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Apple's Software Quality, Continued

[Marco Arment](#) ([comments](#), [follow-up](#)) continues on the theme of [my post from October](#):

Apple's hardware today is amazing — it has never been better. But the software quality has fallen so much in the last few years that I'm deeply concerned for its future. I'm typing this on a computer whose existence I didn't even think would be possible yet, but it runs an OS with embarrassing bugs and fundamental regressions. Just a few years ago, we would have relentlessly made fun of Windows users for these same bugs on their inferior OS, but we can't talk anymore.

[...]

I suspect the rapid decline of Apple's software is a sign that marketing is *too* high a priority at Apple today: having major new releases every year is clearly impossible for the engineering teams to keep up with while maintaining quality. Maybe it's an engineering problem, but I suspect not — I doubt that *any* cohesive engineering team could keep up with these demands and maintain significantly higher quality.

A [former Apple engineer](#):

With Bertrand, we would move in giant monolithic releases where every group would just dump in whatever they had ready and the whole thing would get released with nightly builds. With SnowLeopard in particular, I remember three dozen releases in a row where Xcode was unusable due to obj-c garbage collection issues. Random stuff you didn't expect like CoreGraphics would have showstopper issues and then we'd report it and it would get fixed by the next week.

This resulted in extremely late releases that had a ton of bugs that we piled patches onto as time went on.

Craig moved the organization onto a sprint system, where we would develop new features for 2 weeks and then spend a week fixing bugs. After 10 or 12 or 16 of these cycles, we would deem it ready and ship it out.

[...]

What has changed is that releases and features happen more often. Tiger and Leopard had a good 2 years to mature and get patches while their delayed successors missed target dates. [...] They felt stable because they were just old, sort of like Debian stable. Meanwhile, the development versions of Leopard and Snow Leopard (the two I spent most of my career at Apple developing) were downright horrible and unreleasable. [...] It's just that you remember them better because they had a longer history as a stable legacy OS than the modern versions.

[Update (2015-01-12): There are more comments about this change in development styles [here](#).]

A [current Apple engineer](#):

the sprint (milestone) development system is still in place... it's not the problem though, it's the problem is the focus on new useless [imo] features at the expense of core functionality and quality

Another [former Apple engineer](#):

The good thing about the nightly builds was you didn't have to use them, and people could respond quickly to showstoppers rather than wait for a sprint. There was a quicklook team to catch bugs which stopped nightly builds from release to general dev, and unless you really needed that build (to test a new API) you didn't install until quality was restored. The xCode bug was therefore unusual, as they could have fixed it the next day (and with enough heat they would have).

With fortnightly builds which are only then released to Engineering, if that is now what is happening, there will be massive instability every 2 weeks, until the final round of bug fixing cycle stops all features being added.

Which can't finish in time because the OS has to be released at an Apple event.

[Geoff Wozniak](#) ([tweet](#), [comments](#)):

There are lots of other little things that irk me: mds being a hog, distnoted being a hog, lack of virtualization, other system services mysteriously Wring up, bogging the system down. It doesn't help that the Macbook Pro I have is one of those lemons that overheats easily, thus kicking the fans into "rocket taking oX" mode. At this point, my default position on Apple software in OS X has moved from "probably good" to "probably not OK". They seem more interested in pumping out quantity by way of more upgrades. It's death by a thousand cuts, but it's death nonetheless.

[Daniel Jalkut](#):

The current state of Apple's software does not particularly concern me. Are there embarrassing blemishes? Yes. Does the annual schedule for major OS updates seem rushed? Of course. Are there Apple employees in positions of power who do not share Marco's and my enthusiasm for software that "just works?" I regret to surmise that, indeed, there are.

[...]

Over the years I have never been at a loss for identifying problems big and small with Apple's products, or with the way it conducts its business. I'm sure I had plenty of complaints starting in 2002, but I didn't start blogging in earnest until 2005. Here are some highlights to remind you

that *things have never been fine* with Apple[...]

[John Gruber](#):

Apple hasn't (yet) lost any ground in the market, but they've created an opportunity for that to happen, because they've squandered a lot of trust with their users. It's not that Apple has lost the "it just works" crown to a competitor, but rather that they've seeded a perception that Apple's stuff doesn't work, either.

[TidBITS](#):

Overall, Apple's legendary stability and reliability have suffered some major blows.

For the time being, Mac OS X and iOS are effectively feature complete. The one thing we've repeatedly heard from users is a cry for stability. We'd like to see OS X 10.11 and iOS 9 be "Snow Leopard" updates that — just as 10.6 Snow Leopard did for 10.5 Leopard — remove cruft, clean up problems, and polish existing features so that we have a stable base going forward.

[Dr. Drang](#) channels [Tim O'Reilly](#):

We are Apple's best customers. By "we," I don't mean fanbloggers in particular, I mean power users in general. Those of us who learn the deep details of the software we use, or who write scripts and Automator actions to speed up our work. We're not Apple's best customers because we buy lots of Apple products (although some of us do). We're its best customers because of our leverage.

[...]

Are you as enthusiastic about demonstrating recent versions of OS X as you were about Leopard? Have you avoided family members who keep asking you why their iPhones don't have enough free space to install iOS 8? Do you think it might be better if your friends stick with Android because then you won't feel responsible if some of their data doesn't sync?

[Casey Liss](#):

It was Apple that chose to establish this cadence, and chose to stick with it. Now, for better or worse, they may have backed themselves into a corner. When you're that ox of a man standing in the boxing ring, the last thing you want to do is show weakness. To give the plucky little guy hope.

[Lukas Mathis](#):

I get the same impression: Apple doesn't see what's happening.

It seems to me that the media covering Apple is partly to blame for this. There seem to be two main factions covering Apple: people who dislike Apple, and whose opinions can thus be disregarded. And people who like Apple, but would

rather talk about how wrong the first faction is, and how badly Samsung and Google are doing, than discuss the problems Apple's own products have.

[Kirk McElhearn:](#)

I no longer want to be the first to install an update to iOS or OS X, because I simply don't trust that Apple will get it right.

[...]

Apple is losing its trust among long-term users. The company may be gaining plenty of new users, who, for now, are willing to accept this kind of problem, since they're used to platforms where things may be even worse. But if Apple loses the loyalty of their oldest users, the company's reputation will change from the company that we trusted, to just another computer and device manufacturer.

[...]

Neither I nor the many others who echoed his feelings did so because of any desire to trash Apple; it was rather because we are genuinely concerned that this company with which we have a long relationship is showing signs of decreasing quality in its software.

[Guy English:](#)

What I'd like to call out is this particular paragraph I've quoted. We don't. We don't. We need.

Marco may be passed off as a developer here and dismissed as expressing developer thoughts. The truth is, at least the truth I've known from supporting and dealing with people who aren't technical who use these devices every single day — "we don't" isn't about developers.

Update (2015-01-06): [Craig Hockenberry \(tweet\)](#):

Our concerns come from seeing the start of something pernicious: our beloved platform is becoming harder to use because of a lot of small software failures.

[It's literally a death by a thousand tiny little cuts.](#)

Apple may not be aware of the scope of these issues because many of these annoyances go unreported. I'm guilty of this when I open a Finder window on a network share. While the spinner in the window wastes my time, I think about writing a Radar, but a minute later it's forgotten. Until the next time.

[...]

But I have a pretty simple metric for the current state of Apple's software: prior to the release of Yosemite, I could go months between restarts (usually only to install updates.) Lately, I feel lucky to go a week without some kind of problem that requires a complete reset.

[...]

Every holiday season, my wife and I make sure that everyone's computer is up-to-date and running smoothly. This year, for the first time ever, we didn't install the latest version of OS X. The problems with Screen Sharing are especially problematic: it's how we do tech support throughout the year.

[Garrett Murray:](#)

This, a million times over[...]

[Jason Snell:](#)

This is a complicated issue, and one difficult to assess without knowing the facts about what's happening inside of Apple. An avalanche of bug complaints and misty water-colored memories about the stability of Snow Leopard aside, I do think that there's a problem here.

[Federico Viticci:](#)

When I started MacStories in 2009, two pillars sustained the narrative around Apple: its "attention to detail" and the "just works" aspect of its software. Since iOS 7, it feels like those pillars have begun eroding at a quicker pace.

[...]

What it comes down to, really, is balance. I believe that Apple used to be more disciplined at balancing its desire for new features and commitment to refinements.

My problem with most commentary to Marco's piece is the binary interpretation of Apple's software releases: that they should either do new stuff or fix bugs. That's too simplistic and shortsighted. Software is never bug-free, but there's a threshold where it's good enough to be shipped. I want to see Apple get better at releasing updates like iOS 8 and Yosemite with a better balance between novelty and stability. They shouldn't be mutually exclusive.

[Joe Cieplinski:](#)

I bring this up not because I disagree with Marco Arment's post from last night about the recent decline in Apple's software quality, which is undeniable. I just think it helps to remember that mass market success and decline in build quality pretty much go hand in hand. And that we've been here with Apple before. Many times.

[...]

The only question now is how does Apple balance the speed of innovation against the need to maintain quality moving forward? As the Apple Watch starts shipping later this year, and the critics of Cook finally quiet down about Apple's inability to have a hit new product, will Apple shift gears a little? Will the organization realize that it's out of whack and start to feel the need for a Snow Leopard moment? I think

it probably will.

[Victor Agreda Jr:](#)

Apple's longtime brand promise of "it just works" applies to fewer and fewer products the company makes.

[David Chartier:](#)

Conversations I overhear in public have gone from "hey Apple's new thing looks pretty great" to "meh, just wait until they work out all the problems."

[Shawn King:](#)

I hate agreeing with Arment but sometimes, he's bang on. I believe in this case he is. From embarrassing software updates to apps that simply don't work properly or well – Apple's poor quality and functionality of the Mail.app being just one of many examples – the assessment that "We don't need major OS releases every year" is something many of us hope Apple listens and pays attention to.

[Nick Heer:](#)

For every dumb bug or feature regression, I also find something that works far better than it ever has, and often far better than its competition. Perhaps the big thing Apple needs to do in 2015 is reassert its unique skill in creating unique, easy-to-use software that — hyperbolically — "just works". Not necessarily with new features, but by making the features that already exist truly great.

[Lloyd Chambers:](#)

MPG has been writing about [Apple Core Rot](#) for a year now, and longer before making it explicit. Lately, there are so many dozens of specific issues that could be documented in OS X Yosemite that weeks could be spent documenting them. While adding the numerous examples to Apple Core Rot would strengthen the piece tremendously, MPG has useful work to do.

BTW, my [Apple Mail VIP list has been deleted](#) about fifty times now. Uncle.

[Graham Lee:](#)

So there are plenty of alternatives, many of which are good in some ways and bad in others, and all I know is that I don't want things to be like *this*, without being able to say I want one of *those* instead. I don't even think there will be one of *those*, at least not in the sense of a competitor to Apple on laptop operating systems.

[...]

In fact I don't even think that Apple's systems are *bad*, they've just lost the "it just works" sheen. It's just that when you combine that with the lack of credible alternative, you realise the problem is probably in expecting some

corporation to put loads of resources into something that's not going to have a great value, and merely needs to be "good enough" to avoid having any strategic penalty.

Update (2015-01-10): [Ashley Nelson-Hornstein](#):

I know a ton of smart people work at the mothership, so I'm betting these incredibly intelligent people have already noticed the problem and moved to make the proper adjustments. I think what we likely can't see from the outside are the projects that have already been cancelled to allocate resources for bugs.

Update (2015-01-11): [Riccardo Mori](#):

When a new OS X version *introduces* issues that were absent in the previous one, that doesn't go unnoticed, especially when such issues — like Wi-Fi reliability — are taking *two* minor OS X releases to be fixed. When a new OS X version makes your Mac feels more sluggish than it was in the previous version, that perception clouds whatever new exciting features the new OS X version brings to the table.

[John Gruber](#):

But in avoiding the problems of stagnation and hubris, it feels like Apple has run into a different problem: nothing ever feels settled and stable. If the pattern Apple has established the last two years holds, by the time [the loose screws get tightened](#) in iOS 8 and OS X 10.10, we'll be getting developer betas of iOS 9 and OS X 10.11 at WWDC. And [as Guy English has keenly remarked](#) numerous times, the annual schedule means that by now — that is, January — a lot of engineering talent in Cupertino is being directed to *next* year's OS releases, leaving less talent on the task of tightening the remaining loose screws in last year's.

[Bogdan Popescu](#):

- Last year I spent at least 30% of my development time fixing Apple bugs.
- I spent 4 days just to get the lovely new search field in Yosemite to work properly. In the end, I just found a hacky way of reverting it to how it was before Yosemite.
- I always check if an Apple framework or class is at least 2 years old before using it. If it's not, I assume it's full of bugs and I try to use something else.

Update (2015-01-12): [Glenn Fleishman](#):

Many of us have been grumbling quite publicly since iOS 7 and Mavericks shipped that the fit and finish we expect either on release or shortly afterwards for Mac OS X and iOS has slipped. That we spent a lot of time dealing with bugs or, if we write about Apple, teaching people how to avoid them or work around them. That software and OS problems, once they occur, are rarely fixed in part or full; features we need are removed rather than matured; and new features are added that aren't fully baked.

[...]

Part of what makes these sorts of statements reasonable, though, is to enumerate the problems, whether they're long-running or unique to Yosemite or iOS 8 (or to the last two releases of each system). Here's a list of regularly recurring issues or fundamental problems I've seen supplemented by those provided by others.

[Chug von Rospach](#):

This isn't an "Apple is doomed" scenario, but to me, the trendlines are negative — there is no cliff, but the beginning of the same kind of worry for a trip into the future that ends up looking like SGI (remember them? No? Ask your dad). A couple of people put up the claim that Apple was nowhere near as bad as Microsoft, and I agree, but to me, that's irrelevant. What we're comparing is not Apple compared to any other company, but to the Apple that should be, and the existing Apple and the possible Apple are starting to diverge.

[...]

My evidence for the prosecution is the quality of iCloud, the absolute disaster that is today's iTunes (a tool that's three or four years overdue for a complete overhaul) and the woeful quality of many of the Apps and how those have been changed significantly in non-compatible ways without any real recourse for existing users and no real warning to let them prepare for the update. That's just not understanding or caring for the end user, and to me unacceptable.

Update (2015-01-14): [Nick Heer](#):

So many of these reactions are simultaneously true. Yes, there are extremely stupid bugs and regressions littered throughout Apple's software products. Yes, there's the impression of a downward slide in quality assurance. And, yes, there have previously been really stupid bugs and regressions. I think Apple is cognizant of the fact that their software quality needs to improve faster than they gain new users; if it's slower, it feels significantly worse than it really is.

Update (2015-01-17): [John Gruber](#) found a 2004 article, "[Apple to Slow Down the Pace on Mac OS X](#)."

John Gruber and Marco Arment discuss Apple's software quality on [The Talk Show](#).

Update (2015-01-18): [Jean-Louis Gassée](#):

For the past six months or so, I've become increasingly concerned about the quality of Apple software. From the [painful gestation](#) of OS X 10.10 ([Yosemite](#)) with its damaged iWork apps, to the [chaotic iOS 8 launch](#), [iCloud glitches](#), and the [trouble with Continuity](#), I've gotten a bad feeling about Apple's software quality management. "It Just Works", the company's pleasant-sounding motto, became an [easy target](#), giving rise to jibes of "[it just needs more work](#)".

[...]

The other view is that the quality lapses we observe are the beginning of a slide into satisfied mediocrity, into organizations and projects that “run themselves”, that are allowed to continue for political reasons without regard for the joy of customers.

I know what I hope for. I don't expect perfection, I've lived inside several sausage factories and remember the smell. If Apple were to spend a year concentrating on solid fixes rather than releasing software that's pushed out to fit a hardware schedule, *that* would show an ascent rather than a slide.

Update (2015-01-22): [Rene Ritchie](#):

It's arguable whether or not it's any more pain than last year, the year before, the year before that, the year before that, and so on. But it's inarguable that there's been pain. People at Apple know that. They and their families and friends use the same hardware and software we do. Whether or not the right people were paying attention to the right measures, recent events have at the very least made even those who might not have realized the sentiment aware of it now.

Marco Arment, Casey Liss, and John Siracusa discuss Apple's software quality on the [Accidental Tech Podcast](#).

[Dave Heinzel](#):

But for the past year or so, I have noticed so many little things that drive me absolutely insane, that I would actually be happy to jump ship, assuming there was another ship to jump to (there's not, yet).

Last November, I started keeping a list of all the things that bug me. Some of them hinder productivity. Some are lost opportunities. They cover the full range of Apple products in my life: Mac, iPhone, iPad, Apple TV.

[Lloyd Chambers](#):

Virtually all of these issues persist months after OS X Yosemite was released. And no doubt will never be fixed, or perhaps will be replaced by new bugs as Apple arbitrarily breaks things and rips out good useful features by increasingly disrespectful-to-users judgment. A few of these issues are very serious (security), and inexcusable.

[Gus Mueller](#):

And that is probably the biggest difference between Apple and Microsoft. Apple knows when it's time to show a new product. Apple knows when something is ready for real world use, and Apple won't rush something out the door because of market pressures.

[...]

And I think that is why we're seeing so many people reacting to Apple's software quality lately. You expect Microsoft not to deliver. But we expect Apple to. And lately, it really hasn't felt like they've been doing it.

Update (2015-01-23): [Guy English](#):

If you'd like to know how the sausage is made, how people who have been in positions to make these quality control calls think, and get a sense of the camaraderie tune your compu-radios to [Debug 60](#).

Update (2015-02-05): [Nitin Ganatra](#) hypothesized that the Apple bugs follow the Pareto principle, i.e. that there are probably about 8 P1 bugs that, if fixed, would address 80% of the problems people are seeing. I'm more inclined to [Marco Arment's](#) viewpoint that the problem is more like 6,000 P2 bugs that have been building up because (as Ganatra and Don Melton described) there is never time in the schedule to fix them.

Update (2015-02-06): [NitinGanatra](#):

Just listened to @atpfm 102. Good stuff! One thing I obviously forgot to mention. Perennial internal discussion: how many P2s = 1 P1

Overall quality is tied to state of P2s, and 6000 P2s is definitely felt by users. Agree with host who said that on @atpfm

[John Siracusa](#):

@nitinganatra You didn't say "X P1 bugs," you just said "X bugs."



[36 Comments](#)

36 Comments

Chucky

[January 6, 2015 12:14 PM](#)

Thanks for this roundup, Michael, especially for including those Apple engineer comments I wouldn't have run across on my own.

This one struck me as particularly wrongheaded, though informative:

They felt stable because they were just old ... It's just that you remember them better because they had a longer history as a stable legacy OS than the modern versions.

And he says it like it's a bad thing! Good god!

I delayed upgrading to 10.5 and 10.6 until a few point upgrades

had stabilized things a bit. But any sane person would take that state of affairs over the current state of affairs in a second. Having a release that is stable for years is a **good** thing, old or not. Compare and contrast to current releases which may or may not be better on day one, but **never** get stable...

[John Gordon](#)

[January 6, 2015 12:45 PM](#)

Michael, you excel at these summative blog posts. Perfectly timed.
Your fan,
j

[Joesph](#)

[January 6, 2015 2:27 PM](#)

Everyone keeps saying we need another Snow Leopard release, but nobody acknowledges that 10.6 was a stability release because 10.5 was so unstable. This is nothing new.

[Michael Tsai](#)

[January 6, 2015 3:11 PM](#)

@Chucky It's always hard to compare, memories are hazy, etc. One issue is the number and [severity of](#) bugs at launch. Every OS release has some bugs, but my impression is that the ones in 10.9 and 10.10 were a bit more severe than the ones in 10.6. It definitely seems like the ones in 10.9 took longer to get fixed, and I don't think it ever reached a super solid state. In my view, 10.6 eventually achieved a more bug-free state than other releases *and* stayed in the stable state *for longer*. At least that's how it feels now. As [James Thomson](#) notes, because of the longer cadence, by the time 10.7 arrived it had been about four years since big feature releases.

@Joesph I would agree that 10.5 was less stable than 10.4 or 10.6. I don't see a contradiction between acknowledging that and wanting another Snow Leopard.

[Rui Carmo](#)

[January 6, 2015 4:56 PM](#)

Quite a few of my colleagues complain (pointedly and accurately) about Yosemite being much more unstable and slow than its predecessor, and I've felt tempted to write about it for a bit -- but in the end, that doesn't really matter.

What matters, as some of the posts above address at length, is

that perception has shifted. Markedly so. Our local Mac mailing-list has a (very) long-running thread on Yosemite, and it isn't pretty to read (I'm an outlier - I switched off transparencies and shut down for close of business, so most OS ailments like stuck mds processes and WindowServer crashes pass me by)

In the end, I expect them to sort it out. But I wish there weren't so many recurring, annoying bugs, and that OS X's built in apps weren't in such a state of disrepair. Someone needs to start taking Radar seriously and fix things instead of letting bugs linger.

What REALLY gets to me, though, are bugs like the iOS "secure" keyboard popping up when I switch on airplane mode (and my Bluetooth connection drops) WITH MY PASSWORD AS A SUGGESTION. Someone in the iOS team really dropped the ball on that one, since the black on-screen keyboard is supposed to not display completions, ever.

I don't plan on switching to Linux, but I've always had to use Windows in one way or another during the past decade. If they fixed their stupid "feature" that forces you to wait half an hour for software updates to install when you try to shut down and leave the office, I'd probably get a Surface next (most of my job is about juggling project documents and massive sets of terminal and browser windows, so dev work could just move to a server or VM).

[Milen](#)

[January 6, 2015 5:38 PM](#)

I would like to take a slightly different view. While we're currently discussing the software quality problems, I believe that this is just a manifestation of a much wider and bigger problem.

It's a problem of direction and long term strategy. It's a combination of a multitude of issues which have been lingering for years and it seems that we're finally starting to see the built-up effects finally bubble up. For example, the way developers have been treated has been downright infuriating. They have to endure stupid and silly rejections (sometimes reversed), the App Store policies are heavily tweaked to actively discourage sustainable businesses. They have to wait days or weeks to release an update - how's that even acceptable in 2015? As Cabel from Panic says: "as we began to wrap up bug fix releases, we were able to immediately post them to our customers within minutes of qualifying them. My god. That's how it should be. There's just no other way to put it — that's how you treat your customers well, by reacting quickly and having total control over your destiny. To not be beholden to someone else to do our job feels just fantastic."

It escapes my mind why a premium hardware company would want to run a software store that's equivalent to a dollar shop (or worse). Yes, people will buy phones because there's tons of free apps but we're slowly reaching a point (or already there) where the quality of those apps is so bad, that all other platforms have them as well. The number of apps is no longer a competitive advantage like it used to be in 2008. In the long term, it wouldn't

matter what phone you buy, if all the software is available on all mobile OSes.

Due to the un-sustainability of the App Store policies, the premium software that will keep people in the iOS ecosystem just won't get built - that's a recipe for disaster. Just look at the Panic 2014 report (and multitude other reports as well). It's precisely those developers that have built the ecosystem, have been innovating and creating superb 3rd party software and have been advocating Apple products for decades. And now Apple have turned their backs on them.

People have been slowly waking up to the fact that the 30% cut that Apple has been taking, especially on the Mac, might actually be way over the top (see recently article from Dan Counsell). The premise has always been that your earnings will increase enough to compensate for this except not only are we not seeing evidence supporting this, we're seeing the exact opposite (Panic revenue increased, Rapidweaver doing just fine generating 6 figures).

Mac developers have to endure sandboxing stupidities whereby more and more functionality becomes impossible to be used in the sandbox but no entitlements are getting added (recent Reeder 2 changes and also Coda leaving MAS) - it should be completely unacceptable to lose important and flagship apps for those reasons. We then have Typed, Rapidweaver from Realmac and BBEEdit skipping the MAS. What does it say when long-standing and reputable developers shun your platform? Alarm bells should be ringing somewhere.

In addition, both consumers and developers have had to endure iCloud issues year after year like it's 1995. Yes, sync is hard but the problems that we've been battling have been rooted in the fundamentals where iCloud can't even sync simple files. Just ask a casual iOS user whether they trust iCloud to keep their data safe.

The most infuriating part is that all of these problems can be fixed with ease. What would happen to the App Store if the percentage was cut from 30% to 10%, trials and paid upgrades were introduced? Apple is generating so much money, it will appear as a rounding error. But it will energise developers and restore faith in the platform. It will even save many businesses and lead to the creation of some great apps.

To the people saying paid upgrades are old-school and we just need to adapt - it's a simple economical fact that if an app is to be maintained, improved and supported, money is needed to pay for all of that. It has to come from somewhere, whether the bill is being footed by the customers directly or by watching ads, it needs to happen. Otherwise the software you use and love will never get updated again. That's the reality. Developers are already doing paid upgrades by using bundles and releasing new SKUs - it's just a much, much worse experience.

Finally, what hurts the most is that this train wreck is unfolding right in front of our eyes and there's nothing we can do about it. And it's painful when it happens to the company you love and that you've been devoted to for so long. All my fellow developers feel massively let down and disappointed in the whole situation. I love

Apple and have been a loyal user and developer but the general direction over the last few years has been a huge letdown. And by the looks of it, it's not just a minority feeling that way.

Funky Kong

[January 6, 2015 6:29 PM](#)

@Joesph: But an OS is not only defined by its stability. Here's list of features introduced by each OS X version:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OS_X#Version_10.4:.22Tiger.22

Bugs aside, 10.4 and 10.5 were a pretty busy era, jumping from PowerPC via i386 to x64 in minor versions, introducing Core Animation, Time Machine, Spotlight, Spaces, Boot Camp, ... (And even if our Macs crashed, Windows Vista reminded us that we were living in paradise.)

In comparison, none of the new features I see in 10.8-10.10 justify even the slightest dip in stability. *Maybe* a few WindowServer bugs caused by the new multi-screen functionality in Mavericks. What else?

[The perceived decline in Apple's software quality | Riccardo Mori](#)

[January 10, 2015 10:30 PM](#)

[...] I've known about Apple since the days of the Apple][and I finally started using Macs in 1989. Many eminent voices in the current debate over Apple's software have expressed their frustration at what is generally [...]

[Il bastone da Stessino \(#265\) | Digitalia - Notizie di tecnologia](#)

[January 12, 2015 6:35 PM](#)

[...] La qualità del software di Apple [...]

[Weekend Reader Woche 3 - Philip Büchler](#)

[January 18, 2015 8:49 AM](#)

[...] Follow Up zu Apples Softwarequalität [...]

[Apple Software Quality Questions | Monday Note](#)

[January 18, 2015 3:22 PM](#)

[...] Apple's software quality. See Glenn Fleishman's well-documented list of nontrivial issues, or Michael Tsai's compilation of comments from developers and engineers, such as this one

from Geoff Wozniak (no relation to [...])

Tom

[January 21, 2015 8:03 PM](#)

Great collation - but how to really push this so Apple notices?

Listening back to Debug podcasts with Nitin Ganatra - the issue of Marketing forcing the dev team's hand, the rush for features to market vs extra polish, seems still there in Apple, at a time when it needs more attention to improving the bugs and details, not less (by going off making non-mature new features).

[phil swenson](#)

[January 21, 2015 9:50 PM](#)

What concerns me is it's pretty clear that apple isn't testing their software very well.

Yosemite examples:

(home machine) Every morning I have to turn off WiFi and turn it back on to have connectivity.

(work machine) The phone call continuity feature worked briefly but now I can't start a call from my mac.

Does apple uses continuous integration for their OS builds. How are these defects not being detected? How are they being released?

I don't care about the release schedule or cramming in too much scope, my question how are these regressions not being detected and being released to production?

I wonder if Apple just has shitty QA/development testing practices.

[Craig Hunter](#)

[January 21, 2015 10:37 PM](#)

This is a great summary, and some of the follow-on comments here are excellent. I hope Tim Cook gets a chance to read everything here. I hope he will take it to heart.

Former Apple CoreOS person

[January 22, 2015 3:00 AM](#)

The "sprint model" as it's being called really screwed us over,

starting in Lion.

We were unable to do anything innovative, because everything had to be done in two weeks, and stabilized in three.

A lot of us felt we were being "organ banked", and late in Lion, on the iDevice release cycle, we were pulled away from desktop work in order to do iPhone and iPad work, which was on a 3 month release cycle, instead of alternating desktop with non-desktop, which we had formerly done on a 6 months on/6 months off cycle (release one in fall/release the other in the spring).

The desktop vastly suffered because of this, and we felt that Lion and later were more or less "phone it in" releases for the desktop.

There was a lot of resentment because when the initial iPhone came out, almost no one on the second floor of IL2 was allowed to look at the internal SDKs; even after the SDKs were finally released (a lot of Apple engineers by that point were on the "iPhone Dev Team", and compiling their own apps for jailbroken phones, providing compiler and assembler fixed, and so on).

Then we had to wait 6 months after they started external classes before we were allowed on the platform, or in the classes. We all suspected that that was because there was incredible demand for iPhone programmers, and we'd get hired away from working on boring old crap like Finder and Mail and AddressBook, because Apple couldn't hire people willing to work on boring crap any more.

It was a really bad time at Apple from a lot of perspectives. Getting "organ banked" was the bung in the barrel for a lot of people, and with Steve dead, a lot of us felt it wasn't the company we had initially joined.

We went from working with great people, to working at a company where we knew had great people and working with some of them, to a company we knew had them, because we worked with one or two of them, to a company we didn't recognize. The Apple we quit was not the Apple we had joined.

The security, I think, was largely because we were hiring tons of middle management from Sun, and there was a lot of kingdom building going on. There was never a leak from CoreOS to the press, but we were treated as if there would be any second.

I think at the end, I had to card into a restricted access building, and then card into a restricted access floor, and then card into a restricted area on that floor, then card myself into a lab, and then card myself into a secret lab inside the first lab.

Occasionally some piece of hardware in the innermost lab would let its "secret smoke" out, and the fire department would come, and we'd all have to wait for the security escorts to finish escorting the firemen, which could take hours.

Ridiculously, I remember one time this happened, and one of the engineers had this CDMA iPhone prototype with a hole drilled in it for the CDMA antenna attachment, and was just blithely walking around with it outside the building while we waited for it to be

cleared.

If Apple wants to be great again, it's going to need to (1) let its engineers collaborate and (2) get rid of this ridiculous "sprint" model of software development, and return to its roots.

[Bookmarks for January 21st from 17:19 to 22:28 : Extenuating Circumstances](#)

[January 22, 2015 5:00 AM](#)

[...] Michael Tsai – Blog – Apple's Software Quality, Continued – Tuesday, January 6, 2015 Marco Arment (comments, follow-up) continues on the theme of my post from October: Apple's hardware today is amazing — it has never... [...]

[» The Finder is still broken, people. Mister Morris](#)

[January 22, 2015 7:55 AM](#)

[...] Right. So over the Christmas break, some Mac OS X geeks were obviously in a reflective mood because developer blogs exploded with the meme that Apple software just ain't what it used to be. It all started here, and the best-of-breed collection o' links is here. [...]

[Alan Turing](#)

[January 22, 2015 11:55 AM](#)

Sprints are fine, as long as you understand that each sprint's work has to be shippable at the end of the sprint. Stabilization is implicitly a part of "done" for a user story. If they need 3 weeks to create shippable increments of functionality, fine, but separating feature flaw remediation from feature development makes no sense to me.

Whoever came up with the sprint/stabilize model doesn't understand agile methodologies.

[Grover Saunders](#)

[January 22, 2015 2:09 PM](#)

It's funny because a lot of the OS versions that are being fondly remembered as super-stable are from the same era where I stopped immediately installing the newest OS the day it came out. I'm in no place to judge the overall quality of modern OS releases, but I think that at least part of this is folks (especially those who came to the Mac in the 2000s) just getting older, more wary, and more cynical.

People at Apple know that. They and their families and friends use the same hardware and software we do.

Do they? In recent years I've been getting more and more the impression that they really don't. Of course they have Mac OS / iOS and Apple software on their computers, because they're developing it, but do any of them have to rely on it "just working" for their daily bread? It seems Apple's software development is more a matter of thinking up "cool" new features and implementing them just for fun (or marketing PR), then releasing them unfinished (except for the flashy cosmetics) with no thought at all given to how much disruption may be caused in the lives of the people who actually *use* the products.

AppleWorks was my favorite application ever. Okay, so it really wasn't possible to adapt it completely to OS X, but if a whole new application had to be written, why couldn't it at least, for starters, have had the same features and wonderful integration as AW? iWork was more capable in some ways, but seriously deficient in others by comparison; but we all gritted our teeth and learned to use it, and some invested years and thousands of hours in becoming proficient with it (and converting all our old AW documents). And Apple kicked us in the teeth. Why? Apparently because the Mac has to be dumbed down so iPad users won't be intimidated if they want to switch to a Mac? If an iPad is adequate to their needs, why would they want to move to a Mac anyway?

Not a developer myself, but I've been a Mac user since 1988, and made my living doing user support for some 15 years, have dismantled, repaired, set up, troubleshooted hundreds of Macs. In the early years, of course, "there're always bugs" was understandable – and the general course of development was exciting enough ("This is the Mac; it's *supposed* to be fun!" – *The Macintosh Bible*, 1st edition) to excuse them; but after 30 years I have to wonder why newly released software (such as Yosemite) seems to be just as buggy as System 6 – or even more so. It seems "there're always bugs" has become an excuse for simple laziness. Developers naturally live with perpetually unfinished software; but out in the real world trying to make your living with it is an ongoing, ever-increasing frustration. This is what "people at Apple" apparently *don't* know.

This is how captive audiences are treated. What "people at Apple" need to know is what anybody who's been around the tech world and paying attention knows: An unassailable success story can turn into a disaster in moments. I remember when Aldus PageMaker was king of the DTP hill (and a great program); then the company, drunk on profits, quit paying attention and went off on a buying spree to "diversify". For about five minutes, and Quark took over their market. Then Quark got complacent and arrogant, and treated their customer base as a captive audience; and Adobe took the market away from them. And now Adobe seems to be run by bean counters who see no reason to care about quality, since their customer base has nowhere else to go – yet. See a pattern?

Apple is setting itself up for a similar fate. I've long felt that Apple's greatest disadvantage is a lack of serious competition. It's now become such a closed, self-referencing, self-congratulatory ecosystem that it may simply be unable to respond effectively if such competition does arise. Presumably, none of the dinosaurs saw the mammals coming.

dr.maybe

[January 22, 2015 3:53 PM](#)

At first it was Scott Forestall causing disruption. He can't be blamed any longer.

We have a combination of all older engineers retiring after iPhone success and Scott leaving.

New people are not able to maintain older code.

All the Superstars, same say 1000 engineers/designers were working on AppleWatch.

It is one thing to have bugs but my mother's iPad is having trouble connecting

to the web for days. It is either DNS or WiFi problem.

I can't explain to her why something that was working is no longer.

Apple was quick to apologize for the most mundane, frivolous problem that Press got hold of

ran with it. But in this case it is all quite in the western front.

Hidden issue not talking about is that these Cocoa Developers are used to the Mac Application

Market and they are not able to sell their iOS apps with same margins.

So this is classic gold rush drying and Apple making all the profit.

In the end, Apple wants to be a fashion company because even nerds buying every gadget cannot sustain the growth rate.

Hamranhansenhansen

[January 23, 2015 7:30 AM](#)

The biggest difference is that I used to ignore a new OS update until it was OS X 10.N.3 or iOS N.1.0 and that would mean using relatively trouble-free software. But I skipped the entirety of iOS 7 and then got new devices once iOS 8.1.0 shipped, expecting to get a relatively bug-free version of Apple's Vista-like redesign, but what I got was much more Vista-like than I ever imagined. App crashes, device crashes, apps that won't launch at all and I have to go buy a replacement app from another vendor, inscrutable interfaces, features that simply don't work, or don't work until you restart the app you're in, missing buttons and sliders in apps until you restart the app, AirPlay that works maybe 50% of the time, movies that won't play, movie controls that don't work, movies that get stuck in full screen, keyboards disappearing entirely until

you exit and re-enter the app, and ugliness everywhere.

I have an original iPad here that has crashed maybe 10 times in its entire 5 year life, and next to it is a brand-new iPad mini 2 with iOS 8.1 that has already crashed more than 10 times. And I only had it since iOS 8.1 shipped.

Another difference is that in the past, system software updates were essentially optional, and now they are essentially mandatory. I know from staying behind on iOS 6 for an extra year that you basically have to abandon App Store altogether, you can't buy new apps and you can't get updates for existing apps, and you are going to be pestered endlessly by both the system and many Apple apps to update to the newest OS version. This is problematic when almost everybody else has blindly updated, and you need to get a new app to work on a project with a colleague who expects that it will take you 1 minute and \$2.99 to get the app, but really you have to debate again whether to install the latest iOS before you can even consider to get that app. And your browser engine will go out of date on an older iOS and you can't fix that like you could if you were running an older OS X.

Speaking of browser engines, probably the worst thing has been Safari in iOS 8, which can no longer run by bank's website reliably, which has lead to transactions getting lost, and which crashes Web page after Web page with amazing regularity. I make Web pages that use the Web Audio API, and the audio simply doesn't work sometimes in Safari on iOS 8 until you reboot the entire device. Then it works perfectly until later it stops working again and you have to reboot the device. Ultimately I had to download Google Chrome just to run websites more reliably, which felt like a very sad thing for me when I've been using Safari since 1.0.

Maybe the worst thing is that my long-standing list of things that I wanted to see fixed in iOS since version 6 is still 100% intact. iOS 7/8 did not fix any of them. An example is the fact that the apostrophe and quote keys still type primes and double primes (aka programmer's quotes.) How much programming do I do on my iPad? Almost none, and the one app where I do programming has dedicated prime and double-prime keys. But I actually do a lot of writing on my iPad because the silent keyboard is really appropriate for a music studio, which is where I work. But I need to actually type apostrophes and quotes, not fill up a document with primes and double-primes which then need to be fixed later, leading to errors. This issue has actually gotten worse in iOS 8, because if you type d-o-n-apostrophe-t (with the apostrophe typed by holding down the apostrophe key and choosing the actual apostrophe) then iOS 8 will type don't' which is really not helpful. To workaround this, I had to put every single contraction into the keyboard shortcuts so that I can type don't (prime) and get don't (apostrophe.) So that is a failure of both the keyboard, which types primes instead of apostrophes, and the autocorrect, which doesn't correct the prime in don't to an apostrophe.

I also had the first-time experience recently of buying a Made-for-iOS accessory and I couldn't get it to work. The app that works with it just crashed and crashed and crashed and the developer told me it is a bug in iOS that hopefully will be fixed soon, so I

took the accessory back for a refund. Ironically, it was my first Lightning-equipped accessory. Dozens of iPod-dock accessories worked for me over the years, and now a Lightning accessory didn't.

And I complained about a BBEdit 11 bug and that turned out to be a bug in Yosemite.

And it is not just engineering. The design also sucks. The redesign of the iOS user interface had many academic goals, such as deferring to content by hiding chrome. If you look at those goals, I think you will be surprised to see how many have failed miserably. The white chrome in the Safari browser matches the white backgrounds of 80% of Web pages, as well as the white system bar at the top. I didn't think Web pages could actually get more cluttered than they are, but now the clutter extends to the browser chrome and system bar. The home screen icon grid was supposed to make icons match each other, but they match less now than they did under iOS 6. And you often have a home screen that just looks like an example of a Dingbat typeface, with various inscrutable glyphs just puked down the screen. And so many of the interfaces just look and read like a spreadsheet. You have to scan row after row and read a lot of type before you find the "cell" that you want. Many interfaces that used to be easy to use while for example riding a moving sidewalk at an airport now require me to sit down and precisely navigate a long spreadsheet of tiny type, for example when editing a contact in the Contacts app. And I have triggered the Spotlight search maybe 50 times so far, of which only maybe 5 were intentional. If you are on the go, a leftward or rightward swipe on the home screen very easily gets some downward motion and boom you are ready to search. I have triggered Control Center probably twice as much as I wanted to, but at least it turned out that there is a way to turn it off within apps. But strangely, there is no way to turn off Notification Center within apps, so it gets triggered about 3-5 times per day, even though I **never** use it. I use a lot of music apps that are very, very interactive and use a lot of fingers moving very quickly all over the screen — I need to be able to turn off Notification Center, same as I turn off the Multitasking Gestures. Music apps actually recommend this if they start up and Multitasking Gestures are on.

And so many tasks in iOS not only take 2x to 3x the number of taps to accomplish in the new interface, they are much, much harder for the non-technical user, i.e. my family and friends who bought Apple products on my recommendation. Or me when I am working and don't have the spare thought cycles to task-switch from creative mode to spreadsheet-navigation mode. Many of my family and friends have been using iOS since version 3, 4, or 5, and yet after 7, they had to go to One-on-One training for the very first time. And many of them simply use their devices less, they buy fewer apps, they no longer explore the interface. They are using their iPhones more like just plain old phones because they have a kind of fatigue that comes from iOS 7/8 not rewarding them for their explorations of it in the way that previous iOS used to. And their devices are even failing as plain old phones more often than they would like. My girlfriend's Visual Voicemail has not worked since iOS 7, for example. She was dialing into her voicemail and I was like, why are you doing that?

Turns out, that is the only way she can get her voicemail now. She actually forgot about Visual Voicemail. Likely because she spent the first month with iOS 7 just swearing at her iPhone every time she used it.

A big part of the problem is that nerds (tech bloggers, developers, power users) are often running betas and consumers are running the release versions. The nerds are assuming the release versions will be fixed, and the consumers are blaming themselves when things go wrong, not blaming Apple. Many of my friends and family spent the entire life of iOS 7 saying "I must be using it wrong" because suddenly they couldn't do things they used to do. They didn't think "Apple software now sucks" because they don't really know what software is. They look at their beautiful Apple device and they think that it must all work 100%, if only the user were not failing in some way. So I have family and friends who reported very high customer satisfaction scores to Apple even though they were having a terrible time with their iOS 7 device and complaining to me constantly. Now, after iOS 8, even those users have started to question: what is going on here? And then they read that buzz on the Web about low software quality at Apple after Marco Ament's post opened the floodgates and they are all really angry now, and feel they have been abused by the company that they paid very high device prices to, expecting to get Rolls Royce treatment. So I wouldn't be surprised if Apple doesn't understand how bad the problem is. Customer sat is 98%! What could be wrong? Doesn't your 70 year old father-in-law know he can file a Radar when his AirPlay fails to work so many times that he just abandons it?

Finally, the main thing that I am unhappy about is the lack of firings over iOS 7/8 and OS X Yosemite at Apple. The iOS 6 Maps app worked great for me because I live in an area where the map data was good, and if it didn't work for you, you could use maps.google.com, and yet heads rolled at Apple over the iOS 6 Maps app. Since then, Apple did this bold experiment of redesigning and re-engineering all of their core software, and that has failed miserably to the point where iOS and OS X are hard to use and not even stable and there is no easy workaround for this "death by a thousand cuts" which has half a billion users restarting apps and \$800 devices like they bought a \$100 Android phone, but for some reason all the same people are still in charge at Apple. To me, that is the heart of the problem. When they put Jony Ives in charge of software, my first thought was, "is he really the best software designer in the world? because Apple is supposed to have the best people in the world at each job — so-called A players — in order to make the best products in the world," and then we literally got a bad Web design for iOS. I know Jony Ives is the world's best hardware designer and I thank him for my Power Mac G3 blue-and-white and every other product since, including the very first iPod, iPhone, and iPad, but I don't want to run a crappy website design that takes much more work to use than the interfaces it replaced. And Craig Federighi seems like the nicest guy and he does indeed have great hair, but I think his engineering management has been crap. My iOS apps literally crash and exhibit bizarre behaviors even more than free Web apps! And when they said they were going to do yearly releases I expected humility in design and engineering, but we got hubris

instead: throw everything out and start over and screw it all up. So why is iOS 9 going to come from this same failed software team? This is the exact same thing as Apple Maps in iOS 6 — lots of change in a very short amount of time — except much, much larger and much, much worse.

Tim Cook has done an amazing job as CEO, but like Steve Jobs said, he's not really a product guy. I really miss the *editorial* voice that Steve Jobs provided. You would use an Apple product and feel like somebody already ran it and made sure that it works. Maybe Steve Jobs didn't always test everything, but the people who worked for him knew that he might. Now, you get that same feeling from non-Apple products of "didn't they test this out before they shipped it?" Somebody needs to be put into the position of Chief Editorial Officer, which has been vacant in my opinion since Steve Jobs' untimely death. That person needs to be Apple User #1 and they need to be permanently pissed off. They need to receive work from designers and engineers and stomp all over it so that the designers and engineers look past their preciousness and academic focus and see how broken what they made is, and then go back and work on it some more, before they inflict it on people who have to work 12 hours a day to feed their families and don't have time to spend 30+ minutes a day rebooting apps and devices and looking for workarounds so they can get a task done. With devices that cost 2x or 3x or more what competing devices cost, and don't have any excuses to be just another crappy tech product that fails as much or more as it succeeds. And the editorial voice needs to find inconsistencies like you can turn off Control Center in apps but you can't turn off Notification Center in apps and make those consistent. Another example would be the different buttons for "new document" across various built-in apps, or the varying location of the "send" button in various built-in apps. An editorial eye looks at these things as giant bugs in the product. Embarrassing bugs. Fixing them at Apple might take an extra few weeks maybe, but then you save whole human lives outside of Apple as users don't struggle with the software.

As one of the quotes above says, I would jump ship right now if there were another ship to jump to. And that is after using only Apple gear since before the turn of the century. I am as disappointed in the last 2-3 years as I possibly could be. And I was one of those that laughed at people who thought that Apple couldn't ship quality product without Steve Jobs. But I didn't think that Apple would basically refute almost everything that made them successful, all within a year or two, and then leave a half a billion users holding the bag when they failed to deliver on their promises. The amazing thing throughout the Apple comeback was the humility. That is why people who called Apple arrogant at that time were so completely wrong-headed. There were many times when a feature seemed to be missing "forever" from Apple software — for example, backup in OS X, or Copy/Paste in iOS — but then "finally" they would ship something really, really great that everyone could easily use, and it would seem like those features had been in there since the start. To go from that to the hubris of the last couple of years — i.e. we'll throw out everything from the past, and yet also ship tons of features, and yet also ship yearly giant releases, and by the way, our genius hardware

designer is going to make software design his pet project, whether he is good at it or not — is really astonishing and I think it represents the most significant Apple failure since Gil Amelio was CEO.

I used to watch Android and Windows releases and say “thank goodness I don’t have to run that” but I don’t get to do that anymore because iOS 7 made me say “oh no — I have to run that?” Now, there is no alternative to crappy software. It’s all crap.

[Michael Tsai - Blog - Organ Banked](#) [January 23, 2015 1:46 PM](#)

[...] response to my roundup about Apple’s software quality, a former Apple CoreOS person [...]

[7 Very Early Tips for iPhone 6s Buyers](#)

[January 23, 2015 2:06 PM](#)

[...] The iPhone 6 and iPhone 6 Plus reign as two of the top smartphone options on the market and if Apple does go the ‘S’ route, they could get even better. Better processors, better cameras, better screens perhaps. Apple uses this ‘S’ year to make improvements to its iPhone, both hardware and software. Complaints about iOS 8 have been numerous. [...]

Alfred C

[January 23, 2015 3:58 PM](#)

Well and thoughtfully said, all!
Steve would never have let this happen ...

Ken Heins

[January 23, 2015 4:11 PM](#)

What i have been trying to say for 3 years, not as a developer, but as a user. I have 20 plus years in automotive at a regional and national level and then as a manufacturer of my own products and a Macuser since 1988.

My point is that what I have been seeing at Apple for the last 3 or so years looks oddly familiar to me. Only the products and the specific details of the design and production phases are different.

In all other ways, I have seen this before and its dark clouds until the product people take over again. The more you put your priorities into marketing, the sooner your customers have the opportunity to find out you have a product problem, ironically

BECAUSE of your marketing success.

Terry Lawrence

[January 24, 2015 7:06 AM](#)

I completely agree with everything said above. Lion was Apple's version of Vista, and it's been straight downhill ever since. Yosemite has completely screwed up so many apps it almost defies belief. So many endless stupid pointless removed features, grey-on-grey impossible to read tiny text on low contrast backgrounds, uglified up icons in almost every app, hidden scroll bars, the incredibly stupid combo search and address bar in Safari, the dog slow Mail which crashes regularly, even more often than Safari carpware, in short. Not to mention the effing auto-incorrect that keeps changing what I typed to something elseGrrrrrrrr!!!

Just mindlessly stupid things like changing the dialogue in Contacts/Edit/Delete Contact to Delete Contacts with an S indicating multiple contacts when I only have one contact selected. NO! WAIT! STOP! I only want to delete one contact! Or changing the text Show Map (stupidly hidden by default) to a meaningless Icon, still hidden by default, that looks like a Power Off symbol! What are they thinking. Are the all on Cocaine?

I blame Jon Ives with his over-the-top minimalist design school for 98 percent of this mindless shit, and Tim for the other 2 percent for giving him control of the software interface. Ives has obviously hit his "Peter Principal" Level of Incompetence and needs to be kicked back down the hall to Hardware, where he (mostly) produced good, or at least pretty, designs.

Mind you, if you ever had to repair a piece of his recent hardware, you might have a different opinion. The G4 and G5 towers and G5 iMacs were conveniently accessible, and the Intel towers were OK too, but everything else from the original iMac to the G4 iMac, Emac, and various laptops seem to have been designed as throw-aways. Hard drive needs replacing? Buy a new computer.

Speaking as a Mac consultant with about 1500 clients, I can tell you that every one of them who has "upgraded" to Yosemite, or anything since Snow Leopard, has not been happy or impressed.

As so many have commented above, Apple needs to get it's shit together on the OS and apps front before some Chinese or Indian tech firm comes out with a better and more reliable OS on much cheaper hardware. That is already happening on phones.

I'm afraid with Jobs replaced by a bean counter and a "make everything low contrast grey and hide all the useful features" hardware guy running the software design, Apple's days at the top of the design pile are quickly fading.

Funky Kong

[January 24, 2015 9:34 AM](#)

> Now, you get that same feeling from non-Apple products of "didn't they test this out before they shipped it?" Somebody needs to be put into the position of Chief Editorial Officer, which has been vacant in my opinion since Steve Jobs' untimely death. That person needs to be Apple User #1 and they need to be permanently pissed off.

I'll be the first to nominate John Siracusa!

On a more serious note, wouldn't opening up Radar to developers make for a great first step?

Barry Levine

[January 24, 2015 12:05 PM](#)

Just when I thought my consulting business was slowing down, Apple released Yosemite and my business has never been better. In spite of my warnings, clients have been moving to Yosemite and then contact me to "get me back to Mavericks; help!" when they realize how much of a pig/dog/hog/slug/sloth (take your pick) Yosemite is - even on the latest Macs being sold with SSDs. God forbid you install it on anything with a spinning hard drive.

One item that makes me chuckle is having your Mac and iPad "ring" with an incoming call to your iPhone. I haven't found - anyone- yet who likes this; my clients are eMailing me for instructions to turn off this annoying and intrusive "feature".

What's the solution? Put Jony Ive on a shorter leash. Unfortunately, Tim Cook doesn't have the design sensibility of Steve Jobs. Perhaps if Mac users bombarded Tim with eMails expressing our displeasure he might take notice.

Gregg Rasor

[January 26, 2015 10:19 AM](#)

This comment was excerpted from my December 2014 posting on Ric Ford's excellent site: MacInTouch

I know the main topic is the App Store, and this comment relates to that, as well as Apple's publicly non-existent technology roadmap.

Regarding the moving target Apple created with the once-a-year, come hell or high water, OS update cycle, many Apple developers and users, including myself, have become extremely frustrated. This cycle, introduced with the release of Lion (OS X 10.7.x), creates opportunities for additional third party revenue from larger established developers, via paid updates and upgrades, and also opportunities for significant incompatibility, or in most cases, a complete loss of functionality of older applications based on fundamental changes Apple introduced by removing essential

legacy support libraries from their subsequent Xcode development environments.

I run several of Apple's OS X environments in my personal systems, ranging from 10.6.8 (Snow Leopard) to 10.10.1 (Yosemite). However, my main environment is based on 10.6.x, Snow Leopard.

Many users of Apple's systems stuck with Snow Leopard because of their significant investments in software, and particularly based on the fact that Snow Leopard was the last version of Mac OS X supporting Rosetta, the cross-platform PowerPC emulation introduced by Apple during their transition from Motorola / IBM PowerPC processors to Intel processors. In cases like mine, the investment in legacy software is significant.

Additionally, as Apple has transitioned from Snow Leopard to Lion, then Mountain Lion, then Mavericks, then Yosemite, OS X has been quickly moved from a first class Unix operating system with both power and casual user components, to an iOS look-alike, dumbing down many features to simplify Apple's convergence vision: to create a single unified user experience between the iPhone, iPad, and iMac, yadda yadda, yadda.

As I was reading MacInTouch the other day, under Snow Leopard using Firefox ESR 31.3.0, a secure and updated browser for Mac OS, a dialog box spontaneously appeared. The dialog was courtesy of the one of the last components updated in Snow Leopard, the App Store. It reads:

Get OS X Yosemite free
New design. Better apps. More ways your Mac works with iOS

There is your roadmap.

By the way, in my ever humble opinion, the changes in Yosemite's UI are as unpleasant as the iOS 7/8 flat look. It seems that Apple is now designing based on ... focus groups that use iOS almost exclusively for SMS, oops, that's now "texting" or "texted," rather than asking their actual users what they like or dislike about the UI.

It's time to wake up Apple, or your legacy will resemble the Windows 8 "Metro" mess created by Steve Balmer, rather than the elegant NeXT operating system developed under Steve Jobs.

HandyMac

[January 26, 2015 4:02 PM](#)

I'll be the first to nominate John Siracusa!

Indeed, he's a treasure in the Mac world. Apple also ought to be paying [Pierre Igot](#) for doing the intensive beta testing that apparently nobody in the Infinite Loop can be bothered to do, and writing it up in detail.

El Aura

[January 27, 2015 12:17 PM](#)

I just dug up a blog post of mine on Leopard (in its 10.5.2 incarnation) and what I am describing in there sounds very much like the current debate:

<http://elaura.tumblr.com/post/27966491/dont-really-dont>

I don't feel nearly as bad about Mavericks as I felt then about Leopard.

CR

[January 27, 2015 1:40 PM](#)

I agree about quality control lacking. There has been a bug on some iOS devices where the Faces in Photos are not sorted alphabetically since iOS 8 beta 1 and it is still there today. I won't rehash the items above, but as a developer, I agree that Apple needs to spend the next year making 10.11.0 a bug fix, stability, security release.

[Gary Young](#)

[January 29, 2015 4:17 PM](#)

Could it be that Apple is now always more concerned about "the next big thing" and less concerned about "the next release"? I think it's hard to say that Jobs' absence explains the new lack of quality - at least for OS X as it has been heading down a glitzy peddling path that breaks more cohesion than it provides. I write this as Apple's revenue and profit have been soaring - due to the iPhone. How come the leader, even if it may now still be the best, always has to suck?

[iOS 9 will focus more on stability and bug fixes than new features | Curious MindCurious Mind](#)

[February 9, 2015 3:01 PM](#)

[...] the past few months, there has been an endless debate surrounding a perceived decline in Apple's software quality. As it pertains to iOS, a common argument is that Apple is too [...]

[Michael Tsai - Blog - Apple's Software Quality Decline](#)

[February 11, 2015 9:12 AM](#)

[...] Update (2015-01-06): I've posted a new series of links at Apple's Software Quality, Continued. [...]

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