## What can Apple do?

# What Should Apple Do
# To Improve Its Education Market Position?

Few companies, and even fewer products, perfectly address a customer's requirements or desires. In the case of our NC school district, the current problematic situation should never have come about – and it is partly due to what Apple did and did not do.

While Apple has a history of providing innovative computers having high quality, ease-of-use, and long life, they could do better in several areas pertaining to their Education customers. To that end, in 2001 we submitted a detailed list of suggested Apple improvements, which was published at the MacCentral web site. Below is the latest version of this list, which is being monitored by Apple people, like VP John Couch. **We encourage you to carefully read it.**

In parallel with this, we have an online Petition that we are sending to Apple. If you are in basic agreement with the ideas presented here and would like to have your support registered, please sign the online version of this list. (Note: we are still making changes here, but that once posted, the petition site version cannot be edited.)

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**MIS Items—>**
1 - Assume that the school district's head MIS person is PC/Windows oriented, and not experienced with – or too interested in – Macs.

2 - Assume that this head MIS person will **not** be asking for much feedback from teachers and students – so decisions he makes will be in his own interests.

3 - Maintain very close and frequent contacts with MIS people to lessen the likelihood of their going astray, and to better ascertain the pulse of the situation. **Do NOT wait for them to call you!** Even though the MIS person needs help, it is unlikely that he will be requesting much from Apple. If left on their own they are inclined to go their own way: PC/Windows.

4 - Give MIS people a list of web sites that are beneficial for their situation (e.g. VersionTracker, MacWindows, MacFixit, etc.); provide them with a monthly newsletter; sign them up for the **very** worthwhile (and free) Mac-Managers email list.

5 - Make Mac certification training for MIS persons, simple and **very** affordable.

6 - Provide a thorough, easy-to-understand Mac troubleshooting pamphlet for new school technology persons to follow.

7 - Make a **BIG** effort to assure that Macs can be justified as having lower maintenance costs. (E.g. hand the MIS people multiple copies of a free CD with includes all beneficial updates over and above a standard install for the four most common, good system versions: 8.6, 9.1, 10.3.9 and 10.4. Have a web site with all this info.)

8 - Provide a special software package deal for MIS people, which includes DiskWarrior, TechTool Pro, VNC, Timbuktu, Dave, IPNetmonitor, etc.

9 - Make a **SIGNIFICANT** effort to ensure that school districts use Apple OSX Servers. (E.g. give servers away for free, if need be.) Having these servers onsite will not only demonstrate to MIS people that Apple has serious hardware, but *substantially* increases the likelihood that the clients will be Macs.

10-With its UNIX servers and clients Apple has its best opportunity ever to appeal to the "geekiness" of MIS people. They can't help themselves, so play this card hard and often.

## Software Items—>

1 - All schools should be offered a completely FREE upgrade to OS 9.1. (This version is especially important as it allows automatic software updates, NetBoot, etc.)

2 - Provide a free CD with Apple Software Restore and with detailed, easy-to-follow instructions. Have an Apple Education Rep visit onsite to see that either this or NetBoot is set up.

3 - Include a special education software package that would have worthwhile applications like MS Office, GraphicConverter, HyperCard 2.4.1+, REALBasic, Revolution, FUTUREBasic, iBuild, WebPrint Plus, etc. (*Furthermore, update HyperCard 2.4.1 so that it is OSX compatible.*)

4 - More strongly encourage third parties to develop better quality school teaching software. Work with existing third party suppliers (like NCSLearn) to see that their software offerings support Macs, as least as much as they do for Windows/PCs.

5 - Continue to actively develop PowerSchool (a school information management program), particularly in the area of adding the capability for fees and tuition management.

6 - Make a deal with Microsoft to allow education sites to buy the latest version of VirtualPC (with Windows XP) at **$100** or less.

7 - Arrange for free onsite demos of Apple developments that might be worthwhile (e.g. iWork, iMovie, iTunes, Bluetooth, NetBoot, etc.).

## Hardware/Peripheral Items—>

1 - Offer a free three year education channel warranty. (Dell's is three years…)

2 - Make a deal with a quality RAM supplier to allow education sites to buy additional RAM at a **substantial** discount. (The deal would be that educators would be guaranteed the lowest RAM price, no matter what quantity they order).

3 - In a similar vein, make a deal with vendors who sell common supplies, like inkjet cartridges, that will also guarantee educators the lowest prices for critical provisions.

4 - Make a deal with a good third party manufacturer to allow education sites to buy 64 MB+ USB flash drives (e.g. key drives) at **$10** or less.

5 - Encourage hardware loaners to schools. (The theory is that they will like what they see and then want to buy it!)

6 - Give school districts more advance notice of product developments (non-disclosures are OK).

7 - Allow local dealers to sell Macs to local schools. This could provide better service and pricing in some situations.

8 - Let educators buy Macs at Apple retail stores (at education discounts).

# Miscellaneous Items—>

1 - Most important of all is that (considering the big picture here) Apple simply MUST be **proactive**. Waiting for school systems to call up and ask for advice is folly. Apple should have a schedule something like this: for every 25 Macs at a school, there will be an onsite visit by an Apple Ed Rep for at least 2 hours, every six months. The goodwill generated by Apple *plus* the assistance conveyed by Apple *plus* the information learned by Apple would be invaluable.

2 - Do **not** abandon schools using pre OSX machines. These are future customers.

3 - Offer **very** inexpensive training on the Mac OS and primary applications for teachers.

4 - Offer a deal where schools can subscribe to *MacHome Journal* (for beginners) and *MacAddict* (students/ gamesters) and/or *MacWorld* (technically inclined) at a **substantially** reduced rate.

5 - Foster a more formal relationship between school districts and local Mac user groups. (Offer incentives to make this relationship mutually beneficial.)

6 - Have better advertising that more clearly enumerates the Mac advantages.

7 - Apple's Education Reps (in-house and field) should have the complete PDF of this site to assist them in combating the PC misinformation that they face daily.
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Notes: *Apple needs to remember that:*

> *1) preventing a problem in the first place requires **much** less effort (and is **much** more economical) than having to solve the same problem afterwards, and*
> *2) giving up some of it's normal higher profit margins in the education channel is a wise economic decision – as it reaps financial benefits in several other ways (e.g. when parents of students using Macs at school buy a Mac for home use), and*
> *3) if it actively works <u>with</u> local supporters (e.g. user groups), Apple will be more successful at maintaining or increasing its presence in local school districts.*

*More Notes:*
The intention here is not to suggest that Apple "give away" anything – on balance. Rather the idea is to employ a marketing plan that has been proven to work for a LONG time. For instance, Kodak became one of the world's most successful companies, in no small part due to it's strategy of selling low profit, inexpensive cameras which were tied together with their high profit film. We see this today with $80 inkjet printers, which require $30 cartridges of ink…

Also, we are not advocating that Apple coerce any third party company into giving away their products either. The deal would be that Apple would enable these companies to substantially increase the volume of their sales, so end users (e.g. educators) would benefit from these volume discounts. Win-win for everyone.

We believe that **all** the items above have merit. However, we also know: **1)** that things change, and **2)** that there may be even better ideas that other experienced people may have. Therefore, every recommendation above is open to be improved on. If there is a specific item above you have less than 100% conviction about, hopefully you can still support the principle of what we are trying to do here: **to nudge Apple in a direction that they need to go**.

> *With searching comes loss*
> *And the presence of absence:*
> *"Your File" was not found.*