



New operating systems: Tiger vs. Longhorn

New operating systems from Apple and Microsoft Windows are on the horizon.

Apple's next version of OSX will be released in June or July with many new features while Windows plans to release its new operating system, Longhorn, in 2006.

Many of the features planned for Longhorn have already been incorporated into the new version of OSX so it's time to take a look at these new operating systems.

Windows users have been sitting back watching Mac users struggle with the conversion to OSX – but their time is coming. Hopefully, they learned from the Mac experience.

Software writers for Windows are now scrambling to rewrite programs to gain compatibility with the new operating system.

Mac users can now look forward to some of the new features of Tiger – the latest OSX version.

It's hard to believe, but we've now been working with OSX for four years.

Apple is continuing its feline naming scheme for OSX upgrades. Jaguar was the first big cat name, followed by Panther and now comes Tiger. Since Tigers are the largest of the big cats it will be interesting to see what name Apple selects for its next upgrade.

Let's take a side-by-side look at these new operating systems.



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computer notes
from the road

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TIGER OSX

- **SPOTLIGHT**, a new search technology that finds anything on your computer as fast as you type. Search your entire system from one place: files, e-mails, contacts, images, calendars and applications.

- **DASHBOARD** zooms on top of your desktop with the click of a function key and, like Exposé, disappears just as quickly and easily. Use Dashboard to access new mini-applications called widgets.

The Dashboard is home to a new kind of application called widgets, which are really just small control panel type applications. Widgets keep you up-to-date with timely information from the Internet (such as live weather) and provide quick, simple access to the most commonly used features of iTunes, iCal and Address Book.

- **SAFARI RSS** (Real Simple Syndication) now boasts built-in RSS support. Scan all the latest news, information and articles from thousands of web sites in one simple-to-read, searchable article list using Safari RSS. Many major news organizations, community web sites and personal weblogs offer headlines and article summaries in the form of news feeds using a technology called RSS. Safari RSS lets you take these news feeds and view them together in a simple, ad-free list so you can quickly find all the articles that interest you from across the web.

- Take control of your correspondence with **MAC OSX TIGER MAIL**, now featuring Spotlight search technology. Find e-

mail instantly and accurately, organize messages using Smart Folders and easily share, save or view e-mail images.

Mail now features a Slideshow function that displays images within a message in slideshow format, complete with a handy controller. View images one at a time, on an index sheet or at full-screen resolution.

- Introducing **AUTOMATOR**, an innovative application that helps you streamline challenging repetitive manual tasks without programming. It should be simple to create custom workflows just by dragging items, pointing and clicking. You can easily automate tasks – rename a large group of files, resize dozens of images to fit an iPhoto slideshow or create iCal birthday events using Address Book contacts – then repeat those tasks again and again. A simple and easy-to-understand application. Each action has all the options and settings you need.

- **PARENTAL CONTROLS**. Protect kids with a wide range of system preferences and applications, including Mail, Safari, iChat and more.

Kids love computers, and the Mac is certainly kid-compatible. But sometimes you need to protect your settings from small hands making accidental changes. Mac OSX Tiger gives you more flexibility when setting up your child's computer profile, allowing you to decide what system controls are available to your child. Specify any account as a managed account and limit the changes kids can make to your system. Preserve your settings by locking all System Preferences. Save paper and sanity by granting or limiting printer permission. Lock the contents of the Dock so a careless click won't send your icons to the trash. You can even set up controls for burning CDs and DVDs.

- **QUICKTIME 7** features an ultra-efficient new video code called H.264. H.264 delivers stunning video quality at remarkably low data rates, so you see crisp, clear video in much smaller files.

One caution: I spoke to an Apple tech who said new machines installed with Tiger will not ship with a Classic install disk. It's something to think about if you're still running OS9 programs.

LONGHORN

When someone says Longhorn in the future, we'll have to determine whether they're talking about the elegant animals I see in southern Oklahoma or Windows' new operating system.

Longhorn will be a major upgrade in the Windows world, much like the milestone move from Windows 3x to 95 at 32-bit.

It is the first Windows operating system built with managed code – and the first to host a new storage subsystem. This new system supports a natural search technology that resolves many of the ambiguities in query text. In addition, Longhorn will overhaul the operating system from the ground up with security and trustworthy computing at the core. These and other features suggest that Longhorn will change the way applications are built.

Longhorn will put a strong focus on the fundamentals of the operating system, including advancements in reliability, performance, deployment and ease of use.

Some of the new things that *may be* in this new Windows system are listed below. However, since it hasn't been released yet, it's subject to change.

Improvements to graphics subsystem that exploits 3D graphics will substantially improve the display of both text and graphics.

Longhorn's alpha welcome screen is a slightly modified version of the one in Windows XP, and will feature a time and date display, frequently requested by customers.

The desktop and start menu are virtually the same as their XP equivalents, with a few small changes. You will be able to add "My Contacts" and "My Hardware" nodes to the Longhorn start menu and there's a new Windows Address Book, which will be consolidated into the Windows Future Storage (WinFS) file system.

Shell folders such as "My Documents," "My Pictures" and "My Music" have been updated to support the new Preview view style. Preview splits the folder view horizontally, providing a graphical, web-like preview pane that is specific to the currently displayed content.

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A new Pivots choice in the toolbar expands to show grouping choices. The preview area is now resizeable and, as you drag the divider bar down, more information is displayed.

In the Taskbar settings dialogue, you can enable Sidebar, Longhorn's most discussed feature. The Sidebar is basically a side-mounted menu, very much like the MSN 8 Dashboard that lets you display XML-based components called Tiles.

When you enable Dashboard,

it appears blank on the right side of the screen by default. You can minimize it, add Tiles, toggle which side of the screen it appears on, resize it, and determine whether it's translucent. Available Tiles include a clock, virtual desktop manager, most frequently used programs list, Quick Launch toolbar, an Internet search bar, a My Photos slide show, and a "user tile," which lets you quickly switch between users. Some tiles offer pop-up menus that let you access hidden features. You can also choose to use the Sidebar as your taskbar, in which case the normal taskbar disappears and the Start button moves to the Sidebar. Now when you click the Start button, the Start Menu cascades out from the side of the screen instead of the bottom.

Technologies are broken up into presentation (Avalon) and communication (Indigo).

Avalon is the graphics subsystem that will enable developers to build applications. Indigo is a new approach to building and running connected systems built around a Web services-oriented architecture.

Both new standards represent a change in the way programmers do their job. Microsoft has carefully released information to developers over the past three years so new programs will work well with Longhorn.

Some of this work has already been incorporated into Windows XP because of the slow release of Longhorn.

And what will it take to run Longhorn? User desktop minimum requirements look like this: Pentium III 800 MHz or equivalent; 256 MB RAM; GPU graphics; Dx7 support; minimum resolution of 1024x768 at 32 bits per pixel for display, and 32MB minimum resolution for VRAM.

