

2009 - The year that was

Written by Philip Roy

Monday, 28 December 2009 07:48 - Last Updated Monday, 28 December 2009 20:58

2009 for me will be forever linked to two non-Mac and non-iPhone related things, study and illness. I won't bore you with details of the latter, other than to say it's not been a fun year (nothing life threatening)....and that it impacted both on my study and my attention to NZMac.com and NZiPhone.com, which had to come last on my list of priorities. I am hopeful that as I finally conclude my Master of Education at the end of January 2010 (woohoo!!), that I might also be able to look forward to healthier times...and finally, a proper holiday!! Even more so, I'll finally be able to have my evenings study free (yes, no doctorate is planned for a loooooong time!), and whilst I am intending to go to full-time at the University (I currently work 4 days a week) there should be a lot more time to devote to NZMac.com and NZiPhone.com....and I can't wait. But hey, I did manage to get a few things done, include completely relaunch NZiPhone.com this year!

With my evenings free(ish), I hope to be able to commit to things more things like regular podcasts, blogging and more reviews (it's a shame that some companies will let me review a product, but when I decline, aren't prepared to open the offer up to one of you) and generally spend more time on the content side of the sites than I have been unable to in the past 12 months.

Speaking of podcasts, I do need to give a huge shout out to Darryn Lowe (Lowededwookie) and David Duvall (DavidNZ) who not only revived the NZMac.com podcasts, but often willingly participated in a session without me. It was fantastic to know that they and other site users were willing to do this and it was absolutely amazing to receive the podcasts and have a listen to them. I hope that people might join in over the coming year and that we can have more regular sessions from now on. Thanks guys...your contribution this year has been invaluable, both in the podcasts and elsewhere.

Professionally, it's been a pretty amazing year for me. Being appointed New Zealand's first Higher Education Adobe Education Leader has been fantastic. Getting to spend a week at Adobe HQ and being privilege to all the new things coming in their products (I'm under a standing NDA so can't say anything) has been very cool indeed. I might also be able to give the AEL program more time once my studies are completed (I don't feel guilty as my study focuses on Adobe technologies)...but sitting in on NDA sessions of new products or new versions of products has been very cool indeed. As I write this, I'm also about to see a web-conferencing system (Adobe Connect) that I brought into the University become centralised for all staff. It's a huge thing...both for me and for the University and I'm so pleased the effort has paid off. Oh...and I'm also waiting for the associated iPhone app to get approved by Apple.

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Membership to the Apple Store affiliate scheme has proven to be successful this year, although it can be a mixed bag. There were months when no-one used the scheme at all (so Apple effectively got free advertising on the site) and other times when users of the site kindly listened to my pleas and purchased via an advert on my site. There were a few months that were great, so of course I wish Apple brought out stunning products a bit more often to get us all to part with our cash. Many thanks to all those that did make use of the affiliate program. I'm sorry to make my pleas so obvious at times, but the income from that certainly helps with the running of the site and recovering some of the costs (yes, I'm still running at a loss, but I've gotten used to that over the years).

The iTunes affiliate program (which is on NZiPhone.com) hasn't proven successful at all, with no sales generated at all. I'm convinced that this is due to technical problems with the scheme which I can't seem to get any answers on at this stage. The lack of response from the affiliate third party company has been perhaps the most frustrating part of the whole experience (I wish Apple took the scheme 'in house') and I'm continually frustrated not to receive responses for help from the third party company involved. I'll have to review this affiliate scheme as to whether it is worthwhile, although free advertising for Apple and zero income for me, suggests that the "worth" is somewhat debatable.

Of course again, I wouldn't have made it through the year without the advertisers. I lost one long term advertiser this year and unfortunately didn't pick up any new...but my other regulars stuck with me through thick and thin. Dennis @ RentaMac (www.rentamac.co.nz), Jens @ ToshNewZealand.com (www.toshnewzealand.com) and Duncan and the team at Orcon (<http://www.orcon.net.nz>) all continue to support the sites and I'm exceptionally grateful.

The two highlights for me this year would be the redesign of NZiPhone.com and the traffic both sites are receiving. In terms of the redesign, I moved to a new commercial template from a different company for NZiPhone.com, and I love the new design. For the first time in a long time, NZiPhone.com actually validated to web standards. It's amazing the impact that a Joomla design template can have on validation (and yes, it's appalling that validation has been so bad), and I can guarantee that NZMac.com will also receive a new look over the coming year from the same company....and I can't wait. I confess that the look that NZMac.com currently has, has caused nothing but hard work, and I'll be pleased to see the back of it.

In terms of hits, they are a statistic that sounds amazingly impressive but are also slightly

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meaningless....however it's pretty cool to tell people that NZMac.com now receives over a million hits a month and climbing for both sites. A big thank you to the staff at RimuHosting.com, where I continue to have my virtual private server, who have been simply superb again. I've never experienced a hosting company like them before where sometimes I plead with them to charge me for the additional help they have provided.

So what about the year in terms of Apple news? From the Apple news pages of both NZMac.com and NZiPhone.com, here are the major news stories in reverse chronological order (i.e., newest first):

- [Apple announces over 100,000 Apps on the App Store](#)
- [Apple introduces Apple TV 3.0 software with redesigned user interface](#)
- [Apple unveils new iMac with 21.5 and 27-inch displays](#)
- [Apple introduces Magic Mouse - The world's first Multi-Touch mouse](#)
- [Apple updates MacBook with LED-backlit display](#)
- [Apple reports Fourth Quarter Results 2009](#)
- [Apple's App Store downloads top two billion](#)
- [Apple releases iPhone 3.1](#)
- [Apple premieres iTunes 9](#)
- [Apple introduces new iPod nano with built-in video camera](#)
- [Apple introduces new iPod touch lineup](#)
- [Apple releases iPhone 3.0.1 update with SMS fix](#)
- [Apple reports Third Quarter results 2009](#)
- [Apple's App Store downloads top 1.5 Billion in first year](#)
- [Confirmed - Jobs had liver transplant](#)
- [iPhone OS 3.0 is out!](#)
- [Apple updates MacBook Pro family](#)
- [Apple announces the new iPhone 3GS](#)
- [Apple releases Safari 4](#)
- [Apple apps hit one billion downloads](#)
- [Apple reports Second Quarter results 2009](#)
- [Apple updates Xserve with twice the performance](#)
- [Apple release version 8.1 of iTunes](#)
- [Apple announces incredible new iPod shuffle](#)
- [Apple updates consumer desktop line](#)
- [Apple introduces new Mac Pro](#)
- [Apple release 2.2.1 iPhone update](#)
- [Apple reports first quarter results 2009](#)
- [QuickTime 7.6 released](#)
- [500 million app downloads](#)
- [Steve Jobs takes medical leave of absence](#)
- [Apple Introduces iLife '09](#)

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- [Apple Introduces 17-inch MacBook Pro with revolutionary new built-in battery](#)
- [Apple unveils iWork '09](#)
- [Jobs issues health letter](#)

There are four main stories that stand out here for me...the health of Steve Jobs, the iPhone 3GS and associated OS updates, Snow Leopard (well, OK, I forgot to cover that story) and Apple's financial situation.

There's no denying the impact that Steve Jobs has on Apple and the impact his illness had on Apple rumour sites throughout the time of his absence, ending in the confirmation that he had been a transplant recipient. He has been through a tough time and hopefully has seen the worst of times and can look forward to continuing improved health. I never entered into discussions about his health because of how personal a thing this is, even for such a well known figure as him. One of the interesting aspects to his illness was the fact that we got to see more of others such as Phil Schiller, and it is noticeable and pleasing to see that we see more of these staff in other events still. There's no denying it's great Jobs is back...he was missed, but as usual, he's back to work and focusing on more insanely great products for us all.

The iPhone and iPhone 3GS has been an unparalleled success, along with the iPhone 3.0 (and subsequent 3.1) update. The app store, despite all the bad press, complexities of approval and quirks associated with it, continues to show that, like the iPod, when Apple put their mind to coming into a market that they previously haven't participated in, they not only do well, but they quickly become the trend setter that others have to follow. Not that some thought they would do well... [just take a look at this page for a great laugh of speculation and comments at the time](#) .

How wrong they were!

[Then check out this superb New York Times article.](#)

Snow Leopard was an unusual update for Apple, most notably its cost. The fact that Apple spent so long refining the operating system, making moderate usability changes ("zero new features" was the mantra, but they lied) and then released what feels to me to be an exceptionally smooth OS, is to their credit...although I am aware that a lot of people weren't happy with the performance of Leopard before it. It set new ground for Apple in the way that it was released and the praise it received. Whilst there have been obvious issues for some, overall I believe the introduction of Mac OS X Snow Leopard was exceptionally positive, and it will be interesting to see the direction that they go in next.

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Finally, Apple's financial situation has continued to be as impressive as ever. I usually email the financial announcements out to the Mac mailing list at work, and this year it's been a year that some speculated difficulties due to the recession, but Apple seems to have been resistant to it. Their financial results have been astounding, and as a stock holder (yes, it sounds impressive but I own just 2 standard non-voting stock, bought a long time ago from OneShare.com) it's great to see.

All in all, it's been yet another impressive year for Apple, despite it starting slightly shakily with the announcement by Steve Jobs and the last attendance by Apple at a Macworld. It will be interesting to see what the New Year brings (Apple tablet anyone?), what happens at Macworld and when we can expect the first unexpected announcement from Apple on a great new product.

Finally, and coming back to my opening comments. I'd like to apologise that there is no x-mas or New Year prize or contest on the site over the summer period. This is for the reasons stated and because the remainder of my December and January will be filled with me panicking and writing (and panicking some more) as the January 31st deadline looms for my research report. It's still amazing to think that on January 1st, NZMac.com will have been running for 7 years and NZiPhone.com for 18 months.

I hope that you, your friends and family all have a far more enjoyable and relaxing holiday season than the one that I know I'm going to have, and I hope like me, you are looking forward to an enjoyable and prosperous New Year.

Thanks to you all for your ongoing support of both sites....please keep it up!

Best wishes,

Philip Roy