



# The GAB'er

The Newsletter of the Greater Albany Apple Byters

Volume 27, Number 4 - December 2010

## Apple “Smokes the Competition” in Reliability Survey

PC World published the results of its annual reliability survey, incorporating reports from 79,000 tech users to assess customer satisfaction with reliability and tech support for a wide variety of products. As in previous surveys, Apple topped the rankings in an assortment of categories, with PC World going as far as to say that Apple “once again smoked the competition,” despite a few stumbles from the iPhone.

Apple once again smoked the competition in the desktop, notebook, and smartphone categories, winning high praise from customers in all reliability and service categories. The Macintosh and iPhone maker did so well that virtually all its scores were above average. Apple’s only average scores were related to the company’s deftness at replacing failed notebook components, and in two areas pertaining to serious problems with the iPhone, the latter perhaps stemming from the iPhone 4’s well-publicized antenna issue that resulted in dropped calls for some users.

The report points to Apple’s use of high-quality components and a straightforward software experience for providing customers with high levels of satisfaction. In addition, the company’s retail stores with Genius Bars offering service and support are seen as a key component to Apple’s customer care initiatives.

## Coordinator’s Corner

by John Buckley



We had another successful meeting but did not really do Toast and its associate software justice. Therefore we will finish up with Toast from Roxio. In addition, I will do a follow-up on making mailing labels using the Address Book program.



As usual, check our website for the most current GAAB information. You will find a map and aerial photograph showing how to get to the meeting location.

In addition, we will set the schedule for the remaining demonstrations and then take a look at what is now available from Apple including the new Snow Leopard tips. In addition, we will take a closer look at what is available on your Mac without adding any software.

To find out what’s happening, GAAB is the place to be. So be sure to be at our December meeting and every meeting to find out the best information about the Mac.

The December meeting will be held at St. Mary’s Hospital in the Leonard Board Room on Wednesday, December 8, 2010. The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. St. Mary’s Hospital is located at 1300 Massachusetts Avenue in Troy NY.

**Next GAAB Meeting**  
**December 8, 2010**  
**Toast & Address Book**  
**7:00 p.m.**  
**St. Mary’s Hospital**  
**Troy, NY**

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*Serving the Apple Computer User Community Since May 1984*

The Greater Albany Apple Byters is an Apple Computer User Group. Meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month (except July and August) in Room 212 of Troy High School, located on Burdett Avenue, Troy, NY.

Annual membership fee is \$10.00. Membership privileges include this newsletter, access to a large public domain software and video/audio tape library, local vendor discounts, special interest groups, and other special offers.

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## Apple Ambassador

by John Buckley

I just received an e-mail from iFixit, a company that encourages you to fix your own computers, hopefully with parts they sell. Usually this type of e-mail goes directly to my Junk Mail folder where I found this one. One of the reasons I do not have Junk Mail automatically deleted is that I want to make sure that the e-mail is really Junk before I delete it. However, I decided to check out their website because they offered free stuff for GAAB. Hopefully it will arrive before our meeting. The following is a brief description of [iFixit](#) from their website.

iFixit was started in 2003 by Luke and Kyle in a dorm room at [Cal Poly](#), San Luis Obispo. Since then, we've grown a bit.

We started out fixing an old iBook together. There were no instructions on how to do it, so we started the way everyone does: the hard way. We tinkered. We fiddled. We broke some tabs and lost a few screws. But we fixed it!

We attempted to fix some other laptops but had trouble finding parts. So we bought a broken computer on eBay and stole parts from it. Then we decided to start selling the parts ourselves, and iFixit was born. But that's not the whole story. All of our customers still had to do things the hard way, just like we did. **Easy-to-use repair instructions didn't exist** -- yet.

#### Writing repair manuals

#### Replacing an iPhone display

It bugged us that most consumer devices lacked repair instructions. We think it should be **easy** for people to learn how to fix things. So we wrote some instructions the first chance we got. And we posted them online, for free. For the first time, it was easy for someone with no technical background or experience to take apart a Mac. Our step-by-step instructions were enabling people to repair Macs they wouldn't have been able to repair on their own.

We thought the instructions would be useful to our customers -- and they were. But it turned out that they were

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This year, it's best to do your Christmas and holiday shopping smart phone in hand. Apps help you find the best prices online or at a nearby retailer. Other apps help you earn rewards for shopping. Let's take a look at what's available.

### Price comparison apps

First up, you'll find apps from the major price comparison sites. Shopping.com, PriceGrabber and NexTag all offer apps for the iPhone and Android. Additionally, NexTag offers a BlackBerry app. They'll help you find the best prices from online retailers.

Features differ from app to app. For example, PriceGrabber and NexTag let you search by scanning a barcode. Just snap a picture with your phone's camera to search for an item. You may also be able to purchase directly from the app and build wish lists.

Some of these apps may have more features than others. But what's important here is finding the lowest price. I recommend consulting all three apps, particularly for larger purchases. The apps may search different stores for prices. You don't want to leave a single stone unturned!

Of course, you also want to be able to check prices at local stores. Fortunately, you'll find apps that will help with that, too. Apps like Slifter, TheFind and pic2shop compare prices on products at local merchants. All are available on the iPhone. Slifter is also available for BlackBerry. Android users can download pic2shop.

Unfortunately, price comparison sites have largely ignored BlackBerry owners when it comes to apps. Hope is not

lost. You can visit most of these price comparison sites using your phone's Web browser. It's less convenient, but it doesn't matter what type of phone you use.

### Location-based shopping apps

You'll probably visit plenty of stores when gift hunting. Now, you can cash in just by walking through the door. Shopkick and CheckPoints give you rewards just for shopping. Fire up the app and check in at a participating location. You'll get points that are redeemable for rewards-immediately. You can also earn points by scanning featured products with your phone's camera.

Again, you'll want to use both of these apps. That's because they both have partnered with different stores and brands. For example, Shopkick is partnered with Target, Best Buy and Macy's. CheckPoints works in more than one million locations, including Kmart.

So, what type of rewards can you expect? You can choose from gift cards, electronics and airline miles. You can even donate to charities. You can redeem the rewards directly from the apps. Both Shopkick and Checkpoint are available for the iPhone. Shopkick is also works on Android phones.

### Apps from retailers

Finally, you'll also want to search for apps from your favorite retailer. For example, Wal-Mart, Macy's, Target and Toys"R"Us all have apps. They'll provide plenty of help when you're shopping.

Most will let you search through products the stores carry. They also provide driving directions and store information. But some also include sale items and weekly deals. It's an easy way to see what's on sale!





## Education SIG

# How to Help Teachers Use Technology in the Classroom The 5J Approach Worse for Teens Than TV? by Mary Burns

The following article from eLearn Magazine explores best practices in training teachers to use technology in the classroom to achieve their primary goal of helping students learn the content of their subject matter and not how to use technology for technologies' sake.

Recent reports (from The Chronicle of Higher Education (<http://chronicle.com/article/Reaching-the-Last-Technology/123659/>) and Walden University [PDF] (<http://grunwald.com/pdfs/Educators-Technology-21stCentury-Skills.pdf>), for example) point to teachers' continuing difficulties integrating technology into classroom learning. Despite access to technology and despite the fact that novice teachers are entering the classroom with far more advanced technology skills than their counterparts of an earlier age, only 39 percent of teachers report "moderate" or "frequent" use of technology as an instructional tool (Grunwald Associates, 2010).

This limited use may have multiple causes: Teachers may be overwhelmed by demands of testing; they may not see the value of instructional technologies in their particular content area; they may work in environments where principals do not understand or encourage technology use; and the types of software most helpful in instruction are not always the types of applications students know how—or want—to use.

But one cause of this difficulty seems to be the types of technology-related professional development teachers receive. Though technology training is one of the most common types of professional development for teachers—with 60 percent of teachers reporting some sort of technology-related professional development in the past year (NEA, 2008)—only 43 percent rate it "useful" or "very useful." Many teachers report that the instruction they receive in technology integration, whether online or face-to-face, is still too focused on learning how to use the software versus integrating it into the teaching and learning process (NEA, 2008).

Teachers do use technology—for administration, personal productivity, and displaying content (via projectors and

document cameras)—but not so much as a student learning tool. Why?

After 25 years of incorporating technology in the learning space, we still may not have figured out how to do technology-related professional development that helps teachers use computers as part of the instructional process. After 25 years of having computers in schools, we still lack an approach that ensures teachers truly understand the benefits and appropriate uses of computers for instruction and that teachers actually use technology as part of teaching and learning.

### Back to the Drawing Board: The 5Js

In the 1990s, the Austin-based educational organization, SEDL (<http://www.sedl.org>), developed a technology professional development framework called the "5Js." The five 'J's, which I will explain in further detail in this article, are: job-related, just enough, just in time, just in case, and just try it.

The approach was used successfully with 150 teachers in five states to help them integrate technology into instruction and assessment. Almost all these teachers were successful in this endeavor—the number of teachers who moved from "low constructivist" to "high constructivist" use tripled after two years (Dimock, et al., 2000).

In Indonesia, where teachers' and students' technology skills are almost minimal at best, Education Development Center (<http://www.edc.org>) recently concluded two pilot technology-coaching projects in which every teacher (of approximately 280) integrated one computer into his or her classroom instruction as a part of a learner-centered activity. EDC's Indonesian technology coaches did so by utilizing SEDL's 5J approach as their "playbook." Given



some of the reports we see about American teachers, more than a decade after its development in the U.S., it just might be worth dusting off and revisiting the 5Js to consider how we might improve technology-based professional development and support for teachers.

### Beyond Skills Training: A Theory of Action

The 5Js contain little that is new. Their value is in organizing best practices in professional development under a simple mnemonic device that helps educators focus on essential practices that promote quality implementation of an innovation.

The overall approach, sequential and cumulative, is grounded in two basic premises. First, if technology is used as a teaching and learning tool, tied to curricular goals and assessment and embedded within strong instructional techniques, it can promote better instruction and greater student collaboration, enhancing student learning. If not, it can't. Second, professional development can promote quality technology integration and learning by minimizing the importance of computers within professional development and concentrating instead on the core areas of teaching: content, curriculum, instruction, assessment, and classroom management.

According to the 5Js, technology-related teacher professional development should be:

**job-related**, focused on the core competencies of the classroom, not technology

**just enough**, emphasizing increased comfort, not proficiency, with computers and management of limited technology resources

**just in time**, meaning teachers are provided with skills as and when needed

**just in case** teachers need to plan for contingencies accompanied by a "**just try it**" attitude, wherein instructors apply both pressure and support to compel teachers to use what they've learned.

#### Job-Related

The teacher's primary role is to help students understand particular subject matter. Everything else is secondary. Therefore, the focus of any computer-related professional development should not be on the technology itself, but on how computers can improve performance in these core areas of the teacher's "job."

Begin with instructional objectives. What should students know and be able to do? Select appropriate technologies to support these objectives. What technologies can support these instructional objectives? How will the technology be used (with other learning tools) to do this?

Gauge the effectiveness of technology in student learning. How effective is technology in supporting these learning objectives? This allows teachers to make better planning decisions around technology as an instructional tool.

Make professional development workplace-based. Conduct professional development in the very environment in which the teacher will be expected to use computers-her classroom. This builds confidence that teachers can use a particular piece of software given their own constraints. It removes the "deficit" excuse of "I can't do this in my classroom because..." Equally important, classroom-based professional development keeps technology instructors honest. If teachers can't use technology a certain way given their physical or demographic constraints, technology instructors need to know so they can better support teachers with implementation.

#### Just Enough

Teachers don't need to know everything about a particular piece of software. They only need "just enough" to help them complete a curriculum-related or instructional task. Anything beyond this is wasted effort.

"Just enough" focuses, not on proficiency with technology, but comfort using technology within a curriculum activity.

First teachers need only learn a few software skills to help students use the technology. More important is understanding the software's instructional possibilities. As part of the "just enough" approach, teachers are encouraged to find their own solutions to technology issues, through trial and error, seeking help from colleagues, or reading FAQs and help guides. If this fails, only then should the technology instructor intervene and help the teacher. This approach is often unpopular while it's happening. It may take longer, but in the end, teachers report that they feel more confident once they have solved their own problems. And that's what this "J" aims for-confidence

Next, the principle of "just enough" encompasses hardware access. Teachers often believe more is better, that more technology in a classroom will yield a more learner-centered environment, while having less hardware impedes such an environment. Limited hardware is often



cited by teachers as a rationale for not attempting more collaborative approaches. In the U.S., teacher say, “I have four computers and 25 students. How am I supposed to do this?” In Indonesia, teachers say, “I have one computer and 60 students. How am I supposed to do this?”

The “just enough” principles says whatever the in-class ratio of learners to computers is, it must be the same in the professional development sessions. The sessions then focus on activities that emphasize collaboration and sharing of resources.

Teachers cannot and should not be trained in an environment that is richer with technology than what’s in their own schools. This strategy demonstrates to teachers that scarcity of resources can actually breed, rather than impede, collaboration, and that innovation does not always depend on resources (Burns & Dimock, 2007).

### Just in Time

The third ‘J’ is a truism in the field of professional development. Professional development should support teachers’ learning just in time — when they are ready to both learn and apply what they’ve learned with students.

The “just-in time” approach has three main corollaries.

**Differentiated professional development.** Teachers, like students, have different learning needs and preferences. A just-in-time approach attempts to differentiate the instruction and support teachers receive so they can tailor instruction to particular students.

**In-class support.** As the teacher plans to pilot her new instructional activity with students, the coach should provide “just-in-time” support—whether it’s observation and feedback, support as an assistant, or support as a co-teacher. This “just-in-time” and classroom-based support is most useful before and as the teacher does his activity.

**Reduce latency.** Latency is often a major issue in professional development. Too much time elapses between teacher learning and implementation of learning. By providing professional development close to the point of classroom implementation, this lag time and loss of learning is reduced.

### Just in Case

The Indonesian teachers my organization has worked with have many fears about computers. What if they break down? What if students break them? What if students cannot use or easily learn the software in question,

particularly if the teacher also feels uncomfortable with the software? How can the teacher use one computer or two computers with 50 students?

These concerns reflect larger fears about control that are not unique to teachers in one country or continent. Technology “disrupts” the classroom equilibrium based on teacher control and expertise in all matters. Limited computers mean grouping, making it harder for teachers to control the class in general and unruly students in particular. Inability to help students with software or troubleshoot a technology problem might reveal teachers to be less than omniscient. Teachers everywhere fear that chaos will ensue.

This fourth ‘J’ therefore focuses on helping teachers address these control issues by adopting a just-in-case attitude toward computers. This approach focuses on carefully planning the classroom activity. By remembering that computers are just one of many learning tools, teachers can reduce their chances of being caught unaware when computers fail technically or instructionally.

The central tenet of just-in-case thinking is planning.

By deliberately grouping students with varying technical expertise, teachers can delegate computer training to students, thus shifting some instructional responsibility to students.

By working with teachers to always have a Plan B, if technology breaks down or the school’s one laptop has been double-booked, learning does not grind to a halt.

Technology cannot save a poorly planned learning experience. Often, it just exacerbates the weaknesses. In this just-in-case approach, technology coaches help teachers plan and organize instruction in a more careful, detailed, and comprehensive fashion. By thinking through and planning for all contingencies, teachers will always have a plan just in case technology fails.

### Just Try It

Central to change is action, and this is where professional development often breaks down. “Just try it” is the most important ‘J’ principle of them all. Without application in the classroom, professional development is a waste of time, money, and effort.

Although it’s changing, most professional development programs don’t monitor or track teacher implementation of the knowledge and skills they’ve learned. This is particularly true for online professional development.



Thus, this fifth and final ‘J’ focuses on getting teachers to just try the computers in their classrooms, and making sure they do through pressure, monitoring, and support.

In the project in Indonesia, teachers knew that after every single professional development session, upon return to their classrooms, they would be expected to apply what they had learned and report the results to colleagues and their coaches.

We’ve further guaranteed that they “just try it” three ways:

- Instituting co-teaching between the coach and teacher
- Organizing solo teaching where the coach observes and provides feedback to the teacher
- Creating an ongoing practice of “open lessons” where teachers carry out a technology-based activity in front of colleagues.

When they “just try it,” teachers know that mistakes will be made. Errors and failure are a natural part of learning. But when everyone in the school “just tries” technology, teachers can begin to help one another and build collaborative teams.

Four strategies can help to ensure that teachers “just try” technology.

First, teaching the curriculum, not the technology, is the teacher’s main “job” in a classroom, so any technology-related professional development should make sure that technology supports overall lesson objectives (Job-related).

Next, teachers should receive instruction in technology when (not before) they need it and follow-up support to plan their technology-related activity (Just in time).

Third, technology professional development should de-emphasize the importance of teachers’ expertise with software and hardware (Just enough) and emphasize teachers’ comfort and confidence with computers. Over the years, I’ve found it helpful to encourage teachers to envision themselves as project managers who set up the activity, with students as “technicians” who delve into the intricacies of the software.

Finally, teachers need to carefully plan for using technology in their classroom, including strategies to address things they think might go wrong (Just in case).

Only when these five ‘J’s come together in a systematic way might the story of technology-based trainings have a different ending.

## Apple Ambassador

*Continued from page 2.*

useful to a lot of other people as well! We’ve heard repair success stories from forensic detectives, field translators, and even kids. From New York to Alaska, Tibet to the Faroe Islands, people have used our guides to fix their stuff. They saved money, they kept their Macs out of landfills, and they did it completely by themselves.



And the amazing thing? They enjoyed doing it. **It’s fun to take stuff apart.** It’s interesting to see what’s inside that magic iPod you carry around every day. It’s gratifying to fix it with your own hands. Don’t believe us? Try it! Fix your Mac yourself. Show a friend how to fix something. We’re all in this thing together, and if we work together we can [fix the planet](#). Join us.

### What we do now

We help thousands of people repair their devices every day. Why do we do it? Because companies like Apple don’t provide repair parts and documentation to end users. We believe everyone should have the right to maintain and repair their products.

### What’s next

Well, it turns out that most companies are just like Apple. They make great products, but they never quite get around to telling the rest of us how to fix them. But you can help!

We want to show the world how to fix anything. Nobody knows how to fix everything. But that’s OK, because most people know how to fix something. Maybe it’s just a stapler. Or a bicycle. Or a cell phone. What do you know how to fix?

## Teach us

Show us what you know. [Collaborate](#) with our [community](#). Together, we can fix the world! (OK, maybe just the world's gadgets. You know what we mean.)

For example, this step-by-step guide shows you how to [replace the battery in an iPod](#).

We're working on creating much more repair information for devices of all kinds. Our philosophy is that if you can't open it, you don't own it. Once you disassemble, repair, and put back together your laptop or iPod, you have a much better understanding of what goes into it. It's astounding how just 20 minutes of work and \$10 can make an iPod good as new -- but most people have no idea that there are instructions available to make the work easy. And why should they? Apple tells everyone that the battery isn't user-serviceable. That's where we come in, filling the ecosystem hole that Apple created by manufacturing a device without an end-of-life maintenance and disposal strategy.

Things break. You drop your iPod, trip over your Mac's power cord, or your display wears out. Wear and tear is normal, but throwing away almost-functional devices shouldn't be. Our goal is to provide you with everything you need to fix things yourself. You can fix it. We make it easy.

We help thousands of people repair their devices every day. Every time you fix something, you help the planet by keeping hardware out of landfills.

## Troubleshooting

### Diagnose what's wrong with your device.

So your iPod Video doesn't turn on, but what's really wrong with it? Well, our [iPod Video troubleshooting page](#) says



that it could be either the hard drive, the logic board, or the battery. Let's dig a little deeper. What happens when you plug the iPod into a power adapter? Ah, it starts up fine now! Great, then you just need a new battery. Buy a new [battery](#), and then go to our [repair](#) section to view [instructions on how to install it](#).

## Parts & tools

### Get the repair parts and upgrades you need.

We fund our mission of helping people fix things by selling useful parts and tools on [iFixit.com](#).

### Learn about the tools used for electronics repair.

What the heck is a [spudger](#)? Is a [Phillips #0 screwdriver](#) bigger or smaller than a [#00](#)? Answers to these questions are easy to find in our tool database. Tool pages have photos, useful background information, tips for use, and sources for finding the tool online.

## Free repair guides

### Use iFixit's step-by-step photographic repair instructions.

If a picture is worth a thousand words, why are you still reading this? It turns out that a little bit of text helps as well. Our repair guides combine great, high-resolution photos with helpful instructions. Color-coded bullets and markup help connect the instructions to the device in front of you. Thousands of people have successfully used our guides to repair their electronics, and you can too!

## Why fix things?

Well, you can save a lot of money by fixing things yourself. But there are other, even more important reasons to make the things we have last longer.

So for you who are not afraid to do a little tinkering, you may want to go to [iFixit](#), check out their free manuals and take something apart.





## Mi-Fi - Revolutionizing the Concept of Connectivity

by Renjith VP, SiliconIndia

Bangalore: This new line of compact wireless routers seems to be adding personal dimensions to connectivity. My Wi-Fi or Mi-Fi as it is christened; this device has opened the doors for a potential revolution of advanced Wi-Fi usage.

So pretty much technology related to connectivity are pinging up and what makes Mi-Fi stand out? Well it has already managed to beat Apple MacBook Pro, iPhone 4 and BlackBerry Bold 9700 to win gadget of the year by T3 magazine. And the reason for this is also the reason which can increase the scope of Mi-Fi as a potential connectivity hub - it is so tiny and, according to the New York Times' David Pogue, ridiculously easy to use. The device which can act as mobile Wi-Fi hotspots was introduced by Novatel Wireless and not to add, competition has already begun with all big names getting added up before the keyword such as Bell Mi-Fi, Vodafone Mi-Fi, Verizon Mi-Fi, Three Mi-Fi, Huawei Mi-Fi to name a few.

MiFi is an interesting new invention when we interpret it as a device that gives us a personal modem that will work just about anywhere. That's right - Our own signal. And Mi-Fi interests that particular person who sits in a coffee shop, which is a Wi-Fi hotspot using a laptop, with all that Wi-Fi experience getting ruined because of the many number of people using it simultaneously. The MiFi gets its Internet signal the same way those cellular modems do and with firms like Verizon to provide excellent 3G (high-speed) cellular data network you can access upto 5 GB of data any which way you want. It also makes the use of smart phones debatable since with a Mi-Fi to assist you an iPad can perform as an iPhone without a phone.

Mi-Fi will interest or in fact overwhelm its users in the coming days, if not the present responses are wrong and this will likely increase the new and advanced versions of this technology to pop up. The "cloud" of high-speed Internet connectivity that MiFi offers can be shared not only between users, but between devices such as laptops, cameras, gaming devices and multimedia players. Perfect for carpooling and relieving boredom in the back seat during that long road trip with kids - think Nintendo DS or Sony PSP - the MiFi will support up to five users simultaneously. It has got its own limitations too. Being a cellular modem, the user will be rather having low data caps. The packages as of now rate at \$40 for 250 MB and \$60 for 5 GB and are currently available in U.S. and Europe. Feedback on the total use, features and performance are still incomplete but claims are high as of now.



India has roughly seven million broadband users. Though this represents only a tiny portion of the country's over 400 million mobile subscriber base, telecom industry experts agree that with the advent of 3G more and more and more people will start accessing Internet via mobile. Thus the need for continuous connectivity will rise. WiFi mobile hotspots are all set to drive a new ecosystem of broadband connectivity. US telecommunication carriers Sprint, Verizon and Spain's leading telecommunications company Telefonica Espana have already taken the device to their broadband users. There is no doubt that MiFi will have takers in India. However, it is yet to be seen how soon it will enter into Indian wireless broadband space, since the company sources say that there are no plans yet to take it to the third largest mobile subscriber base in the world.



## The Myth of the Apple Bias

by Philip Berne, SlashGear.com

If you work for a Web site that covers consumer electronics, eventually you are going to be accused of two things: having an Apple bias and trying to destroy Finland. The backlash against Apple coverage is exquisite, as far as baseless Internet accusations go. It's not quite on the level of 9/11 conspiracy nutjobs or the racist and homophobic bigots you'll find scouring YouTube comments, but it does have its own patterns. Beyond simple bias, I've seen numerous Web sites accused of taking actual bribes and payments from Apple. Are these accusations completely without merit? The answer is complicated.

First, let's talk about why there is actually an Apple bias in the media. Apple probably gets disproportionate coverage compared to other companies. Take the recent announcement about the white iPhone 4, for instance. Apple once again pushed back the availability of the white version of its phone. That's all. Nothing inside the phone has changed. Nothing was said about fixing the antenna problems so widely reported at launch. But most tech news sites not only covered this story, they've probably covered it more than once. They probably cover the white iPhone story every time Apple makes an announcement about it.

Is it news when a company paints a phone white? From a journalistic standpoint, probably not. But I don't think that sites cover this issue because they are biased towards Apple. They cover the issue because people will read about it. People will click on the link to get to the story. Then, they might see the advertisements on the page. What if one of those ads is for a service that paints your phone white? Or for a competing phone already available in cool colors? You might click on that ad.

This isn't a bias issue, it's a capitalist issue. Long gone are the days of the New York Times acting as "the paper of record." I believe most good Web sites still follow the tenets of honest journalism, but coverage can be equally dictated by the needs of the consumer as it is the needs of journalistic integrity.

If you hate Apple products, or if you think this is a silly news story, you might think this coverage is biased. Indeed, I can't think of another phone or gadget that would generate such coverage for a single color option. But that speaks more to the iPhone's existence in the cultural zeitgeist than it does about the writer who pens the piece.

Another way there might be a pro-Apple bias is in comparisons with other products. Take the MacBook Air, for instance. The current version of the Air is an ultraportable notebook computer that costs around \$1000, give or take a few hundred. Fully loaded, that machine costs



\$1800. It uses a notebook chipset and notebook-grade discrete graphics. It costs more than full-powered multimedia notebooks that offer much larger screens, more powerful chips and more ports and features. That's fine, it's an ultraportable, and the market for ultraportables sacrifices power and

features for extreme portability.

When a site compares a \$500 netbook with a MacBook Air, that's not a fair comparison. Netbooks use ultra low power chips, and usually rely on integrated graphics. They are built small, but netbooks try to cram in as many features as possible in the tiny shell, while the MacBook Air tries to remove as many features as possible to get even smaller. The biggest advance on the current MBAir? The second USB port. I've seen netbooks with 3-4 USB ports, and some with integrated optical drives.

This problem is even more obvious with the Apple iPhone. For a long time after the initial wave of iPhone enthusiasm crested, every review seemed to compare the phone at hand with the iPhone. If you want to compare touchscreen smartphones with the iPhone, that's fair. But even comparing a phone like BlackBerry, with its hardware keyboard, or the raft of inexpensive touchscreen feature phones that Samsung steadily floats with U.S. carriers, is disingenuous.

If Apple is your only point of comparison, it may seem like you have an Apple bias. If the comparison is weak



or completely misguided, this only confirms the bias in some reader's mind.

Still, I'm not sure this is really a bias issue. After all, if I want to use a competitor for an ultraportable comparison, I might use the MacBook Air or I could mention a computer like the Sony VAIO Z series. The point of a comparison is to help your reader relate to the product you're reviewing. While a certain segment of my readership might be very familiar with the Sony VAIO Z or the Toshiba Portégé R705-P35, I'm sure that many more readers will instantly recognize the Air.

Of course, this is a self-fulfilling prophesy. After all, if I constantly go to the Air as my standard for comparison, I'm only teaching my readers about one ultraportable instead of taking the opportunity to expand their knowledge a bit. But is my job to teach my readers, or to help them relate in a way they already understand? That depends on the story I'm writing.

My absolute favorite Apple bias claim, and the one that simultaneously makes tech journalists laugh and cringe, is the claim that Apple is paying off tech sites for positive coverage. This makes me laugh because I know Apple's PR style, and this couldn't be further from the truth. I am sure that Apple is not paying off any tech site like SlashGear or Engadget. Apple is not paying David Pogue or Walt Mossberg. Does Apple exclude writers and sites that skew more negative in their coverage? That's entirely possible, I honestly don't know. But I'm sure Apple isn't rewarding positive reviews with cash prizes. Access is its own reward.

Of course, there is danger here. If David Pogue knows that writing positive stories about the Mac leads to more inside access with Apple products, he might be tempted to skew his coverage. I think this is more a problem for less prolific writers, like Pogue. Pogue writes a weekly column for the New York Times. He also writes instructional manuals about Apple products. If Apple cut him off, it might seriously hurt his livelihood. But for sites like SlashGear and other tech blogs, Apple is only one piece of a very large pie. It would never be worth the access opportunities for a site SlashGear to sacrifice its unbiased integrity for an early hands-on opportunity with the next iPod nano, or even the next iPhone.

So, there is bias in Apple coverage, for sure, but that bias is usually in delivering the most popular news to a competitive market. The bias is in favor of earning more readers, and more clicks. If consumers weren't biased towards Apple products, the Web sites would not seem biased either.

## Jobs: No USB3 at This Time

External hard drives have become truly massive; Western Digital, Seagate and others now sell 3TB drives, and Drobo allows up to 16TB of storage to be used in some models.

However, while many of these external storage devices support Firewire or eSATA, many are limited to relatively slow USB2 connections. Some Macs are also limited to USB2, such as the Macbook Air, leaving users stuck with a connection that can only push 30MB/s in an ideal situation. Mac users frequently report even lower speeds while running Mac OS X compared to the same machine running Windows.

While many users can get by with the slower USB2 connection, the bottleneck becomes apparent when large files need to be moved on or off the external drive, or when the user wishes to move all of their files from one drive to another; moving 3TB over a USB2 connection can take almost 2 days. Painful.

Relief is due to arrive at some point with USB3, which has a theoretical maximum transfer rate of 572MB/s, and a real world transfer rate of 250MB/s or higher, faster than just about all spinning disks and even many SSDs.

Unfortunately, Mac users will have to wait a bit longer for USB3 support to appear in Macs. A 9to5mac reader emailed Steve Jobs, wanting to know why it wasn't possible to order a new Mac with a USB3 port, and got this reply:

*We don't see USB 3 taking off at this time. No support from Intel, for example.*

Short, and to the point as usual.

So will Macs ever get USB3 support? Probably, however Apple and Intel are known to be working on a next generation connection system called Light Peak, in fact Engadget has previously reported that Apple is the one who brought the Light Peak idea to Intel in the first place.

Could Apple actually skip USB3 entirely in favor of Light Peak? The next 12 months could get very interesting, stay tuned!

Source: 9to5mac



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The best route to St. Mary's Hospital from the Northway is the following:

1. Merge onto NY-7 East from the Northway.
2. Follow Route 7 to Troy where it becomes Hoosick Street.
3. Turn left on Oakwood Avenue (10 Street/NY-40) which is the first light after the bridge and bare right.
4. Turn right on Sausse Avenue. Turn left onto Lindenwood Court. When you come to the first entrance to the hospital parking lot, turn left and park.



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