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GeekFree

Mac Computers: A Love-Hate Relationship

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Full disclosure: I do not own or regularly use a Mac computer. I have provided technical support and upgrade services for several clients with MacBook Pro, iMac, or iPad devices over the years and have virtual MacOS systems running on my Windows computers to help increase my knowledge and skills to support them.

As a long-time Windows PC user, my first exposure to macOS was a little intimidating. I can appreciate the similar challenges going from Mac to PC. Soon I began to realize that the differences were mostly in semantics. For most familiar Windows functions or apps, there was an equivalent macOS one with a different name. There are many helpful articles on the internet explaining this:

https://www.online-tech-tips.com/mac-os-x/mac-equivalents-of-windows-software-and-features/

https://www.laptopmag.com/articles/windows-hot-keys-on-mac

https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT204216

https://www.dummies.com/computers/macs/comparing-common-windows-terms-with-mac-terms/

There are also some differences in navigating the user interface on a Mac vs. a PC, but it can be learned with practice. My overall impression of the macOS after experiencing several of the yearly updates of Mac OS X is that the look and feel of the user interface changes much less than Windows does, which may be appealing to some users.

The Apple hardware is the most distinguishing difference between a Mac and a PC, in my opinion. Each new model usually introduces new advancements in lighter and thinner design, display technology, port capability, or other features. That, coupled with the fact that Apple only competes with itself (through the Apple certified refurbished market), means that Apple can and does demand a premium price compared to mainstream Windows PCs.

The biggest distinguishing difference between a Mac and a PC that I find particularly frustrating, along with many other independent repair companies, is that Apple likes to control the aftermarket repair business. Official Apple parts are only available through the Apple supply chain to Apple Certified repair facilities and only for as long as they want to produce the parts. Attempts to sell the identical part produced independently by the same factories have been limited by Apple sometimes officially coding parts. As a result, the device will either not function or not update with non-Apple-supplied parts that do not have the code. Other industries have tried taking similar actions and have eventually been stopped by right-to-repair legislation to protect the independent repair shops and consumers. I can sort of understand the desire to control repairs while a product is under warranty, but after that, the consumer should have the right to obtain parts and repair the device in any manner they choose. I follow a website called ifixit.com that likes to dismantle new products to see what has changed and how difficult it might be to repair. Eventually, they produce repair videos and sell parts and supplies for do-it-yourself repairs. They also have information on the right-to-repair issue. Another good resource for information on the repair or upgrade of Apple products is Other World Computing (OWC).

https://www.ifixit.com/

https://www.owc.com/

In general, Apple products have a good track record for quality and reliability. However, a few notable miscues have been noted, such as a problem with Nvidia graphics processors popping loose or problems with new keyboard designs. How a company responds to such problems is essential, and I feel Apple could do a better job of that. Typically they wait until customers start threatening class action lawsuits before extending the warranty on defective products. Still, the repair or replacement is usually the same design as the original, so there is a good probability that the problem could reoccur. This does not seem to bother a lot of Apple customers who typically replace their devices frequently, but for those who want to hang on to a device for more than a few years, it could be an issue.