agreement signed by the three founders. No devices designed after Steve Jobs are exhibited…

Some of them you can find in the Computer History Museum in Mountain View, California, but as far as Apple devices are concerned, the biggest private collection has been avail- able recently in Prague at the newly opened Apple Museum. The museum is focused almost entirely on Apple and Steve Jobs.

In contrast to the museum in California, in Prague one can trace the history of Apple from the founding of the company by Jobs, Wozniak and Wayne to 2012 and the death of Jobs. They even have one of the copies of the original agreement signed by the three founders. No devices designed after Steve Jobs are exhibited; it's hard to consider the latest iPhones, MacBooks or Apple Watches as museum exhibits.

## Garden of Eden on the Vltava River

In a few rooms of a baroque historic house at the Old Town of Prague can be found beautifully restored Apple computers and devices of many kinds, including different models of Apple II, like the Apple II Bell & How-

ell, Apple II, and Apple II GS. One can have a closer look at the less popular, but groundbreaking Apple III and Lisa. And of course there is a wide variety of classic Macintoshes, Power Macs (Mac TV, PowerMac G4 Cube), Powerbooks (including a PowerBook Duo with its docking station), iBooks, iMacs and many more. There is even a Macintosh Portable and 20th Anniversary Mac in the collection, as well as two NeXT computers manufactured by the company Jobs founded after leaving Apple. Of course there is not enough space to exhibit every Mac model ever made, but there are many people who want to donate their unique or rare Macs to the museum.

> At the cafeteria, which of course serves only vegan food and healthy beverages, visitors can listen to the songs most loved by Jobs.

There are plenty of other products and product lines presented in the museum: Newton MessagePads, QuickTake cameras, graphic tablets, an Apple Interactive Television Box and iPads, iPods (including some rare stuff like The Beatles iPod box) and iPhones. In a separate cabinet, a working original iPhone prototype is presented - one of the devices that was used or at least touched by Jobs himself.

## Church of Jobs

In case you think that the Apple Museum only has hardware, you'll also find Apple and Steve Jobs memorabilia, like a full collection of Think Different campaign posters, iMac posters and Steve Jobs' genuine busi-

ness cards, a pair of his jeans and sneakers. The museum really seems to be almost a shrine or temple of the cult of Steve Jobs. At the cafeteria, which of course serves only vegan food and healthy beverages, visitors can listen to the songs most loved by Jobs (we were welcomed with Dylan's *Mr. Tambourine Man*). In the exhibition rooms one can listen to Jobs' famous speeches, like the commencement address he gave at Stanford University. To be honest, it is hard to design a museum highlighting both Apple and Steve Jobs, for many iconic Apple products were designed during Jobs' absence at Apple, like the Newtons and Power Macs exhibited.

To be honest, I wish there was more information about other people who strongly participated in the history of Apple like Steve Wozniak, the original Macintosh team, John Scully (after all, he was an Apple CEO, introduced the Newton and pushed forward the entire Mac line) as well as the person who is in charge of the look and design of many iconic Apple products - Sir Jonathan Ive.

Despite that lack, the Apple Museum in Prague is a place that every Apple fan should visit. Actually, any person interested in the history of personal computing should stop by the museum. It is the largest private collection of Apple products available for public viewing, and the curators are working to expand it with some additional exhibits and multimedia presentations. I just wonder why Apple hasn't opened its own museum at Infinite Loop so far.

The Apple Museum is located in the Old Town of Prague at 21 Husova Street. It is open seven days a week from 10 AM to 10 PM. Entrance fee is €11.

Photos: Tomasz Wyka and Apple Museum images

1976
Together with Wozniak
and Ronald Wayne, Jobs
founded the Apple Computer
company in his parents'
garage. To raise the initial
1,300$ Jobs sold his old
Volkswagen microbus and
Wozniak sold his HP 65
programmable calculator.

2066 Crist Drive, Los Altos, California.
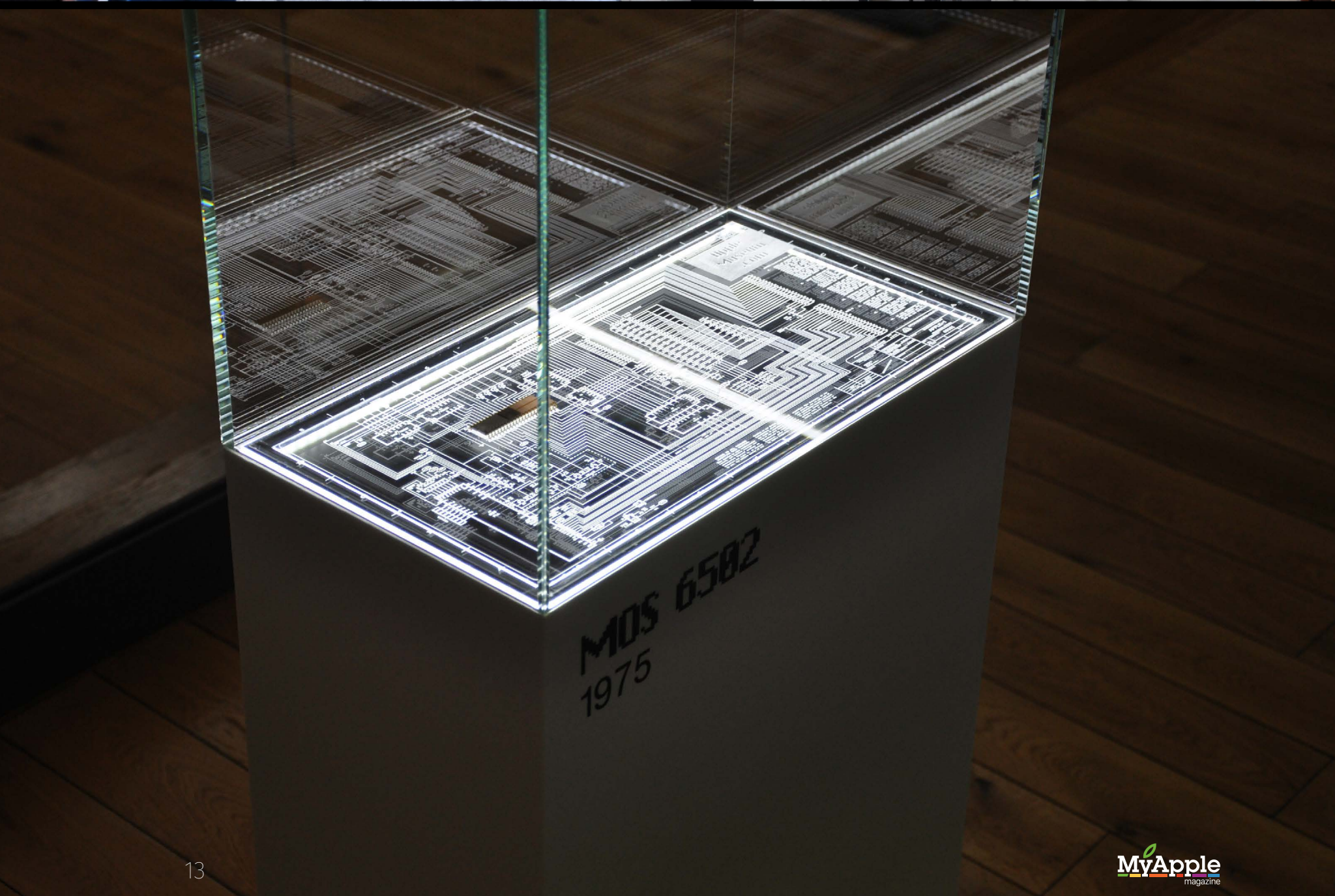
1984

IBM PC
(monitor only)

MAC

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magazine
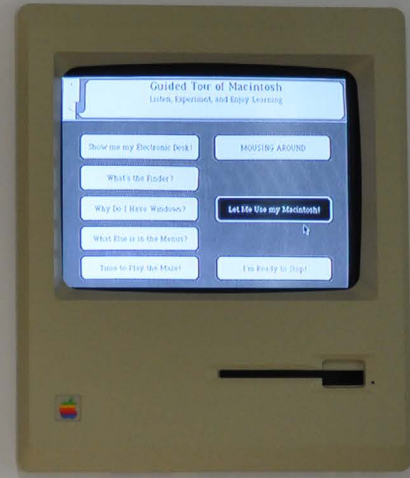
# Interview with Lukas Hnilicka
## - Apple Museum architect

Krystian Kozerawski

**What is it about Apple products (contrary to those made by Microsoft, IBM, HP) that makes them so special that they deserve their own museum?**

There's something about the brand that makes it connect emotionally. Their products adhere to a philosophy that people just get. Apple's products and endeavors in general, are unique and original in comparison with the products of the companies that you've mentioned. And of course there's the leadership of the visionary, Steve Jobs - which makes it all the more special.

**Who came up with the idea of the museum and who is the founder of this place?**

The museum is operated by the Pop Art Center Foundation and it was partly a coincidence. We had the opportunity to collect numerous Apple products and since we already possessed a great space for a showcase, we just went for it because it made sense.

Most of the products weren't in very good shape. It took hundreds of hours to restore each product and to give it the appropriate look. Today they look like brand new, but there is a lot of blood, sweat and tears behind it. Apple is different from other brands, and we wanted to glorify that. As a brand, it evokes strong emotions, and customers form unique relationships with their products.

**Prague is a unique city, but why was the Apple Museum founded there and not in London, Paris, Berlin or New York?**

Just like we said in the previous question, it was a great coincidence. We had a great space to create such an exhibition and we're connected to many collectors who wanted to exhibit their prized possessions.

**There is an outstanding and enormous collection of computers, peripherals accesso-**

**ries and other Apple memorabilia. How was such a collection created and how much time did it take?**

It was very difficult to collect such an amount of products. It took year and a half of a constant work. We needed to find the products, then transport them to Czech Republic, renovate them and do the architectonical solution which is unique.

**What part of the collection was collected by one person and how much is from different contributors.**

Most of the products are from different contributors and they all wish to remain anonymous.

**Most of the computers and devices shown in the museum look almost new. What was condition of them before and how much time did it take to restore them?**

Most of the products weren't in very good shape. It took hundreds of hours to restore each product and to give it the appropriate look. Today they look like brand new, but there is a lot of blood, sweat and tears behind it..;)

**How did you get Apple I and original iPhone prototype?**

We were looking for a real rarity and even those exclusive and rare products can still be found.. :)
We get them from private collectors and genuine Apple fans from abroad.

**I had the opportunity to visit the Computer History Museum in Mountain View, California. Your museum is different (and I am not talking about it being focused only on Apple products). I would say that it is to some extent a true temple or church for Apple fans. Is this effect intentional?**

It definitely is intentional. Apple is different from other brands, and we wanted to glorify that. As a brand, it evokes strong emotions, and customers form unique relationships with their products.

**You put great emphasis on the character of Steve Jobs. I missed the presence of other important figures, such as the creators of the first Mac (including Andy Hertzfeld, Bill Atkinson and others) and Jonathan Ives, whose imprint has been stamped in almost every Apple product for almost 20 years. There is no mention about other Apple CEOs like John Sculley, though you present computers - including handheld devices such as Newtons - created under his leadership. Where did the idea to focus only on Jobs come from?**

We all know that behind all of the products there were many more people who had contributed greatly. But we felt that we needed to honour the legacy of the leader himself, Steve Jobs. He was the visionary that brought the company to such heights. He was so important and his life was so inspiring, that we couldn't choose anyone else.

**Information on your website says that everything displayed in the museum is original. I would like to ask about the sneakers, jeans and T-shirt. Did they really belong to Jobs?**

Yes, all of the pieces are his personal clothes. The jeans, New Balance sneakers and glasses were all used by him - it's all authentic. We even have the water that he used to drink and the armchair he used for presentations and home use.

**The museum was recently opened. Have you had any feedback from Apple? Has anyone from the company contacted you to express his or her opinion?**

Some of the ex-workers from Apple that worked with Steve Jobs have already visited and they really liked it.

**And what about Steve Wozniak? Are you in touch with him? What does he think about your museum?**

We deeply hope that he'd be able to visit Prague one day to see the exhibition. We'd love to talk to him and further discuss his personal feelings towards the museum.

**I know that some exhibits are not ready yet. What are your plans for the future?**

The only product that we're missing is the Lisa I because it was broken during its transport. We are currently trying to find another one but it's quite difficult. As for the future, we're going to prepare a pop art gallery in the Roman cellar and we'll also begin to sell Apple products right here in the museum. People will be able to buy T-shirts, cups, pencils and also some original products that Steve Jobs used.

> The only product that we're missing is the Lisa I because it was broken during its transport.
> As for the future, we're going to prepare a pop art gallery in the Roman cellar and we'll also begin to sell Apple products right here in the museum.

Photos: Tomasz Wyka

# My perfect (though imaginary) Apple set-up:
# the Apple Pod with Apple Display/Dock

Dennis Sellers
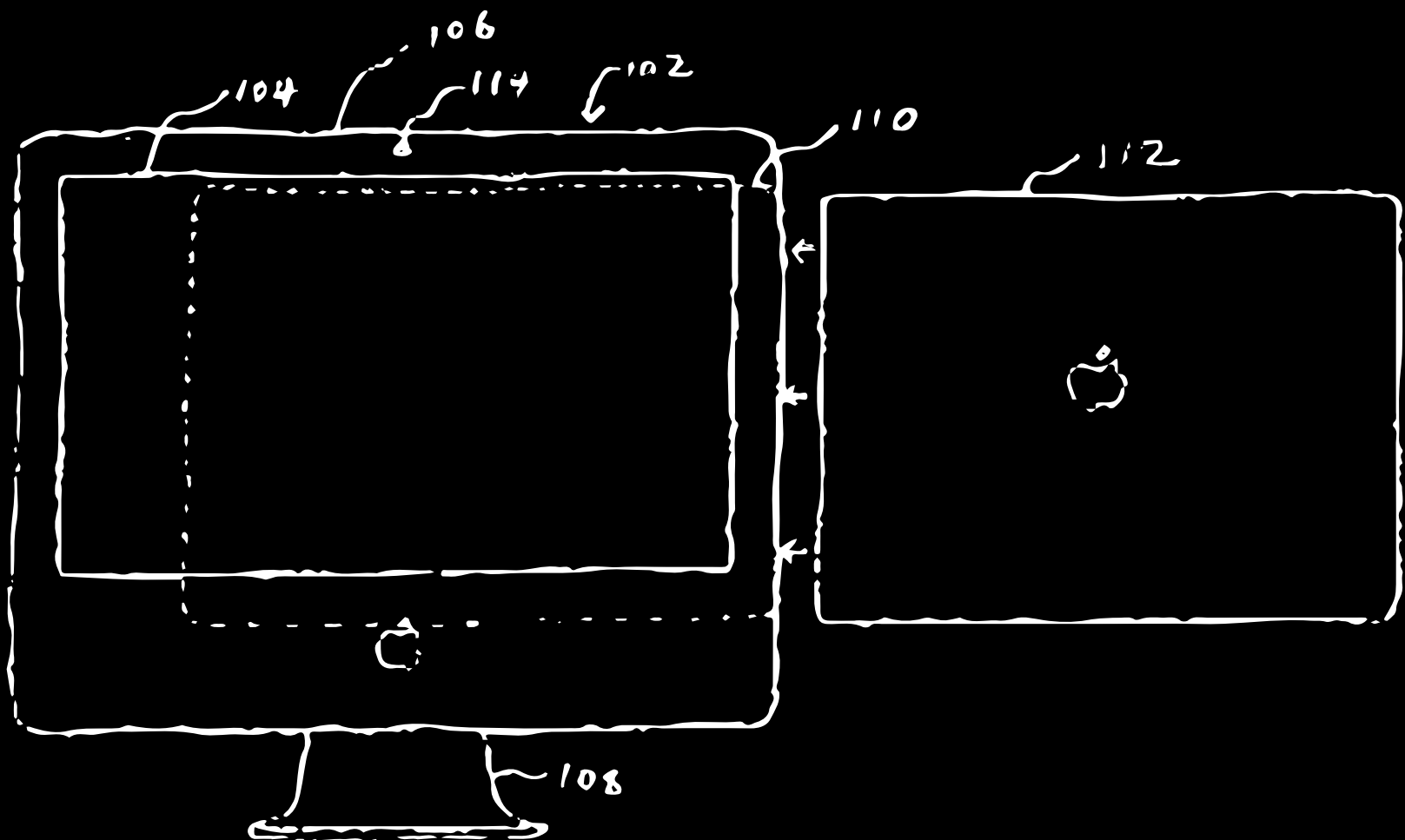
I enjoy the various Apple gadgets in my life: my iMac, my iPad Pro, and my 12-inch MacBook, as well as my iPhone and Apple Watch. However, in an ideal world, the first three would all be combined into one perfect device (well, perfect for me anyway).

Here's the Apple Pod as imagined by Yours Truly:

It's a slim tablet — basically the size of an iPad Pro, but with a 10TB flash drive (don't laugh; we'll see laptops and tablets with such storage by 2018 or sooner). It will run either:
a) a touchscreen version of Mac OS X, or
b) a version of iOS that's more keyboard oriented and more multi-tasking friendly. The Apple Pod will come in Wi-Fi and Wi-Fi + Cellular versions and run the eight-core A12 processor.

> Here's how the patent
> is described: "A docking
> station is disclosed.
> The docking station
> includes a display and
> a housing configured to hold
> the display in a manner
> that exposes a viewing
> surface of the display
> to view. The housing defines
> a docking area configured
> to receive a portable
> computer…"

The device will work with an optical Smart Keyboard (or a descendant of it), so I can use the gadget as either a laptop or tablet for work and play when I'm on-the-go. However, once I'm back at the home office, I'll insert the Apple Pod into the 27-inch (or bigger) Apple Display/Dock with a 5K Retina Display.

Once docked, the software in the Apple Pod will automatically adjust to the bigger screen.

It will also immediately pair with my external keyboard, mouse, and trackpad.

Actually, Apple filed for a patent for a "dockable" computer back in 2006. It was for an "integrated monitor and docking station." Here's how the patent is described: "A docking station is disclosed. The docking station includes a display and a housing configured to hold the display in a manner that exposes a viewing surface of the display to view. The housing defines a docking area configured to receive a portable computer; The docking area is at least partly obscured by the display when viewed from the viewing surface side of the display at an angle substantially orthogonal to the viewing surface."
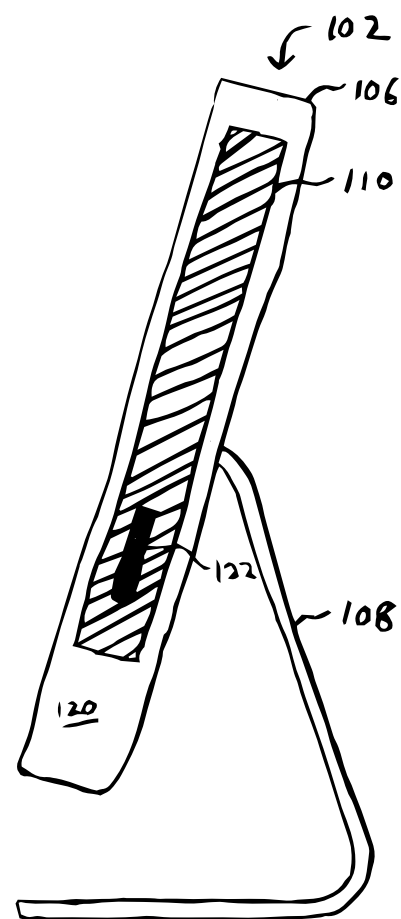


I like the idea of such a device. For me, the Apple Pod would have all the conveniences of my tablet, desktop Mac, and laptop Mac, but with only one device to maintain and update.

# Exogear ExoHub
## adds USB ports, SDXC card reader to iMac

Steve Sande

What if you could add three 1W USB 3.0 ports, a 2W rapid charger USB port and an easily accessible SDXC card reader to an iMac without taking up any more desk real estate? That's the premise behind the Exogear ExoHub (US$129, available for limited Kickstarter pledge for just $89), currently on Kickstarter getting funding for production. I had the opportunity to try out a prototype ExoHub and whether or not it gets funded, it's a great product that will probably end up in production anyway.

## Design

So, how do you add all those good ports and a card reader to an iMac without throwing some ugly external hub onto a desktop? Easy, you build them into an aluminum and black polymer stand that precisely fits the iMac's "foot".

> Everything I plugged into the ExoHub worked as if it was connected directly to the back of the iMac, as you'd expect from a USB 3.0 hub. The best thing about this? All of these nice ports are at my fingertips instead of on the back of the machine, so there's no more blind groping to try to plug accessories in. That's especially true of the SDXC card reader...

ExoHub looks great with a brushed aluminum exterior to the base that precisely matches the finish of the iMac. Likewise, the black polymer "lid" that goes over the base of the iMac matches the bezel on the iMac display. It adds about .75 inch to the height of your iMac, but that's barely noticeable for most users.

On the back of the ExoHub are the power port, a red LED indicating that the device is receiving power, and one USB 3.0 port for connect-

ing to the iMac. On the left side are three USB 3.0 ports, while the right side is graced with another USB 3.0 port and an SDXC card reader slot.

## Function

Installation is a total non-brainer and takes about three seconds: Lift the iMac, place the base of the iMac into the padded top of the ExoHub, and then place the black polymer cover in place. Plug in the hub (an AC adapter is included), and then use the included USB 3.0 cable to connect the ExoHub to your iMac. Done.

Everything I plugged into the ExoHub worked as if it was connected directly to the back of the iMac, as you'd expect from a USB 3.0 hub. The best thing about this? All of these nice ports are at my fingertips instead of on the back of the machine, so there's no more blind groping to try to plug accessories in. That's especially true of the SDXC card reader, since trying to reach behind an iMac and get an SD card into that slot is an exercise in futility. With the ExoHub, you can see the slot. My only wish is that they had put the SDXC slot on the front of the ExoHub for even easier access.

## Conclusion

At its production sales price of $129 I think the ExoHub will be a bit overpriced for a USB 3.0 hub, but if you can manage to snag one on Kickstarter for $89 or even $99 (or two for $169), it's well worth the price just for the convenience and top-notch design. Exogear has designed an accessory that every iMac owner should consider. Get yourself to Kickstarter today and see if you can snag an ExoHub.

Photo: ExoGear - Kickstarter

MyApple magazine

# What will Apple have to release
## after an Apple Car to please its critics?
# Robots? Time travel machines?

Dennis Sellers

Apple has given us more revolutionary products than most companies have or ever will: the Mac, the iPhone, and the iPad (the Apple Watch and Apple TV are fine products, but not revolutionary — at least yet). Still, many industry "experts" weep and moan that the company is stuck in a rut because it didn't release a world-changing product in 2015 and may not in 2016.

Apparently, according to these pundits, the company will barely hang on by its fingernails until it drives out an Apple Car in another five years or so.

> In 2030, the company launches the Apple Bot, a true personal digital assistant (sorry, Siri). It's an android (sorry, Google) with the most advanced AI ever created and is as functional as any human butler ever was. The Apple Bot can do all the chores in your Apple House, because naturally,the company also unveils the most advanced, energy efficient dwelling in the world.

Even though such a project has never been officially confirmed, let's imagine that an Apple-branded car does indeed drive out in 2020 and is unlike any other auto to ever hit the market.

Apple's stock goes through the roof. The world rejoices. The experts are happy once again.

But what happens after that?

Here's a likely scenario: the Apple Boat arrives in 2022 and the Apple Copter in 2024. Both sell well, but the doomsday analysts dismiss them as mere variations of the Apple Car concept.

Apple's stock goes down. Pundits tell us that the company is growing irrelevant. In other words, Apple is doomed. Again.

But wait. In 2030, the company launches the Apple Bot, a true personal digital assistant (sorry, Siri). It's an android (sorry, Google) with the most advanced AI ever created and is as functional as any human butler ever was. The Apple Bot can do all the chores in your Apple House, because naturally,the company also unveils the most advanced, energy efficient dwelling in the world.

Yay! The experts tell us that Apple is back on track and is innovating again. The company isn't doomed, after all.

But wait. It's 2035. The Apple Bot and Apple House are old news. The pundits are weeping again, walking about in sackcloth and ashes, proclaiming the end of the world for Apple.

If only the company would build the rumored Apple Transporter, then all would be well again. Or perhaps the Apple Time Machine. Or ….

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# Vivaldi for Mac
## - is there a place for a web browser for power users?

Krystian Kozerawski

I remember when users had very little choice in terms of Mac web browsers. There was Netscape Navigator, Internet Explorer and Opera, and only one of those was available for free — Internet Explorer. Since the late 1990's and the 2000's, the launch of almost every new web browser was an important event worth mentioning, especially Safari, Firefox and Chrome.
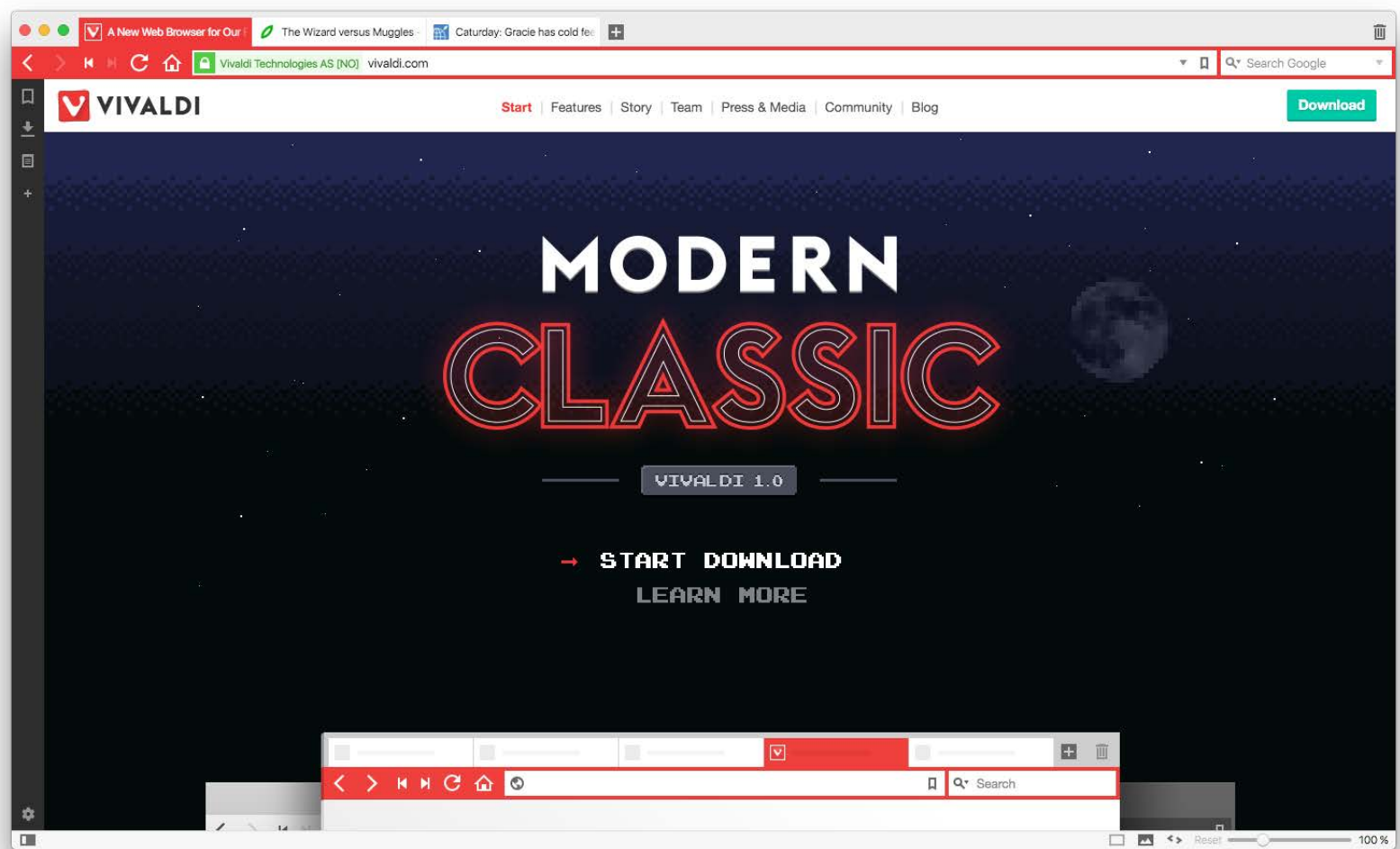
It is extremely different from all recent browsers and kind of a return to a time when users a lot of different functions available and could customize almost every part of the user interface. Indeed, the interface of Vivaldi may surprise you, both in good and bad ways.

Almost all web browsers during this time had expanded user interfaces filled with many additional features. Nowadays, browsers tend to be minimalistic. They look more or less similar, and are equipped with basic set of important functions — letting users browse the net easily and quickly, and jump from one device to another while reading a website.

As with most everything these days, a web browser must be simple, and all complicated and powerful work (like site rendering and cloud syncing) must happen in the background, literally under the hood. Of course, there are additional functions like developer's tools and plugins, but they are usually hidden from the ordinary user and have to discovered and installed by hand. As a result, the world of extra browser features is more or less the domain of power users. They can add to the web browser what they need while keeping it simple and clean. Do they need a new tailored web browser?

## Do power users dream of a new web browser?

I am asking this question because there is a new player in the web browser market. Vivaldi is a new Chromium-based web browser designed for power users. It is extremely different from all recent browsers and kind of a return to a time when users a lot of dif-

ferent functions available and could customize almost every part of the user interface. Indeed, the interface of Vivaldi may surprise you, both in good and bad ways.

There are dozens of filters and effects that can change the look of a website. One can hide all images, change all type to monospace, change colors to sepia or greyscale, adjust color saturation, or even invert colors and blur the entire page.

I first spotted Vivaldi almost a year ago when it was available as a early developer preview and even at that time it surprised

me with its large number of features. Some of the features were interesting and handy, while others seemed to be a nod to current fads. The browser, with its interface layout and some functions, reminded me of old versions of the Opera web browser. That should not come as a surprise, since the head of the team behind Vivaldi is Jon von Tetschner, one of the founders and a former CEO of Opera.

## Color Vertigo

What struck me the most was not the number of features in Vivaldi but the user interface, which is very aesthetic and archaic at the same time. There is no coherence with the current user interface of OS X — Vivaldi looks like it was taken from the 1990s. There are both light and dark modes, and in each case there is also a color mode. This mode lets the user interface change some of its colors to the ones used on the website. Unfortunately, that makes the browser more chaotic than aesthetic. The interface certainly stands

out, but I am not sure I like it or not. Is this an interface that power users would like?

Apart from how it looks, the interface can be widely customized. One can put the address and search fields at the top or bottom of the screen, and it's worth mentioning that those are separate fields. The tab bar can be placed on any side of the screen - top, bottom, left or right, in this case showing thumbnails of each open website. One can even zoom in or out the entire interface to the extent that is both curious and ridiculous.

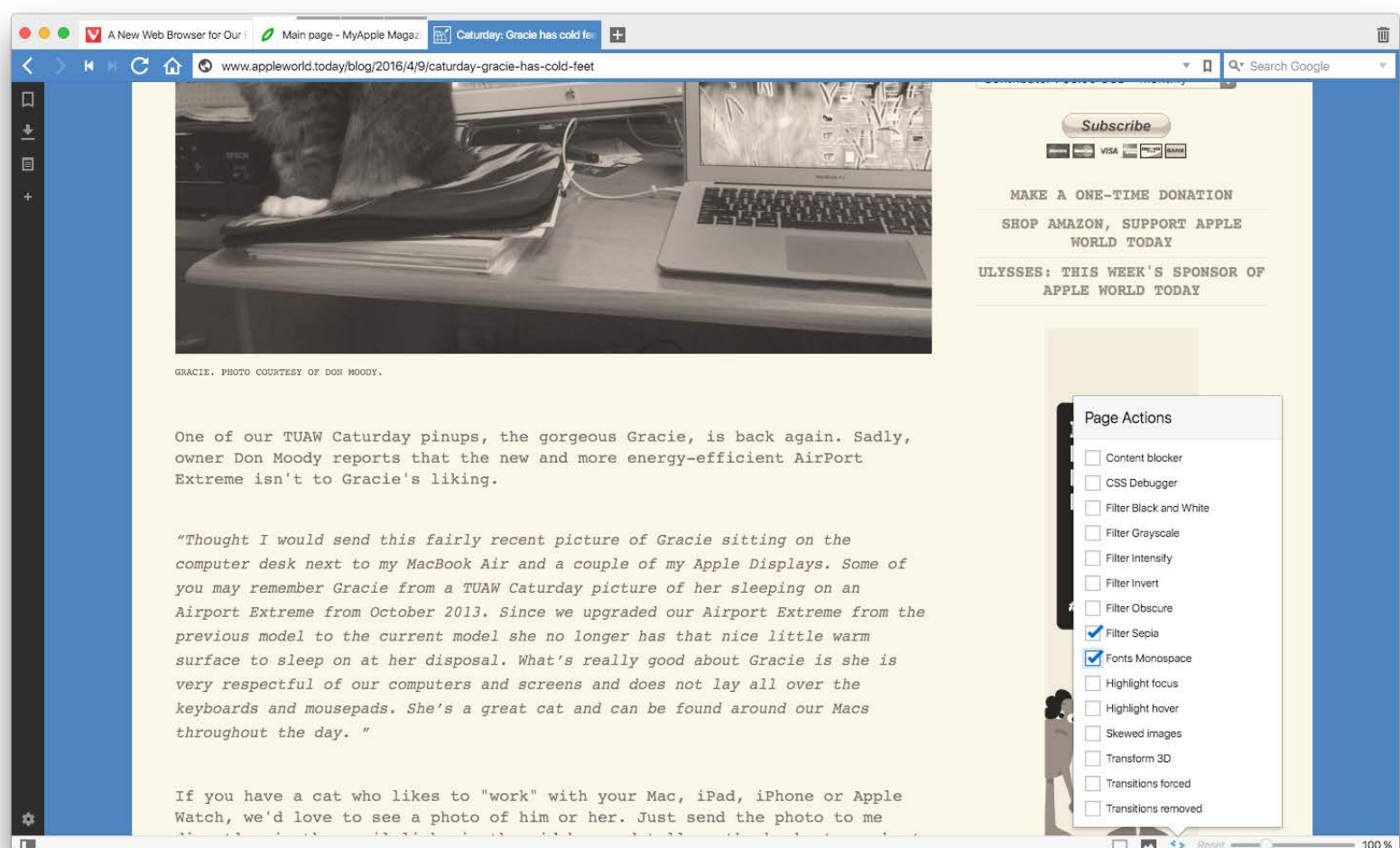A user can customize not only the interface, but also keyboard shortcuts, mouse/trackpad gestures and the way the content of website is presented. There are dozens of filters and effects that can change the look of a website. One can hide all images, change all type to monospace, change colors to sepia or greyscale, adjust color saturation, or even invert colors and blur the entire page. There is a CSS debugger and a simple ad blocker. Some of those filters and effects help browsing and reading at night

in the dark, which could be useful for web developers.

However, there are a lot of those settings that - as I described them before - are hard not to call a "developer's fad". Seriously, I see no reason for turning all images on a site to a 45 degree angle.

## Things I like

So far I have mainly criticized the Vivaldi web browser. However, there are some features that I really like. One of them is Quick Commands which lets the user navigate the browser using only the keyboard. Quick Commands resembles OS X Spotlight. A panel is evoked with a CMD + E keyboard shortcut that lets the user search through all open tabs, commands, bookmarks, history and settings. Quick Commands works so well and so fast that I almost forget about the trackpad.

I like the way Vivaldi deals with open tabs. They can be stacked together manually or au-

tomatically. Each stack has a special mark and provides a preview of all tabs within it. What I really like is the ability to tile multiple tabs into one. One can open two or four tabs at once, side by side or in a grid of four tiles. The latter is really useful only on a big screen, while opening two tabs side by side in one screen (like in a split view) works well on my 13-inch MacBook Air. I use this feature to compare websites and when I am working with more than one web source. In addition, Vivaldi can hibernate inactive tabs. Usually I have over 20 tabs open, and thanks to this feature they consume less system resources.

> There is no doubt that Vivaldi is a real monster among all of the web browsers that are available.

## Everlasting life of old-fashioned side panels

Side panels or sidebars are a common feature of interfaces. You can find one in the Safari web browser, for example — the one with the bookmarks and reading list. The side panel in Vivaldi is an old-fashioned one, which is good or bad depending on user needs. It is a multipurpose tool; one can open the website in a sidebar. It's a matter of personal requirements, but it just doesn't sound good to me. Even in the age of responsive web design there's no reason to open a mobile version of a site too often. I could think about having Twitter open next to a website I'm browsing, but it does not make much sense to me, especially when I have at least two Twitter clients installed on my Mac (Tweetbot and Twitter). Perhaps a web devel-

oper would use this feature to have a continuous preview of a website that he or she is working on.

What I *do* like is the internal notes app that sits in the side panel. It is very simple, but lets me create notes and work on my own texts using the web sources. It can also be used as simple storage for copying/pasting text, or as a quotes archive.

## Do we need a monster among web browsers?

There is no doubt that Vivaldi is a real monster among all of the web browsers that are available. However, I wonder how many power users will need such multipurpose and expanded tools? I am pretty sure there are people who will be happy with them, and Vivaldi will suit their needs. But will it gain wider acceptance and popularity?

For me, Vivaldi — despite the new technologies hidden under the hood — is a web browser stuck in the past. That's not necessarily a disadvantage as it brings back some nice features and ideas that have been forgotten. But the way people use the internet has changed. I mean literal use, not browsing, for browsers are no longer the gates to the internet. Almost every app is now connected to the internet as well as operating systems. In many cases one can publish, read and communicate using no web browser at all.

Vivaldi solves some problems in its own way. However, I have solved those same problems by either using different apps or features that were added to OS X, and to be honest I am not willing to change them. Despite its quirks, Vivaldi offers some interesting features and solutions, and it's definitely worth installing and trying.

# Apple Watch 2
## - will it meet my expectations?

Krystian Kozerawski

During the last couple of weeks there has been a lot of talk and speculation about whether or not Apple will come out with a new Apple Watch. Such guesswork is food for bloggers and journalists who have been flooding the internet with this kind of "news". The most recent articles point at March as the timeframe for the possible introduction of a completely new model or at least new designs of the original Apple Watch. With such speculation, there is a question that is being asked quite often: who is going to replace an Apple Watch with a new one every year, the same way some people do with their iPhones?

A new Apple Watch should have a much larger capacity battery and more energy efficient components. Apple could choose to use a processor made in 14nm technology that would reduce its energy consumption — processors of this type can be found in the latest iPhones. However, I don't expect that a new Apple Watch would work as long as the Pebble Time, which can survive up to 7 - 10 days without recharging.

The answer is more or less simple: no one is forcing us to replace those devices every year. Older generations of iPhones, especially the iPhone 6, 5s and 5, are working fine for many although they lack all the new features introduced year after year. Apple could introduce a new Apple Watch every year and that doesn't mean that the older ones would stop working soon after. The fact that users decide to replace them often is their sovereign decision, which may largely be due to natural human vanity. It is cool to have the newest iPhone, so why not buy a new Apple Watch too? It doesn't matter that new features and a more powerful processor are not enough to excuse the expense of buying a new device and that common sense says "no" to the idea of making the purchase — vanity, together with brand loyalty, is stronger than common sense.

So will Apple come out with a new Apple Watch in March or September? Never mind — it will show up sooner or later. What intrigues me the most is what new features would be found in a new Apple Watch and what would be revised compared to the original model. There are many speculations and expectations, some of them are more and some less reasonable, while others are ridiculous. Of course, I have my own expectations for the new Apple Watch.

## Battery

Apple Watch battery life, which is officially about 18 hours, aroused a lot of controversy from the day it was presented during the introduction keynote in September 2014. After the Watch hit the market, it turned out that in some circumstances it can survive much longer than one day. The most important factor in long battery life is, paradoxically, a lack of physical activity. A few hours of workouts effectively drains the power from the batteries of the Watch and I personally have to remember to charge it a bit after an extensive workout.

A new Apple Watch should have a much larger capacity battery and more energy efficient components. Apple could choose to use a processor made in 14nm technology that would reduce its energy consumption — processors of this type can be found in the latest iPhones. However, I don't expect that a new Apple Watch would work as long as the Pebble Time, which can survive up to 7 - 10 days without recharging. I would be happy if it could make it a full 48 hours.

## Faster processor,

more RAM and better efficiency

One of the most annoying Apple Watch ailments is overall efficiency, probably due

to the processor and small amount of RAM. Many times there is a long latency between tapping the screen and the reaction of the system or app. Often the Watch stalls or hangs for up to a dozen seconds while I am trying to open one of the apps, usually the one in charge of tracking my physical activity - Workouts. The second generation should be rid of such issues and have a faster processor, more RAM and a much better optimized system.

> I am of the opinion that Apple degraded the waterproof ranking of the Watch to protect itself against claims of users whose devices died in a swimming pool or in the sea. I guess they knew it could survive a dip in a swimming pool fine and that there would be daredevils who would use it while under water.

## Better hand movement sensor
for activating the screen

Many smart watches I have had the chance to try - except Pebble watches - have an OLED screen that wakes up and is backlit after tapping it, pressing a button or turning the wrist. Unfortunately all of them, including the Apple

Watch, have problems with recognizing the movement of my wrist so I can check notifications, the time or my daily activity progress. Most of the time this process works fine, but it usually seems to fail in the moments where it is most annoying and I have neither time nor a free hand to tap on it. Usually I am nervously moving my arm and wrist trying to activate the screen. I wish a new Apple Watch would fix this.

## Better waterproofness and a swim tracking function
in the Workouts app

The Apple Watch can survive hand washing, rain or being drenched in sweat while exercising. Unofficially, it can survive taking a shower and swimming. I do wear my Apple Watch while swimming, and I'm aware that by admitting that I just made the warranty officially invalid. Fortunately, though, so far my Apple Watch has been fine. I am of the opinion that Apple degraded the waterproof ranking of the Watch to protect itself against claims of users whose devices died in a swimming pool or in the sea. I guess they knew it could survive a dip in a swimming pool fine and that there would be daredevils who would use it while under water. I wish the next Apple Watch would be officially suitable for swimming — at least in a pool — and that the Workouts app would be able to track laps, lengths and of course the calories burned during such exercise.

## Sleep monitoring and smart alarm

Sleep monitoring is a very popular feature of many fitness bands. Usually they track the stages of sleep and the moments of being awake (usually we do not remember them in the morning). While they pres-

ent data in a fancy graph showing all stages of the sleep cycle, there is not much one can do with that. The fitness bands, and I would say apps as well, cannot affect the quality of sleep. However, sleep monitoring could be used as a part of smart alarm functionality. After setting an alarm for an exact time, the new Apple Watch could wake me at about that time at the best possible moment to wake up. That could save me from a kind of "zombie phase" between leaving bed and my first cup of coffee.

> ... third-party watch faces would have to be verified for copyrights to eliminate those that copy designs found on other, usually luxury, watches. It's worth mentioning that Apple had such problems with a clock face design in iOS 6.

## Third-party watch faces

This is one feature that many users wish Apple would allow. Contrary to other smart watches like those from Pebble, Apple Watch doesn't allow installation of third-party watch faces. There are a limited number of watch faces available in watchOS 2 and after a while they all seem a little dull. I wish Apple would add not only new in-house watch faces, but also let Watch owners install more of them via the App Store. I am fully aware that this could bring on some legal problems. Those third-party watch faces would have to be verified for copyrights

to eliminate those that copy designs found on other, usually luxury, watches. It's worth mentioning that Apple had such problems with a clock face design in iOS 6. It was almost identical to the official Swiss Federal Railways clocks installed at Swiss train stations, designed in 1944 by Swiss watchmaker Mobatime and Hans Hilfiker - a Swiss railway engineer. It is said that Apple paid Swiss Federal Railways a sum of $21 million for that design.

## Fully native apps

WatchOS 2 allowed native apps to be installed on an Apple Watch, but they are still packed into iOS apps that have to be installed on my iPhone. As a result, I still regard them more as widgets than apps. I hope that one day apps for watchOS will be installed via the Watch app directly on the Apple Watch without the need of installing an iOS app on my iPhone. I also wish that these apps would be better coded and optimized than the ones I currently have installed on my Watch.

## GPS

Having built-in GPS would make the Apple Watch even more independent from the iPhone, especially while exercising. Taking my iPhone 6s Plus with me for a when jogging is not very comfortable. Having a built-in GPS tracker in my Apple Watch would let me leave my iPhone at home.

## Smart or power bands and bracelets
with access to the service port

Thanks to the service port hidden in one of the slots for mounting a band or bracelet, the Apple Watch could be easily extendable. Unfortunately Apple keeps quiet about

this feature, even though it is well known that thanks to this little port the Apple Watches that are built into demo panels seen at Apple Stores are powered via this port and a power cable hidden inside the watchband. The service port can not only be used for powering the device, but communicating with other devices as well. That potentially gives a lot of accessory opportunities, like bands with built-in batteries, additional sensors and trackers that can be hidden in the buckle. Opening the service port to manufacturers would be handy not only for users but could create another secondary accessory market. It could cause some security concerns, as someone could create a malicious accessory that would have access to private user data. Apple would need to clear all possible privacy and security concerns before openInc the service port to accessories.

I had a chance to play for a few weeks with Samsung Gear watches and found that taking photos with a watch is uncomfortable and produces poor quality images. Even the photo gallery available in the existing Apple Watch is a poor tool for viewing pictures. It may be handy for storing family photos, but I have already have larger and more easily viewed photos of my kids, wife, and other relatives on my iPhone and in my wallet.

## Bells and whistles

In all the speculation about what might be found in the second generation of Apple Watch there are many so-called bells and whistles. There is often a wish for as many features as possible to be packed into a small device regardless if they would ever be used. Many of them are more or less ridiculous, such as rumors about adding a camera to the Watch.

The Cold War times where spies like James Bond had to take photos of top secret plans or film some weapons facility using a tiny camera hidden in a watch have passed. Nowadays, one can take excellent photos with almost every smartphone available on the market. Moreover, there are other spy accessories now available and cameras can be easily hidden in a button of a coat. I had a chance to play for a few weeks with Samsung Gear watches and found that taking photos with a watch is uncomfortable and produces poor quality images. Even the photo gallery available in the existing Apple Watch is a poor tool for viewing pictures. It may be handy for storing family photos, but I have already have larger and more easily viewed photos of my kids, wife, and other relatives on my iPhone and in my wallet.

When voicing expectations for the future Apple Watch it is better to weigh them against the reality that it is still a tiny wrist device.

Photos: editorial

# A **Starry future** for broadband internet

Steve Sande
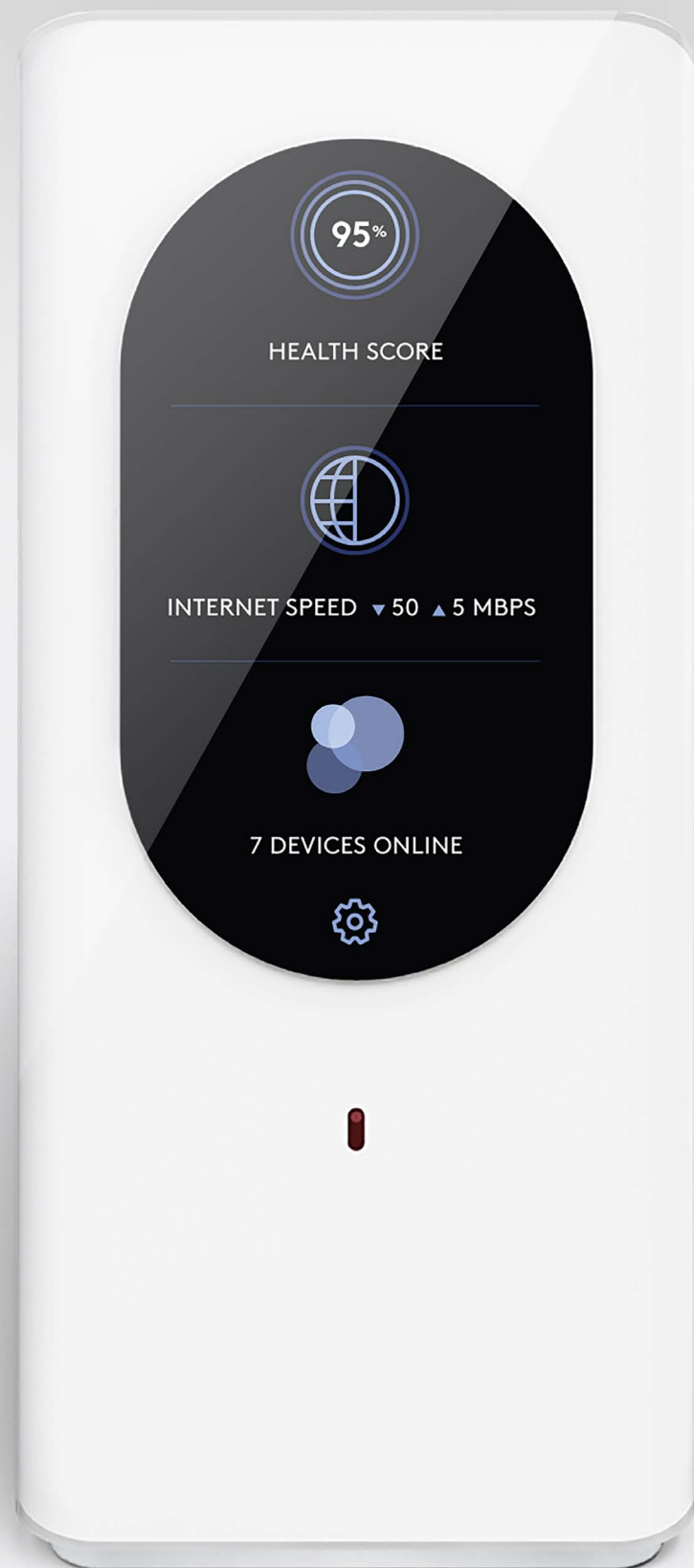
Like most Americans, I have a love/hate relationship with my Internet service provider — mostly hate. I dislike the fact that I have no real choice for broadband service except one company, and that they charge me a ridiculous amount for service. A new home broadband service called Starry was unveiled recently at an event in New York, and it might be the first opportunity for many of us disenchanted broadband customers to get away from the cable or phone company.

Starry is the brainchild of Chet Kanojia and a team of veterans from Aereo, a failed startup that wanted to disrupt cable companies by provide streaming TV service. What Starry will eventually do is install a number of distribution points called "Starry Beams" around major cities, then sell a $349.99 "Starry Station" router to consumers. There's an antenna that you'll install outside a window (called Starry Point) that will connect to your Starry Station to give all your devices fast and reliable internet service -- like gigabit per second fast. There's no price set for Starry Point yet, just the word that you'll be able to install it yourself.

There are some potential downsides; since the service requires line-of-sight links, trees, snow and rain could all cause problems as they do for satellite TV services. It's also unknown how much the service will cost per month.

The company will start with a limited beta in Boston, Massachusetts this summer, then expand the beta to 15 other locations including Seattle, Denver, LA, San Francisco, Detroit and Washington, D.C.

To begin with, Starry is selling the Starry Station routers and already taking orders for March delivery. The router itself is a work of art, providing 802.11ac Wi-Fi with beam-forming technology similar to that found in the latest Apple AirPort Extreme routers. The device has a touchscreen that displays the health of the network in real time, and the company says that Starry Station is ready for 802.15 -- millimeter-wave high speed personal area networks.

Starry Station's display shows how many devices are attached, with devices showing up in blue or red depending on the quality of the Internet connection. It also provides network-level parental controls that block network connections to devices when you want the kids to be studying instead of playing games or watching videos. All settings can be changed from an iOS app.

The company is also working on "Starry Wing", which is a network extender that just plugs into a wall socket and then pairs with the Starry Station to improve network quality in those problem areas of your home.

Will Starry be able to offer a real alternative to current cable or DSL broadband services? It may take a few years, but if the company is able to prove its technology, overcome reception issues brought on by weather, and price the service competitively, then Starry might have very bright future.

Photos: Starry, Inc.

MyApple
magazine

# Why Apple will have to fight an uphill battle to create a successful subscription streaming TV service

Steve Sande

Over the U.S. Thanksgiving weekend, I installed a new X1 set-top box from Comcast, mainly because the big cable company kept bugging me to do so and it didn't cost me a penny. I was able to replace my old cable box and a second piece of equipment with the X1, and it gives me a voice-controlled remote that isn't as handy as the Siri Remote of the Apple TV — but close — and improves on the discovery of channels, movies and shows out of the thousands available on Comcast.

Setup was incredibly simple; the only thing I needed to enter was an all-numeric account number that was entered in seconds, and everything was up and running perfectly in less that five minutes.

Compare this to Thanksgiving Day, when I decided to use my third-generation Apple TV and AirPlay to show a slideshow to my relatives. Or I should say, TRIED to use the Apple TV and AirPlay. Although I had the slideshow on an iPad and had watched it a few months before using the same Apple TV, the streaming box just didn't show up as an AirPlay target. I tried rebooting the Apple TV. Nope. Tried restarting the AirPort Extreme. Nope. Even tried to get to the Apple TV from two other iPads and two Macs. Nope. Finally, I gave up and we all watched the slide show on the nice big screen of the iPad Pro. I still have no idea why the Apple TV isn't working properly. Is Apple giving me a subtle nudge to buy a fourth-generation box?

For a company that prides itself on creating devices that "just work", the Apple TV — even the new fourth-generation box — has a lot of shortcomings that we've heard plenty of gripes about. Dennis Sellers, in his online review of the new Apple TV, noted that there's no 4K support, no optical out port for audio, and worst of all, you still need to use the onscreen keyboard to enter text. Fortunately Apple has resolved the last issue by providing support for external keyboards and the Apple Remote app in more recent versions of tvOS.

Now the X1 box will supposedly run apps; there are a few built in already, but my guess is that Comcast is waiting for the population of these set-top boxes to reach a critical level and then boom, they'll start selling games and other apps.

While it's not perfect — and neither is Siri — Comcast's voice search does a pretty de-

cent job of letting me find and record movies and TV shows. Last night, for example, we decided to watch Ratatouille. I just punched the microphone button, said "Find Ratatouille" and within 10 seconds we had rented the movie in HD for $3.99.

So, here I have a cable box that's ridiculously simple to set up, gives me voice search capability, has every channel I'd ever want to watch (plus a few hundred I'd never want to watch) and thousands of movies on demand. But for the fact that I can't stream my own music, photos or videos to it, the Comcast X1 box is doing a lot that I need for it to do.

Apple's fourth-generation Apple TV is supposedly being primed for a streaming video service that will offer a bundle of stations for a set price, plus premium channels for a bit more. This service has been rumored for years, and will apparently hit the market in 2016 if all of the rumors and hoopla are correct.

Given that for many people, the good old cable company set-top box will do everything they need for it to do, what will Apple be able to compete on? Price. To give you an idea of the ridiculous monthly charge I pay Comcast for internet service, phone service, and cable, our bill is currently about $230. About $75 of that bill is for the high-speed Internet, which I would have to continue paying in order to use an Apple TV for a subscription streaming TV service. The phone service could be dropped in favor of mobile service, which is cut about $30 of the total. So the gap Apple will have to play with is, in my case, about $125 per month.

That's a pretty good range that Apple could play in. Bring in several hundred channels of streaming HD video at even as high as $75 per month, and I'd drop Comcast cable in a minute.

But that's where I find the entire idea of a successful Apple streaming service falling apart. Apple has never competed on low price in any of its businesses. It's always been the high margin player in each and every business it gets into. When PC manufacturers are in a race to sell the cheapest personal computer, Apple sells expensive Macs and sees growth when the other companies are watch sales fall. When other smartphone manufacturers try to compete by selling cheap Android smartphones while Apple's pricey iPhones command an increasing share of a huge market, Apple ends up pulling down 94% of global smartphone profits. Remember when the iPod was Apple's big market surprise? The company was selling more expensive media players while everyone else was once again in a race for the bottom price.

Can Apple compete on price? It all depends on two things; volume of sales and what Apple ends up paying to the networks and other content providers. Apple will have a lot of competition — the big cable companies are not going to stand by and watch the world's largest consumer electronics company tap into their longstanding revenue streams. There are also companies who are already beating Apple at the game: witness Hulu, Netflix, and Amazon, although none of them have a true cable substitute subscription streaming service. If Apple can bring a near-cable experience to Apple TV, it's going to bring a flood of price cuts from the competition as well as a rush to grab more network contracts.

One big area that Apple is lagging in is content creation. Apple might have difficulty making deals with every network, so it's going to need to start creating its own content. While the other streaming providers are already creating Emmy Award-winning content, Apple has... nothing. A really smart move that could help Apple get a jump on the competition would be to buy a studio, or a group of them.

My pick for a merger or acquisition of a studio (probably a merger) would be Disney. The company is really an entertainment conglomerate now; Disney Media Networks (Disney Channels Worldwide, ESPN, ABC, and a number of radio stations), Disney Parks & Resorts, The Walt Disney Studios (Disney, Disneynature, Pixar, Touchstone, Marvel Studios, Lucasfilm), Disney Consumer Products, and Disney Interactive.

Why Disney? Why not? Apple and Disney have some interesting ties; Disney CEO and Chairman Bob Iger is on the Apple Board of Directors, the estate of Steve Jobs is the single largest shareholder of Disney, Jobs sold Pixar to Disney... It would give Apple one of the big three American networks (ABC), the leader in sports programming (ESPN) and a collection of studios that is continually cranking out blockbuster hits.

Could Apple buy Disney? Let's say Apple makes an offer of ten times EBITDA (Earnings before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation and Amortization) for Disney. That figure for the twelve months ending October 31, 2015 was $16,487,000,000 — ten times that is about $165 billion. Apple has that much cash on hand, but a lot that is overseas. I have no finance background, so I won't venture a guess as to whether or not Apple could make an acquisition of Disney without incurring some huge, nasty tax penalty.

Whatever the eventual outcome of Apple's foray into becoming a player in the video content delivery market, the next few years are critical. They can either make a few brash acquisitions now and spend some money to do so, or they can continue to dither for the foreseeable future and end up as a has-been as Netflix, Hulu, Amazon, and other entries dominate the streaming video world.

Photos: editorial archive

MyApple
magazine

# The ARCHT Audio offers serious sound
## - at a serious price

Dennis Sellers

Until now my favorite speaker to use with my iMac has been Harman Kardon's Aura, which offered serious sound for a one-piece system — albeit at a serious price of $399.99. Now I've tested an even better one-piece speaker — the ARCHT One — which sports an even more serious price tag of $599.

One: the ARCHT One doesn't have a microphone so can't function as a speakerphone for incoming calls over Bluetooth. Two: the 17-inch, eight-pound behemoth has to be plugged into an outlet so isn't portable. Three: …

Should you fork out 600 smackers for this all-in-one, wireless 360-degree speaker system that looks like a rocket about to blast off? Not if you'll only use it with your Mac or iOS device occasionally (the iMac's built-in speakers are surprisingly good). However, if, like me, you're on your Apple device hours a day, constantly playing music, and occasionally watching a movie or playing a game, the ARCHT One is devilishly tempting.

The folks at ARCHT Audio say their patented Sound Array transforms speakers from directional to multi-directional, dispersing sound evenly in all directions. Their patented technology and the ARCHT One's built-in 120mm 4.7-inch subwoofer, 50W amplifier, three-inch full-range driver, six-inch 150mm passive radiator, and built-in digital sound processor deliver room-filling sound. You can also use your iPhone and a free ARCHT app (available on the App Store) to optimize the speaker system's sound based on the space in which it's being used.

The app did help slightly, but the ARCHT One sounds incredible right out of the box without any tweaking. Highs and lows come through clearly. Bass is deep and impressive (Pentatonix's *Misbehavin'* positively thumps, for instance).

Speaking of connectivity, the ARCHT One is as convenient as you could wish. It connects via Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, AirPlay or directly through USB, and takes just seconds to start. Once it starts, it pumps out rich, full bodied (24bit/192kHz) audio that's distortion free. If you've really got money to burn, you can pair ARCHT Ones (or send me some of that extra moolah).

Input source, playback and volume can be controlled via capacitive touch controls on the top ring of the system. However, I found them to be a little temperamental. Sometimes I had to press them more-than-firmly to make 'em work.

Three things you should note. One: the ARCHT One doesn't have a microphone so can't function as a speakerphone for incoming calls over Bluetooth. Two: the 17-inch, eight-pound behemoth has to be plugged into an outlet so isn't portable. Three: as sweet as it is, the patented Sound Array won't let you recreate a true 5.1 surround sound from its solo speaker. None of these caveats were deal breakers for me, but you have been alerted.

Also, I've heard some complaints that the ARCHT One's plastic body isn't as impressive as that of a $599 speaker system should be. Once I got used to its appearance — and it is a funky-looking beast — this didn't bother me. Plus, I really like the thick, rubber feet that elevate the speaker and provide a stable base.

If you need a top-of-the-line speaker system for use with your Mac or iOS device, the ARCHT One certainly fulfills the need. Once you hear one up close and personal, be prepared to put a dent in your bank account or your credit card.

Photo: Dreamaudiolab.com

MyApple magazine

# BoomStick

## - booster for headphones and earphones

Krystian Kozerawski
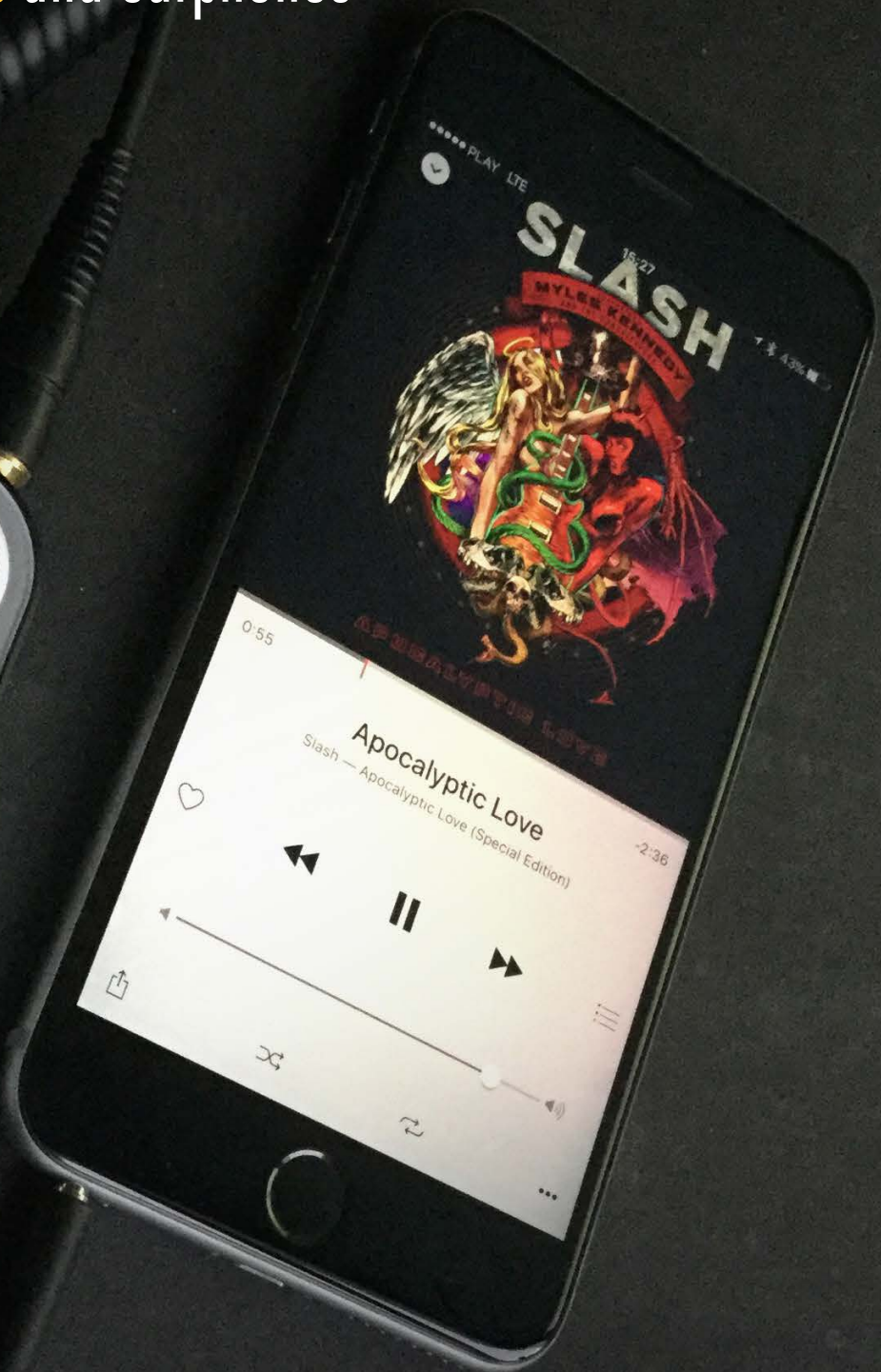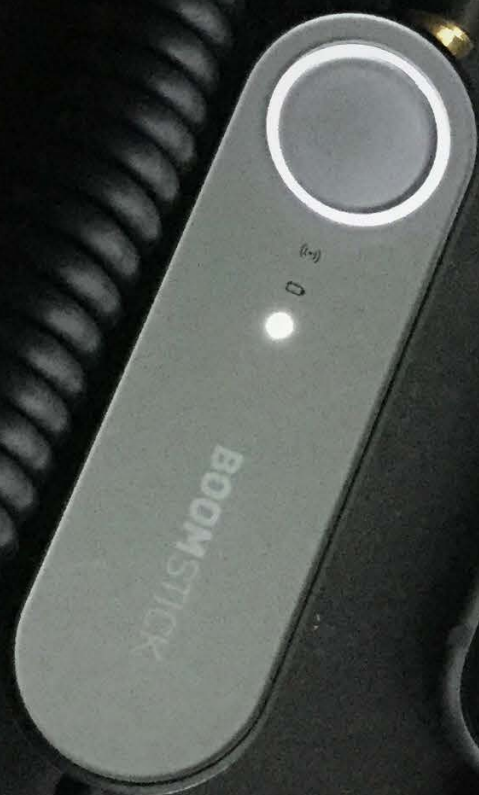
I listen to music on my iPhone using many kinds of earphones and head-phones. They are devices of different quality, from the cheap earbuds and Ear-Pods through midrange to studio class headphones. Depending on the head-phones or earphones, the quality of sound varies from bad to good as does the pleasure of listening of music. Such issues inspired a company named BoomCloud360 to invent the BoomStick — a small audio booster for all kinds of head and earphones.

BoomStick is a cigarette lighter-sized sound processor and amplifier. It not only amplifies the sound signal but also processes it in terms of different frequencies. The device offers two modes of operation; pressing the large round button activates the first mode that gives a mid boost, while pressing and holding it activates the high boost mode that is primarily designed for weaker earphones like the EarPods mentioned earlier.

Sound routed through a BoomStick receives a gentle and pleasant bass boost. The sound itself is clearly more malleable and spacious compared than sound direct from the iPhone no matter what kind of music I am listening to at any given time. As mentioned above, BoomStick also acts as a small signal amplifier - music that goes through it is clearly louder than the output directly from the headphone jack of the iPhone. Of course, there's no need to mention that this small accessory can be connected to any other audio source, including other smartphones, MP3 players or computers.

It's a matter of taste; you can either listen to music without any changes (especially when it is stored in a lossless format) or treat the signal with many bass, midrange or treble boosters. A group of my friends regards these kind of changes as being equivalent to adding a mustache to a portrait - editing a work of art by another person. I can accept that argument only in the case of stereo equipment of very good quality --even high-end sound equipment has its own characteristics that make the sound different from what musicians originally heard in a recording studio. In the case of the low cost and midrange ear- and headphones that I usually use while traveling or training and sometimes at home, BoomStick greatly increases the pleasure of communing with the music.

Photos: Krystian Kozerawski

MyApple
magazine

# Samson Meteor M2 Speaker System

brings <mark>retro chic and big sound</mark> to your Macs

Steve Sande



Tech bloggers tend to review a lot of wireless speakers, so today we're going to treat you to something a bit different. The Samson Meteor M2 Speaker System (US$72.95 via Amazon, affiliate link) is a wired system that delivers loud and clear sound when connected to your Mac or any other sound source.

It takes up a lot less space than many of the wireless boxes, produces better sound...

## Design

The look of the Meteor M2 speakers can only be described as "retro chic", as the speakers have that "grilled" look of old microphones. The speakers are a matched stereo set, each with a 2.5 inch driver and a rear-ported passive radiator. An included 3.5mm male to male cable connects the right speaker to the headphone port on your device (Mac or iOS), while another cable connects the right and left speakers. An AC adapter "brick" is included to power the speakers.

The right speaker has a blue LED on the front of it to let you know when the speaker power has been turned on, as well as a power/volume switch on the side. The speakers have a silicone pad on the bottom to prevent them from moving or buzzing when you have the volume cranked. Made from zinc die cast metal, these are surprisingly heavy speakers for the size — each one weighs about 2.5 pounds. Size-wise, they're about 3 inches wide, 5.75 inches tall, and about 3.5 inches deep.

## Function

After trying tons of wireless speakers, I was pleasantly surprised by the Meteor M2 system. It takes up a lot less space than many of the wireless boxes, produces better sound, and doesn't require constant recharging.

I did my usual test of the speakers, which includes playing everything from classical to jazz, hard rock to hip-hop. The sound qual-ity was crisp and clear, and if volume is what you're looking for — say for watching movies on your 5K iMac or gaming — you're going to get it.

The one thing I have to say about having this set of speakers set up at opposite ends of my 27-inch iMac is that I get incredible stereo separation, something you'll never equal with even the best headphones. You can really feel the music, which in my opinion really adds to the enjoyment of whatever you're listening to. Whether it's a recent digital recording or an original session recording from the 1950s, that vibration in your body from the music emanating from the speakers adds another dimension to your listening pleasure.

Sure, it might be that way with any speakers you can hook up to your Mac. I find the M2s to be unobtrusive in terms of size (especially next to the iMac), but powerful and big in terms of size. And just think — you'll never have to worry about pairing the speakers or suffer through another Bluetooth audio dropout.

## Conclusion

With a fun design, rugged construction, and the ability to really push out sound with great fidelity, I'd recommend the Samson Meteor M2 Speaker System to any Mac user who wants a pair of connected speakers for enjoying music or soundtracks. At less than $75 on Amazon, these speakers provide music reproduction that's better than what I've heard from speakers costing hundreds of dollars more. For more information, check out the Samson web page for the Meteor M2 speakers.

I can't wait to hook 'em up to my iPad Pro with the new version of GarageBand on it!

Photo: Samson Technologies

MyApple
magazine

# Mobile World Congress, Barcelona 2016

## - the end of innovation for smartphone manufacturers

Krystian Kozerawski

What does a smartphone look like? I guess almost everybody knows. It is obvious - a device that can be held in one hand (the old fashioned word "palmtop" would suit it perfectly), with a large LCD or OLED display, 3.5, 4 or even up to 6 inches diagonal in size. There is at least one camera in it and a GPS/GLONASS signal receiver. The device itself is a powerful pocket computer that enables not only voice or text communication, but also lets us work remotely or have fun playing games, listening to music or watching movies.

There were no revolutionary new smartphones with breathtaking features from any of them. Sure, there were some strange half-baked ideas that seem to have been brought to life only to make visitors to the conference amazed, but with no luck in my opinion.

Over the years, the screens in those devices grew bigger as well as their pixel density and resolution to the extent that the human eye can no longer distinguish single pixels. The devices gained more accurate location services, cameras with better sensors, lenses and analog image stabilization. Fingerprint scanners and screen pressure sensors became the norm. Some devices added inductive charging and became water resistant. There were even some attempts -- with a little success -- to equip them with e-ink screens, the same as those found in many e-book readers. Those screens are very energy efficient, and are better for reading longer texts. Two years ago at Mobile World Congress in Barcelona, I played with one of them, the Russian Yota Phone, a dual screen smartphone with a traditional LCD (or OLED) on one side and an e-ink screen on the back side.

This year at Mobile World Congress I couldn't find a Yota Phone or any other smartphone that could be called "an innovative device". I dare say that the streetcar named innovation (not the one named desire) seems to have ended its run down the track one way and it is turning around at the terminus. Or even worse, maybe it just reached the end of the track.

Due to their form, smartphones and the old-style cell phones have more or less closed construction. It is hard to make a screen bigger and bigger, for eventually a phablet would be called a tablet and not a smartphone. One could put more pixels in the screens to pack them even more closely together, but the human eye wouldn't be able to discern a difference. In fact, at this point smartphone manufacturers can only improve cameras, batteries, processors, graphic chips and storage. There is nothing that can be done with the form of the smartphone. The best example of this can be found in the just-introduced Samsung Galaxy S7 and S7 Edge. I am deliberately ignoring the curved screen on the side of the Galaxy S7 Edge, which was made only to prove that the company could do it. Sadly, for the last two years Samsung still hasn't figured out a way to take advantage of it. These smartphones have better processors, batteries and cameras, but they introduce no real new features and absolutely no innovation. Yes, they are water and dust resistant and have a SD card slot, but those are features well known from the old Galaxy S5 smartphones.

I'm not just pointing my finger at Samsung (probably the biggest Apple competitor in smartphone market), but the other manufacturers as well. There were no revolutionary new smartphones with breathtaking features from any of them. Sure, there were some strange half-baked ideas that seem to have been brought to life only to make visitors to the conference amazed, but with no luck in my opinion. LG introduced its new modular flagship G5. One can swap its modular parts, installing a photo grip with zoom controls, a bigger battery or a Hi-Fi module from Bang & Olufsen. There are no more options, and both the smartphone and the swappable parts look poorly made. In my opinion, the LG G5 idea is also completely contrary to the idea of a smartphone. It's supposed to be a compact pocket comput-

er that is ready for use out of the box without the user needing to worry about swapping parts. Except for some die-hard geeks who might be interested in such a device, it won't gain many users. The idea of swappable parts isn't new and there are issues. What do users do when a new version of the smartphone comes to the market and all those modular parts are no longer supported? The poor user ends up with a strange device with even more strange parts kept forever in the lowest possible drawer of his or her desk.

The end of innovation is a problem not only for manufacturers of Android devices, but for Apple too. The iPhone has the same closed form factor as the competing smartphones and it will be difficult to put new revolutionary features into it year after year. However, since Apple haven't been taking part in the game called  "we put all possible new features into our devices", there is still some space and time for Apple's innovations -- better, more matured features known from the other smartphones. After another two or three years the only moves available for Apple will be improving tech specs or even reviving old stuff from the past. There is a lot of current talk about a new 4-inch iPhone that could be called the "iPhone 5 SE". Bringing back the old screen size and a similar form factor is definitely turning back the clock.

## Escape into virtual reality

Competition is strong among manufacturers of smartphones and in general mobile devices. There were no new revolutionary smartphones, tablets (except for the Huawei ripoff of the iPad Pro and Surface Pro) or even smartwatches. While facing the end of innovation they have to try to be seen as innovative, so they're massively trying to escape in a growing (or constantly overblown) virtual reality (VR) market. At Mobile World Con-

gress there was a lot of talk about VR and VR goggles. It all started with the presentation of Samsung's new Galaxy smartphones. About five thousand journalists and bloggers were invited and watched presentations wearing Samsung Gear VR goggles. The new revolutionary Samsung product was a small ball-shaped camera called Gear 360 that let users record spherical movies (Check out our article about the Ricoh Theta S spherical camera in MyApple Magazine Issue 3). There was a lot of talk about VR at the Samsung presentation, especially from Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg. However, it was rather scary that he could walk freely among an enormous press audience wearing those virtual reality goggles. Being cut off from reality is the biggest danger of that VR stuff.

LG and HTC also presented their own VR goggles in Barcelona. Although Vive by HTC seems to be a step forward, I am still very skeptical. Vritual Reality can provide some amazing fun, together with headaches and a lack of contact with the real world. The technology is so invasive that I don't expect that it will be widely adopted. It's worth mentioning that VR has been touted as the future of tech since the mid-1990s, without luck. Nowadays, it's probably the only way for smartphone manufacturers to show innovation of some kind.

There is a high wall in front of all of the manufacturers called the end of innovation. They cannot jump over it. What will interest me the most is who will be the first to make it to the other side of the wall, and what exactly is out there on the other side of it. The chances for all manufacturers are more or less the same. The question is which of them will be the first.

Photos: Krystian Kozerawski

# Welcome, back Default Folder!

## You've been sorely missed

Dennis Sellers

I'm thrilled that one of my favorite Mac utilities — St. Clair Software's Default Folder X is now compatible with Mac OS X El Capitan. Since upgrading to the latest version of the operating system, I've missed this tool, which enhances Open and Save dialogs and offers features that Apple should consider building into OS X.

Default Folder lets you access the contents of your recent, favorite, and open folders right from Default Folder X's toolbar. Its hierarchical pop-up menus expand as you mouse over them, letting you navigate your folders to get to your files. You can assign a keyboard shortcut for all of your favorite folders. If an Open and Save dialog isn't open, then you can use Default Folder X's menu bar, Dock icon, or keyboard shortcuts.

If you're constantly saving things inside the same folder, Default Folder X can remember that folder for you. You can even set a different default folder for each application you use.

Default Folder 5 offers tracking of recent files as well as recent folders, an integrated menu in the Finder's toolbar, configurable keyboard shortcuts, more information displayed for selected files, file/folder tagging with draggable recent tags, a new drag 'n drop sidebar for quick access to files and folders.

Default Folder X lets you open up or save to any Finder window with a single click. It also lets you get info on, rename, and delete existing files, putting the Finder's power in every Open and Save dialog. to help you quickly return to folders you've recently used, Default Folder X remembers them for you. It can even rebound to the last file you used in all your recent folders.

Default Folder X lets you add Spotlight keywords, OpenMeta tags, and Finder labels on the spot, while you're still in the Save dialog. It even remembers keywords you've used before and automatically completes them as you type.

With the recently released version 5, Default Folder received some useful enhancements as well as El Capitan compatibility (with System Integrity Protection turned on or off). There's now support for tabbed Finder windows in the Finder-click feature. Default folders can be applied by file extension as well as by application. Hierarchical menus can now display all folders before files.

Default Folder 5 also offers tracking of recent files as well as recent folders, an integrated menu in the Finder's toolbar, configurable keyboard shortcuts, more information displayed for selected files, file/folder tagging with draggable recent tags, a new drag 'n drop sidebar for quick access to files and folders. Finally, there's an updated user interface for setting preferences, adding favorites and setting default folders

As I said, the St. Clair app offers features that Apple should be building into OS X. But since it's not, do yourself a favor and spring for Default Folder.

Default Folder is compatible with Mac OS X 10.10 and higher. Version 5 is a $14.95 paid upgrade for version 4 users who purchased their licenses before June 1, 2015. For users who purchased on or after June 1, the upgrade is free. Default Folder X costs $34.95 for new users.

Photo: Pixabay.com

MyApple
magazine

# Pigment is a fun iOS app

## for use with the Apple Pencil (even for non-artists)

Dennis Sellers



If, like me, you have an Apple Pencil but aren't a great artist, you should download Pigment from the Apple App Store. It allows you to color pictures just like you did as a kid. Of course, kids can use it as well.

Don't laugh. Coloring books for adults are a serious trend. The Pigment/Apple Pencil/iPad Pro combo brings coloring books into the digital realm.

With Pigment, you can color like you would on paper with colored pencils. You can choose from over 200 hand curated, professionally drawn illustrations. There are eight different kinds of pencils, markers and brushes (colored pencil, marker, paint brush, fill, airbrush, circle brush, linear gradient, radial gradient) and an unlimited number of colors to choose from. Once you're done, you can share your artistic masterpieces with others or print them using AirPrint.

Pigment does an excellent job at simulating pencil and brush strokes for a realistic coloring experience. It also adds finger support, but coloring with the Apple Pencil is a much more satisfying experience. I've heard complaints that the app's palm recognition is terrible; however, I had no issues with it.

Pigment is free, but you'll have to subscribe to Premium Access for a new book of designs every week. Premium Access is a paid subscription that gives you access to all of the designs in the Pigment Library, removes watermarks on your shared and saved images; and lets you save high resolution images.

Subscriptions come in three flavors: weekly, monthly, and yearly for, respectively, $1.99. $4.99, and $24.99. If you're really into coloring, those prices are reasonable. However, since I only color occasionally, I'd like the ability to buy one or two coloring pages for a low price per item.

On the downside, the color palettes are somewhat limited. You can create a custom shade, but as far as I can tell, there's no way to save it for use in your future coloring ventures.

Hopefully, future versions of Pigment will address these issues. In its current form, it's still a fun virtual coloring book — and an excuse to buy an Apple Pencil for those who aren't professional artists.

Photos: Pigmentapp logo artwork and photo - Pixite LLC

# ¡Hola!

## ¿Estás cansad@ de leer siempre las páginas en inglés?

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# Olloclip Studio

adds protection and photo/video accessories to newer iPhones

Steve Sande

Olloclip started a photographic revolution when it came out with interchangeable lenses that clipped onto an iPhone. The company is still at the forefront of clip-on lens kits for iPhones and its latest product — Olloclip Studio (US$89.99) — is designed to take iPhone photography one step further by providing photographers with a way to use tripods and other accessories alongside their Olloclip lenses. Olloclip Studio is available for the iPhone 6/6s/6 Plus/6s Plus.

The back of the black Studio Case is dominated by what looks like — but isn't — a flip-out kickstand of some sort. Instead, that's center of a "track" that all of the accessories are clipped onto. One part of the track is slightly wider than the rest, and that's where you place accessories to install or remove them.

## Design

Olloclip Studio consists of the new Studio Case and six other pieces. First, there is a two-finger grip that attaches to the case, giving photographers a more stable way to hold onto the iPhone and accessories. Next, there are two 1/4-20 clips for mounting the Studio Case onto a tripod, grip or handle either in landscape or portrait orientation. There are also two cold shoe adapters for mounting external LED lights or microphones in seconds. Finally, the Studio includes the Kickstand, a way to prop up the iPhone and case for hands-free reading or video viewing.

You notice that I didn't mention anything about lenses. That's because the Studio is meant to work with Olloclip's 4-in-1, Active, or new Macro Pro Lens Kits (not included). Any of those lens kits works with the protective Studio Case and the other accessories.

Compared to the Ollocase, the Studio Case seems to be quite a bit more sturdy and able to withstand the occasional drop. The Studio Case has a mounting area for the lenses,

passthrough switches for the power and volume toggles on the iPhone 6/6s/6 Plus/6s Plus, and openings for the mute switch, speaker, headphone and Lightning connector.

The back of the black Studio Case is dominated by what looks like — but isn't — a flip-out kickstand of some sort. Instead, that's center of a "track" that all of the accessories are clipped onto. One part of the track is slightly wider than the rest, and that's where you place accessories to install or remove them. Once the accessories are slid into the skinnier part of the track, they're held into place by the track and by the outside of the case.

## Function

The Studio Case is rather underwhelming in terms of looks, but does a pretty good job of protecting the iPhone. However, it's a good thing that the Studio kit includes the two-finger grip, because the case isn't very "grippy" and would otherwise be easy to drop.

The case is fairly easy to install, but like many stiff cases like this, it can be a bear to remove. Fortunately for many Olloclip lens kit owners, you probably won't want to remove the Studio Case after installation.

The two-finger grip works very well. As you'd assume, it gets its name from the fact that you put two fingers of one hand through the "loop" of the grip. I found that it was quite simple to do one-handed iPhone photography with the grip installed by using my thumb to press the shutter button.

The two 1/4-20 tripod mounts are set up slightly differently so that one works for taking pictures in landscape orientation and the other for portrait mode shots. In portrait orientation, the tripod mount ends up on the lower right side of the iPhone as seen

from the front, while the landscape mount can be moved just about anywhere you wish on either side of the iPhone.

Videographers are going to love the cold shoe mounts. Slide one or two onto your Studio Case, and you'll be able to add accessories like microphones and LED lights with ease. The Kickstand works pretty well as long as you don't have some of the other accessories attached.

> If I have one complaint, it's that with all of the little parts that are part of this kit, Olloclip really should have considered throwing in a little carrying bag of some sort. What I ended up doing was threading the accessories I'm not using onto the strap of one of the Olloclip lens kits. Those lens kits, of course, work just fine with the Olloclip Studio.

The Studio also includes a wrist strap for your device. You look the "string" end of it through a pair of holes on one side of the case, loop the "strap" end through that, then pull tight. It makes it quite easy to just dangle the phone, lenses, and clip-on accessories from one wrist.

If I have one complaint, it's that with all of the little parts that are part of this kit, Ol-

loclip really should have considered throwing in a little carrying bag of some sort. What I ended up doing was threading the accessories I'm not using onto the strap of one of the Olloclip lens kits. Those lens kits, of course, work just fine with the Olloclip Studio.



## Conclusion

For anyone who owns the current Olloclip lens kits, the Olloclip Studio is a nice set of accessories that can help an iPhone photographer or videographer go the extra step toward capturing better images. Whether it'susing the two-finger grip for better handheld work, mounting the iPhone on a tripod for more stability, or adding self-powered LED lights or mics, the Studio is a relatively inexpensive add-on that protects your iPhone while providing a rail-based clip-on system for accessories.

Photos: Olloclip

MyApple
magazine

# Postcards from a trip
## - photo processing on iPhone

Krystian Kozerawski

Mobile photography has been my passion for a long time. I began taking digital photographs more than 10 years ago using a Motorola mobile phone, but the real fun began with the release of the iPhone 4 and launch of Instagram. Usually I indulge in mobile photography with a passion during both holiday trips and business trips to various trade shows and conferences.
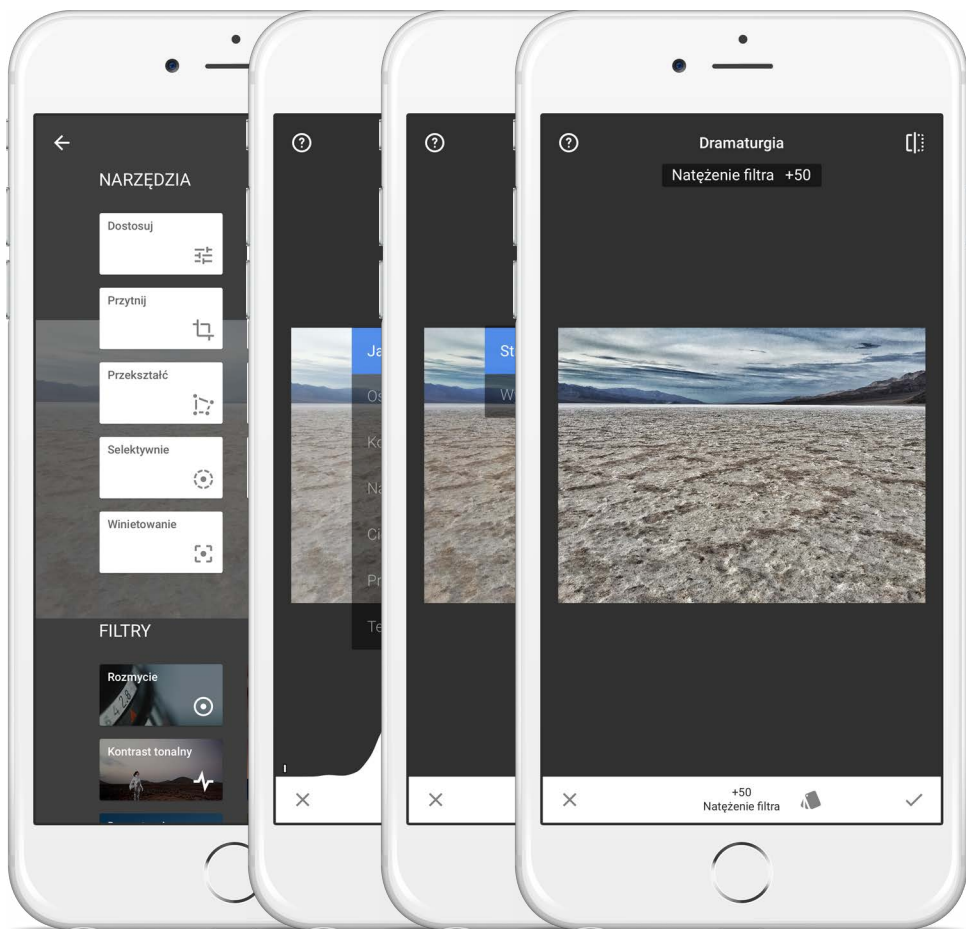
Typically my timelines on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook show a mass of new photos while I am away on trips. I took a lot of photos during a trip that I took just before the 2016 Consumer Electronic Show in Las Vegas, Nevada. We were trying to explore the area, so there were many opportunities for photography.

> With Snapseed one can adjust brightness, lights, exposure, saturation, contrast, sharpness, level of details, make some of them bold with tilt shift or - on the contrary - blur them, and lighten dark areas of the image. Of course, there are also perspective correction...

Photos taken with either the iPhone or DSLR cameras don't often capture the feel of a photographed object or place. Quite often they are faded and flat, and they are lacking drama and color — they just need some processing. I process them in place on my iPhone shortly after I take them. That gives me the ability to compare the final effect with not only reality, but also with how I perceive it. The app I use for processing is the Snapseed app for iOS.

Snapseed provides a lot of tools for editing, retouching and processing, including a wide selection of filters and effects with customizable parameters. With Snapseed one can adjust brightness, lights, exposure, saturation, contrast, sharpness, level of details, make some of them bold with tilt shift or — on the contrary — blur them, and lighten dark areas of the image. Of course, there are also perspective correction and cropping tools, and Snapseed does color correction and transformation with very good desaturation, black and white, and noir tools. Finally, thanks to the drama tool your photo can look like a little work of art.

What makes Snapseed very unique is fast and easy access to all available tools and with simple thumb gestures (swiping up and down chooses a parameter of a photo, filter or effect; swiping left or right changes the value of it).

Snapseed won't make a great photographer out of a person with no photographic taste, but it can create a good picture from a photo that would usually not attract any attention.

Here are some photos I took last month in Death Valley and Calico Ghost Town, California

Photos: app screenshots, gallery - Krystian Kozerawski

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