

ERIC L. VAUGHAN



My son calls me an Apple Fanboy. It's true; I'm in love with the elegance and technology that Apple, Inc. has churned out over the years. What Steve Jobs has accomplished in redefining existing market segments from the iPod (nee music player) to the iPhone (nee smartphone) to the iPad (nee we wish

we had a small, fun, powerful, touch-screen computer we could carry around) is nothing short of amazing. I often imagine this comes from a fanatical approach to Steve walking in on design meetings at Apple and inspiring the troops with religious philosophies on simplicity, beauty, elegance and attainability. I could wax exhaustingly on this, but then, we'd all be exhausted.

Another hallmark of Apple's run over the last 15 years is the position of underdog they've championed and thrived upon. They were the little guys; Mac vs. PC, niche-computer maker against the monolith of Microsoft. Product introductions and announcements were like spiritual revivals, and that hasn't changed. However, what has changed is Apple's position in the technology space. At the end of May 2010, Apple overtook Microsoft, IBM, Intel and every other technology company on Earth by one very broad measurement—market capitalization, aka what the public believes is the value of the company. In fact, as of the end of 2010, Apple trails only Exxon Mobil as the largest public company in the U.S., with analysts predicting with some certainty they will overcome Exxon in early 2012.

Apple has continued to CULTivate a following for a broad range of reasons. In my opinion, it's simple—literally. There were many smartphones available for years, but when the iPhone came out, Granny actually had to have one. And she uses it, with more apps than most of us!

I'm fairly certain there are now only 25 letters in the modern English alphabet, with Apple all but absconding with the letter "i" (yes, my company is a bit nervous). Apple is rapidly branding everything with their beloved prefix, and before long—that's right—the iMainframe™.

Why not? What's left for Apple? They're about to be the largest company in the world with more cash than IBM and Microsoft. They already have the iPhone, iPod, iPad, iTouch, iTV, iOS ... think about it! The only thing left is to emerge into the enterprise computing space and redefine what it means to "iPL" a systems disk. Parallel Sysplex, MWLC, VSAM Shareoption 4, CICS Transient Areas, and z/OS HiperSockets—beware!

Through the years, this column has complained about the trail of acronyms, architectures, and other inhibitions we've crafted to essentially create silos of capabilities to keep away from those who weren't "in the know." It's a bit like hostage taking, really, although to let us off the hook, we came by it honestly. As it was emerging, we didn't have the perspective to realize the walls we were constructing by implementing, and in fact ordaining, complexity.

In the mainframe industry, IBM and others have made tremendous strides in improving cost efficiency, performance, energy consumption, floor space, and just about every other metric that matters except one—distilling technology down to its simplest form so real humans can just use it. We still require a vast level of competency to manage and deploy mainframes, and in fact, to even use them. In 2011, we still have people fighting vocally for the "integrity" and usefulness of the 3270 green screen! Granny just can't live with that!

What would the iMainframe look like? Well, it's now available only in Apple White (they also own the color in addition to the letter i), arrives in a beautiful Apple White box, and only requires three steps to start it up. You open it up, plug it in and push the on button, and there it is, fully configured and running, with touch-screen interfaces for everything! Applications? All available in the App Store, including payroll, hospital care systems, robust banking applications—all with automatic update and standard download and installation. Granny will be managing your iMainframe.

The November/December 2010 issue of *Mainframe Executive* featured an article about the new mainframe and an interview with an IBM Fellow, one of only 73 out of 400,000 IBM employees; clearly, expert thinkers at a whole different level. They focus on vast technologies that can transform the industry to benefit all concerned. I think it's high time that one of these fellas focus on reducing the barriers of usage and employing that which they create. They have a great role model in big brother Apple.

I've just written this column on my iPad and sent it from my iPhone. Fanboy indeed.

That Sums It Up. **ME**

The iMainframe?

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