Macintosh

vs Windows 95

#16 Videoconferencing

Summary

The new Apple® Power Macintosh® 7500 and 8500 models are the first mainstream personal computers that make videoconferencing easy and affordable. They come with virtually everything the user needs built in and are very easy to set up.

This is part of a series of short reports on the contrasts between a Macintosh® computer and a PC with Windows 95. To see previous entries in the series, visit us on the Internet at http://www.apple.com/whymac/

The Macintosh Advantage

Personal computer videoconferencing has a long history of high expectations and poor delivery. The first wave of PC videoconferencing products were both costly and difficult to use. Even today, most of them require additional hardware and software totaling U.S. $1,500 or more per computer, and installation and troubleshooting is often complex and frustrating.

Apple's new Power Macintosh 7500 and 8500 computers have changed this. They include nearly everything a user needs to quickly and easily begin videoconferencing—QuickTime® Conferencing software, high-speed communications capability and video/sound input. Customers need only attach an inexpensive (approximately U.S. $100) video camera to the Macintosh system's video-in connector.

With QuickTime Conferencing, users can call other videoconference participants over their existing local area networks. Users can see multiple participants at once, take snapshots during sessions, record sessions, and "whiteboard" with others. (Whiteboarding is when two or more users work together on a shared document.)

QuickTime Conferencing is built on top of the H.320 videoconference standard, which lets Macintosh users connect to many other videoconference systems. Apple is releasing a QuickTime Conferencing upgrade kit for existing Power Macintosh users.

Macintosh computers are uniquely capable of handling videoconferencing applications for two reasons. First, because Apple is the only computer manufacturer to build both the hardware and software, Apple has been able to integrate videoconferencing smoothly into the Macintosh architecture. The second reason is the PowerPC™ chip. Its fast RISC architecture was designed with multimedia applications in mind and Apple thinks it is the most effective mainstream processor for desktop multimedia on the market today.

Videoconferencing products in the Windows 95 world continue to require the user to purchase expensive add-on cards and deal with the complexities of integrating the hardware and software themselves. In fact, Microsoft's own Windows 95 compatibility guide reports compatibility problems between Windows 95 and Intel's ProShare 1.8 videoconferencing product.

What It Means To Users

Apple's goal with the Macintosh is to bring new technologies into the mainstream and make them usable by ordinary people. That's what we feel QuickTime Conferencing has done with videoconferencing. With little or no additional cost and few setup hassles, users can now dramatically improve how they communicate with their colleagues and friends.

- In education, home-bound students will be able to keep up with classes and classmates, students will be able to contact experts at remote sites, and students around the world will be able to work together and get to know each other.

- In the home, users will be able to use QuickTime Conferencing to chat with other Internet users via TCP/IP, even sharing sound and graphics using the shared whiteboard.

- In business, videoconferencing can cut down the cost and hassle of traveling to business meetings. And it can enable workgroups to collaborate even when their members are in different locations.
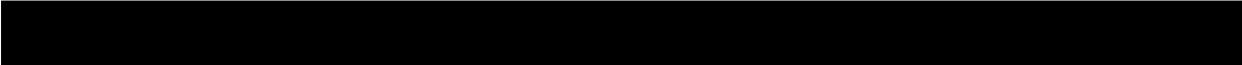
What About the Future?

Apple will continue to integrate videoconference technology into future Macintosh models, as well as provide other communication "pipes." For example, Apple is developing an ISDN connection kit, anticipated for release in early 1996, which will allow videoconferencing over standard ISDN telephone lines. Third-party software and hardware vendors are also working on interesting new products and solutions built on top of QuickTime Conferencing technology.

Questions or Comments?

You can send e-mail to the Macintosh Platform Marketing team at competition@applelink.apple.com

To learn more about the products mentioned in this document, use the Internet:

http://quicktime.apple.com/qtconf.html