



Friday, January 5th, 2007

A teacher at the Karachi Grammar School once told her class that it was important for them to learn to speak Urdu so that they could communicate with their servants.

This used to be my prize story when dissing KGS or during discussions about how Urdu is being neglected in Karachi.

The top honour, however, now goes to the Convent of Jesus & Mary, where, like KGS, the only Urdu syllabus offered for O-Levels is Syllabus B, aka Easy Urdu.

- Class 10
- Urdu Period
- The teacher walks in and says “You can put your heads down or do your homework”.

I have never forgiven KGS for treating Urdu like a second-rate language and for nurturing the notion that speaking Urdu is somehow not cool. Obviously this is not an official stance *but the truth is out there ...*

Saturday, January 6th, 2007

In 1989, I met my first *Macintosh* computer.



I'd never seen anything like it and fell in love instantly. It was a *Mac Plus* with a black and white 9-inch screen, a mouse, and a graphic user interface ... and I spent an entire year obsessing about how to get one. Previously, I had used an Aquarius computer to learn Logo, after which I was gifted a disgusting DOS-based PC which did C:/ prompts very well. I learnt how to get directory listings and execute one other command that launched a game of some sort.

All I could think about was the Mac Plus I had seen in Zak's office. I called up Zak with trepidation (there was a time when I was terrified of him) to ask how much a Mac would cost and nearly passed out when he said, Rs. 47,000.

I started saving pocket money, Eed money, birthday money, and sold the despicable beast that used to make me feel like an idiot (I hadn't been introduced to Donald Norman in those days, but here he is):



... and FINALLY, in 1990, I got my first Mac.

It was an intensely gratifying day. Over the summer, I discovered the intricacies of the Mac OS, and taught myself *MacPaint*, *MacWrite*, *MacDraw*, and *HyperCard*. Those were the days of single 800 K floppy drives and infinite disk swapping. What fun (in retrospect, of course)! My life changed. I was going off to college in Lahore and didn't really know what I wanted to do but one thing was clear - the Macintosh was indeed "insanely great", it was "the computer for the rest of us", and my professional career was going to be based around creating things on the Mac. It was also the summer I discovered Pink Floyd and I spent a long time wondering why people needed anything other than *The Dark Side of the Moon*, *The Wall*, *The Final Cut*, chilli chips, and a Mac.

Over the next 5 years, my obsession with the Mac intensified as I learnt new tricks, started discovering what human interface design really meant, stumbled upon *Easter Eggs*, and fell in love with men who dropped out of school and started companies in garages.

In 1995, I went to the United States and was to spend the last 4 days of my trip in San Francisco, where I was meeting up with Zak. I was going to turn 21 in arguably the most unique and wonderful city in the world and was super excited.

On the 19th of June, a day before my birthday, Zak announced that we had to go get train tickets because he had a special treat planned for the 20th. After much pestering, he said we were going to go see the Golden Gate Bridge.

I was astounded. My ears started burning with anxiety - I didn't want to be rude and I was also a little confused. Neither of us were remotely into tourist attractions and the last thing I thought we'd do was go see a frickin bridge. Yes, it's iconic and represents San Francisco, and perhaps it should be seen up close, but ... it was totally bizarre as a ZakPlan. Anyway, I pretended to be excited and tried to look happy. Off we went to the Caltrain station to buy round-trip tickets to Sunnyvale. I was still confounded but said nothing.

The next morning, I turned 21 and was sort of dreading the trip as it just seemed like such a mundane thing to do. I was with someone who'd lived in a commune, had seen Pink Floyd live, had met the Beatles, and introduced me to *City Lights Bookshop* and *Ben & Jerry's* icecream - and we were going to the Golden Gate Bridge???? WEIRDNESS.

We got on the train - I continued to feel puzzled, and tried to muster up enthusiasm, quite unsuccessfully. We got off at Sunnyvale and boarded a bus to Cupertino. I had no idea where we were going or where this silly bridge was.

And suddenly, I saw a sign ...

Back in those days, if someone slashed us we used to bleed in 6 colors.

After a short distance, the bus stopped, and we jumped off. I saw another sign.

My jaw dropped. What the hell where we doing here? Zak nonchalantly said that this was my birthday present and he thought we'd just walk past the Apple campus and maybe get as far as the parking lot. I was in shock. This was beyond my wildest imagination. I was so deliriously happy that I burst into tears. Zak said, C'mon kid, it's only the parking lot.

What difference did that make. We were in the general vicinity of a place that was home to Steve Jobs, Steve Wozniak, Alan Kay, Andy Hertzfeld, Susan Kare, Tog, Bill Atkinson, Guy Kawasaki ... then my knees buckled.

I was in a daze and just followed Zak mindlessly. We got to a building and he said, maybe we should just go in and look around, I'm sure they won't mind. By now, I was in the throes of an out of body experience. We went in and Zak walked up to the reception and mumbled something to a lady and suddenly we had name tags, which were being churned out by a gorgeous old *Mac SE*.

The atmosphere was electrifying. A guy in shorts zipped through the reception and out the main door ... on a bicycle! 5 minutes later, a young woman came up to us and said, "Sabeen? Happy Birthday!!" She handed me an Apple bag full of goodies and introduced herself as Kim Slaton. According to Zak, at that moment, I reminded him most of the *Ecstasy of St Theresa*.

Even when Kim said, "Let's go, I'll show you around", I couldn't figure out what was happening. I was completely befuddled. After what seemed like an eternity, I came crashing down to earth with a resounding thud. It finally dawned on me that Zak had master-minded this astounding plan, and in typical dead-pan fashion, had not let on, even remotely what was in store.

After I vaguely internalized that we were at Apple Computer Inc's headquarters, and had actually been invited, I floated off the ground again. Kim Slaton was Satjiv Chahil's secretary and Zak knew Satjiv, who was heading up Apple's New Media Group and had arranged our visit.

Kim showed us around the Apple Campus, the beautiful Apple Icon Garden, took us to the gourmet Apple cafeteria for my birthday lunch, and then took us to the Apple Campus Store, where we were able to buy cool stuff with her employee discount card. The bag Kim gave me included a gorgeous Apple beach towel, a Mission Impossible jacket, an Apple watch, and a bunch of assorted goodies.

Obviously, there were Macs everywhere and it just felt so good to not have to see a single PC for an entire day. I think I did manage to regain consciousness and coherence at some point and hopefully did not make a fool of myself for the entire duration of our visit (except for the occasional teary bits). I don't remember really as I was walking on sunshine.

June 20th 1995 was, without a shadow of doubt, the best day of my life. Zak, I have no words to thank you for making it possible.

11 years later, I am going back to San Francisco to attend *MacWorld* as Apple's Pakistan journalist. On January 9th, 2007, at 9:00 am, Pacific Standard Time, I

will see Steve Jobs, in the flesh, and will be sucked into his famed *Reality Distortion Field* for two hours. As press, we will also be taken to the Apple Campus in Cupertino. It'll be interesting to see how things have changed since the second coming of Steve Jobs.

Reports from the trenches to follow ...

Monday, January 8th, 2007

Got to San Francisco at 2:30 pm on the 8th of January. Picked up my Press Badge at 4:00 pm and now await the big moment. Steve Jobs will deliver his keynote address at 9:00 am tomorrow, i.e. 10:00 pm Pakistan Standard Time. CNN, NBC, and 2 other HDTV companies already have massive vans parked outside the Moscone Center. The Asia Pacific Press team has decided to leave the hotel at 6:30 am to queue up for the keynote. I will leave at 5:30 am so I can be there by 5:45 am. Doors open at 7:00 am.



Am zonked. Have been emplaned for 20 hours with longish waits at Dubai and Frankfurt. Haven't slept but adrenaline levels are intense and will pull me through.

Check out the Macy's Sign

(Zak: Can't be found anywhere. Sorry)

Wonder how much Apple paid for that.

Love from the City By The Bay. More tomorrow ...

Tuesday, January 9th, 2007

4:00 am: Woke up - not that I was able to sleep.

5:15 am: Left the hotel for Moscone West.

5:25 am: Got there. Joined 2 other members of the press, who'd been there since 4:00 am. We made our own line.

The line was already about 1,000 people strong. Several of them had been camping out since 9:00 pm the previous night, including folks from Google.

It was amazing being up and about in San Francisco at 5:30 in the morning. It was freezing cold but wonderful. Loads of coffee places were open and Peets Coffee and Tea were handing out free hot beverages to the people waiting in line.

6:30 am: Apple staff started letting people in.

Media was told to wait until 7:30 am.

7:45 am: The line was never ending. Must have been about 3,000 people by now. Met Ryan Block of Engadget. The Media group was constantly reassured that we'd get good seats and didn't have to worry, and that there was a special area for us. After several door changes, being allowed in only to be thrown back out, and an interminable wait, we finally got inside the building. The place was crawling with Apple security men and women in black.

7:45 am - 8:54 am: Behind barriers, waiting to be allowed into the Keynote Hall. Watched several VIPs go past, including Paul Otellini, Bob Iger, folks from Pixar, and I think Bill Atkinson who invented HyperCard. Apparently Jobs' family went past us as well.

8:55 am: All hell broke loose as scores of media "professionals" practically trampled over each other to board the escalators. FINALLY IN. The hall was split into three parts - the Media area was to the left and I was in the fourth row of journos, somewhere in the middle of the Hall. Anyway, I had a clear

view of the stage, but was too far back to take decent pictures. Sorry everyone .

8:56 am - 9:10 am: Apple's signature playlist was blaring - ColdPlay, Gnarl Barkley ...

9:12 am: Someone welcomed us to the MacWorld 2007 Keynote Address, requested everyone to switch off their phones, and announced that the show would begin in a moment. I know I said the exact same thing in a recent post, but truly, the atmosphere in the Hall was electrifying. No WiFi, so decided to sit back and enjoy the show.

9:15 am: A rocking James Brown number got the crowd totally in the mood - and in walked The Man, in his standard black turtleneck and dark blue jeans. Rapturous applause for Steve.

OK, by now everyone knows that the iPhone was announced. I have to take a short nap before I collapse and die. Will be back shortly.

Back.

Housekeeping arrived to clean my room so have been denied sleep, yet again. And now, enough of the minute by minute account.

The crowd went nuts when Steve got on stage. Practically everyone stood up and some people got up on their chairs. He put his hand together, Namaste style, and said, "We're going to make some history together today." Aaaaaaooooooooooooo. With these posters all over the place, heartbeats accelerated and pulses started racing.

Is he a CEO of a company or a fucking rockstar? *Don't answer that.*

Steve very quickly spoke about the switch to Intel and how it was a huge heart transplant. He said that the switch had been successful owing to the beautiful and seamless version of Mac OS X for Intel processors. Remember how shocked we were when this was announced at a previous keynote - the project had been on for over 5 years and no one knew. Users were thanked and he said Apple's retail stores were selling around 50% of their Macs to switchers.

Steve then showed a new ad "celebrating" the release of Vista. Hodgman was in a hospital gown going into major surgery. Heh. He said 2007 was going to be a great year for the Mac and awesome new stuff would be rolled out over the next several months. That was that on the Mac front. So, no Leopard, no 10" laptop, no new iMac, no 8 core Mac Pro.

Steve then talked about iPods, sales figures and how the Shuffle is the world's most wearable MP3 player, which elicited giggles. He dissed the recent report that stated iTunes sales were slowing - said he didn't know what data those people were looking at. 2 billion songs sold on iTunes. Apple now sells over 5 million songs a day, 58 songs each second, and more music than Amazon. 50 million TV shows sold. New movie partner announced: Paramount. Crowd thrilled. Movies include Tomb Raider, Zoolander, Italian Job, School of Rock, and Wrath of Khan.

The next segment was about Apple's new holiday season competitor. How well did they do? 2% marketshare in their launch month! Haha. Classic Jobs jab followed: "No matter how you spin this, what can you say?" And the Zune text that was on the screen caught fire and dissolved.

A new set of iPod + iTunes ads were shown next. The usual stuff; the black silhouettes are now colored, the colored background is now black, and the dancers were going nuts in tune to an indie track that I couldn't place. The next ad had the same action going on except the background was grungier and full of cool graffiti. Nothing earth shattering. But it was phenomenal watching the ads on a big screen with Steve looking on proudly, as opposed to the tiny webcast we suffer through every year over stuttering Internet connections.

Next up was the Apple TV, codenamed iTV, announced last September. The Apple TV is a cool, sleek device that enables wireless streaming of movies, music, and photos to a widescreen TV. It has an Intel processor, and a 40 GB hard disk, so content can also be stored on it. The ports on the back are USB 2, Ethernet, WiFi, HDMI, Component Audio, and Optical Out. Content can be auto-sync'd from a Mac or a PC and streamed from up to 5 computers. Steve streamed a trailer live from Apple.com; the Good Shepherd (Angelina Jolie - WOOT) - awesome quality, meant to be 720p. Then he showed a hilarious clip from Zoolander. The Apple TV is also great for streaming music to a home theater system and Steve played some songs, and demoed CoverFlow and how album art flips from one side to the other - "it does that so it doesn't burn a hole in your Plasma TV"

Steve then showed how hi-def photos can be viewed on a TV, using a photo album he'd made. By now, it was time for the ubiquitous Steve and Phil show. Phil Schiller is Apple's head marketing dude. Steve streamed a TV show off Phil's computer, and that concluded the Apple TV demo. Priced at US\$ 299, it's available to order today and will start shipping in February. Steve was very pleased with this product and said "Enjoy your media on your big screen TV, we think this is really going to be something special".

By 9:45ish, Steve's famed Reality Distortion Field started kicking in. When he said, "This is a day I've been looking forward to for two and a half years", a loud, collective gasp resounded through the hall. "Every once in a while a revolutionary product comes along that changes everything. One is very fortunate if you get to work on just one of these in your career. Apple has been very fortunate that it's been able to introduce a few of these into the world. In 1984 we introduced the Macintosh.

It didn't just change Apple, it changed the whole industry. In 2001 we introduced the first iPod, and it didn't just change the way we all listened to music, it changed the entire music industry."

The moment of truth was upon us. I nearly fainted right about then.

"Well today, we're introducing 3 revolutionary new products. The first one is a widescreen iPod with touch controls".

Everyone went nuts.

"The second is a revolutionary new mobile phone."

Oh my goodness. The crowd went wild. What an experience.

"And the third is a breakthrough Internet communications device."

Hmmmm? Very intriguing. This man is undoubtedly the finest presenter alive today.

Steve then said, "An iPod, a phone, an Internet mobile communicator. These are NOT three separate devices!"

Here it comes ...

Steve said "Today Apple is going to reinvent the phone. This is what it looks like ..." For a nano second, we were like, WTF? It was a joke. The image on screen was the first generation iPod with a clunky rotary dial. Hehe. Anyway, Steve then spoke about SmartPhones and how they aren't smart and aren't easy to use. No shit. He said that Apple didn't want to make one of those things.

Off to an Asia Pacific Dinner.

More as soon as I get back.

Tuesday, January 9th, 2007

Just got back from dinner, where the drinks were far superior to the food. Anyway, so back to the SteveNote. What a man, what a man, what a man, what a mighty good man. Unhh hun.

Everyone's pretty confused about the nomenclature since Cisco/Linksys launched their VOIP iPhone a few days ago. Weird. They must have worked something out for sure.

So, Steve talked about the revolutionary UI of the iPhone and said it was the result of 5 years of development. How do the folks at Cupertino keep everything under wraps for such extended periods? Crazy. On screen at that time, were these butt ugly, disgusting pieces of shit, you know, stuff like the Motorola Q, Blackberry, Treo, Nokia E62. UGH.

Then the screen changed to show half of the "beauties". Steve said that the problem lies in the bottom 40% of all these phones. The keyboards. They're "there whether you need them or not". "They have control buttons fixed in plastic. Every application wants a different button. You can't add new buttons. How do you solve this problem?"

He said, "we solved this problem - we solved it in computers 20 years ago". So, the iPhone has 1 button. That's right. ONE button. He then asked, "how are we going to communicate?" With a stylus? "NO!! Who wants a stylus?" I can swear he said "YUCK" in a totally desi style. As in, YUCKKHH. Have never heard an American say YUCK like that. Coupled with all the Namaskar action, I think he is still inspired by the sub-continent, and will visit soon.

Apple is a company that truly espouses and lives the "less is more" design philosophy. I absolutely love minimalist design but sometimes, as power users, we get left in the cold with software like Apple Mail and Keynote, that are great but often lack enhanced functionality that may boggle a new user but are absolutely necessary for seasoned pros. One would think that the iPhone, with a single button, may fall victim to the same syndrome. But no. It's super powerful and totally flexible as everything is controlled by software and can therefore adapt to myriad needs. I assume.

“Let’s not use a stylus”, says Steve Jobs. “We’re going to use the best pointing device in the world - our fingers”. Apple has developed an awesome new technology called Multi Touch, and here’s a typical reality distortion phrase; “It works like magic. You don’t need a stylus and it’s far more accurate than any interface EVER shipped”. He got a good laugh out of us when he said “Boy, have we patented it”.

The audience roared with delight when Steve talked about the software breakthrough that’s 5 years ahead of what’s on any other phone. That’s right, iPhone runs OS X. Fabulous. Since OS X has multi-tasking, power management, graphics, security, Core Animation, audio and video, the benefits to the iPhone are obvious and tremendous. Alan Kay, a demigod in the computing world, was then invoked with a quote, “People who are really serious about software should make their own hardware.”

Understandably, Steve is super proud of the iPhone’s design. 3.5 inch screen, highest resolution ever shipped, i.e. 160 ppi, and of course, the solitary button that takes you “home”. That damn phone is one slick beauty and seeing it on a 40” screen was orgasmic. It has a 2 mega pixel camera, a headset jack, SIM tray, and a sleep/wake switch. At the bottom is a speaker, mic input and an iPod connector. All very slick and unobtrusive. The stuff we can’t see includes a proximity sensor, so when you bring the iPhone to your ear, the display and touchscreen switch off, an ambient light sensor that adjusts brightness to save power, and an accelerometer, which can detect landscape or portrait modes.

After this came the totally awesome demos of the iPhone. Steve whipped one out of his pocket and there was a camera attached to the giant screen so we could see Picture in Picture live action of whatever he was doing.

More to follow ...

Wednesday, January 10th, 2007

Steve's demo of the iPhone had everyone oohing, aaahing, and salivating. The first thing he did was to slide his finger across the screen to unlock the phone. *Bahut aala*. He kicked off the demo with the iPod by scrolling through a long list of artists. He just took his finger and scrolled across that beautiful screen and the hall exploded in a frenzy of raw desire. The iPod includes CoverFlow so album art looks stunning on that 3.5 inch screen. "Touch your music".

Now on to the phone part of the iPhone. Steve said, "We wanted to reinvent the phone. What's the killer app? The killer app is making calls!!!" iPhone is a quad-band GSM + EDGE phone with WiFi and Bluetooth 2.0. Simply amazing interface, and in true Apple style, the emphasis on detail was off the wall.

Steve's first public call was to Jonathan Ive, Apple's wonderboy of industrial design. He turned on the Speaker Phone and we heard Steve chatting with Jony Ive. Then Phil Schiller called and grumbled about how he wanted to be the first call. Steve effortlessly created a conference call by touching a button and they had a three way conversation. Steve asked Jon if he had anything to say on the first call and Jon said, "It's not too shabby, is it." Brit Boy RuleZ. Tells Phil he has to go cause he has this keynote to get back to. Heh. Visual Voicemail was cool - heard Al Gore and Tim Cook on revenue results. Steve said, "You know, this can wait until later", and the audience cracked up.

SMS conversations are displayed iChat style with bubbles. He then showed how photos are managed on the iPhone. To look at photos, you just have to swipe them and turning the phone activates the sensor that puts the photos into landscape mode. The coolest part was when he showed how you make a picture bigger or smaller. Just pinch the photo to make it smaller and move your fingers apart to make it bigger. *Hae zaalim*. Lots of other cool bits and pieces were shown after which he said, "I think you'll agree, we've reinvented the phone".

The Internet Communications device component of iPhone incorporates rich HTML e-mail which works with IMAP and POP3 services, Safari, Google Maps, and Widgets. Yahoo will offer free push-IMAP email, Blackberry style. By now everyone must have read the details so I won't go into them here. The Safari demo was mind-blowing. Steve loaded up the

New York Times website - and not just some WAP version, the real thing. Ooooooh. He turned the phone around and went into landscape mode and

then back again. Stunning resolution. Double tapping on an image or text zooms in. He also showed how you can create multiple pages and scroll through them. Then he showed Widgets - weather and stocks; Apple's stock price was already on the rise.

The Google Maps demo was super. Steve searched for Starbucks near Moscone West and when the phone number was displayed (the software has a parser so numbers are automatically touchable), he called Starbucks. An Asian woman answered the phone, "Good morning, Starbucks. How can I help you?" He goes, "Yes, I'd like to order 4,000 lattes to go please. Oh, sorry, wrong number, thank you." He hung up and we cracked up. Massive applause.

In a way, I'm glad he called Google's CEO, Eric Schmidt on stage right then because there was just too, too much excitement. Next came Jerry Yang of Yahoo! Apple has been working with both companies on a number of exciting services.

Steve then showed what happens in a real-world environment when all three components of the iPhone interact with each other. The music fades out beautifully when a call comes in, and Phil wants one of Steve's photos, which duly gets e-mailed with a couple of taps, while Phil is still on the phone. When he ended the call, the music smoothly came right back on. Hell let loose in the hall yet again. Dramatic.

He compared the iPhone's mail, calendars, contacts, and browsers with all those smartphones. UGH. He said, "After today, I don't think anyone's going to look at these phones the same way again." He showed off some accessories, including a beautiful Bluetooth headset and then announced that Apple has filed for over 200 patents for all the inventions in the iPhone.

He did this major *tamasha* when revealing the price, building anxiety and tension. So, as predicted, US\$ 499 for the 4GB model and US\$ 599 for the 8 GB model with a 2 year Cingular contract. The iPhone will be available in June in the US, Q4 in Europe, and 2008 in Asia. The Cingular CEO was then called on stage. Gosh, the two CEOs come from different planets.

When Steve FINALLY came back on, both his clickers had died. He said, "They must be scrambling back stage right now". Haha. He effortlessly cut to a joke. When Woz was studying at Berkley, they made this device called

the TV jammer, a little oscillator that put out frequencies that would screw up the TV. They'd go into dorms while people were watching Star Trek

and basically just mess with their minds. Heh. He talked then a bit about the size of the cellphone market and the 1% Apple would try to capture in one year.

Steve then announced that the company is dropping "Computer" from its name and will now be called Apple Inc. since it does Macs and iPods, and Apple TV, and iPhones, and who knows what else ... He said, he hadn't slept a wink the previous night because he was so excited. He shared a Wayne Gretsky quote, 'I skate to where the puck is going to be, not to where it's been.' "That's what we try to do at Apple."

Unbelievable applause and a standing ovation for Steve Jobs. WOW WOW WOW. He then asked all the people who worked on the iPhone to stand up for a round of applause and then thanked all the families who hadn't seen much of them in the last 6 months. He said, "Without their support, we couldn't do what we do. You don't know how much we need you and appreciate you, so thank you".

We then got to hear John Mayer live and he sang "Gravity" and "Waiting on the World to Change". Great. Steve came back, thanked him and everyone in the audience, and that was it from the Keynote Hall at Moscone West in San Francisco.

Thanks for reading, everyone. More on Steve's performance later ...

Wednesday, January 10th, 2007

After the Keynote ended, I went downstairs to head on over to Moscone South to get to the Exhibition Floor. I was chatting with Jeremy Khoo, who works at Apple Inc. (!!!) in Singapore and looked out the window ... And my eyes popped out!

It was Steve Wozniak riding by on his Segway.

I ran out and a crowd quickly gathered around to get a peek at the other Steve who co-founded Apple. The über computer engineer, the creator of the Apple I and II, the man who developed the prototype of Atari's Breakout game in 4 days, the ultimate prankster, Woz is a superstar of a different kind.

I desperately wanted an autograph but didn't have a damn thing to get Woz to sign on. Scrambled to get my bag open and yanked out the first piece of paper that fell out of my folder - how undignified to get Woz's autograph on the back of a Vignette whitepaper.

Anyway, he graciously signed it for me and rode off, while we watched in awe.

Chalo, aik Steve ka to autograph mila.

Wednesday, January 10th, 2007

In a few moments, we will get to touch an iPhone. Press briefing coming up in 20 minutes. Stand by for details.

Wednesday, January 10th, 2007

On the 10th of January, at 12:00 noon, I got to play with a first generation, pre-release iPhone, at an Apple Press Briefing. AAAAAAAAAOOOOOOOOO. We met with Greg Joswiak, aka Joz, Worldwide VP - iPod Product Marketing and David Moody, Worldwide VP - Mac Product Marketing. They also had the newly designed Airport Extreme on display and the Apple TV connected to an enormous Sony Bravia TV.

The iPhone. What can I say? With Jon Ive as the lead designer, what do you expect? Oh, there are some women on the design team. Figures ... Stunning industrial design, smooth round edges, thin, sexy, edible, lickable. I was the last to get my hands on it so played with it a little longer than everyone else. Good move. Listened to a Billy Holiday track, pinched some photos (too cool for words - nearly levitated out of my chair when that happened), scrolled through the New York Times website, watched a movie for a couple of seconds in landscape mode, and tapped out a text message. Everything feels and looks beautiful. Then again, it's Mac OS X so I expected that. The resolution was stunning. I mean, really really stunning. Oooof. Fingerprints wipe off easily. The screen is ultra hard coated and resilient. Not like the first generation Nanos in case anyone's worried.

As far as network providers go, for now it's Cingular. However, Apple will evaluate options for other markets and do not currently know whether

there will be an unlocked version at any point. There may well be. They also don't know about countries that will be included in the Asia list for the 2008 release. I told them that there is loads of silly money in Pakistan and people change phones every 3-4 months and it would be best if there was an unlocked version for us. They have partnered with a carrier because they want to control the entire end-user experience. *Mobilink, Warid, Ufone: Pay Attention.*

The platform is NOT open and Apple will provide all software and updates. However, as you know, they have teamed up with Google and Yahoo! and perhaps others will come later, so expect to see interesting products being released for the iPhone.

Joz was not concerned about battery life. Batteries are service center replaceable like the iPods and replacements will be handled ecologically, with appropriate care for the environment. They were not willing to comment on GreenPeace and the GreenMyApple campaign. Those folks were there yesterday, handing out flyers to people prior to the Keynote.

Finally, it's another 6 months to go until launch so we can expect to see enhancements to the software, for sure, and maybe some hardware tweaks. The Calendar and Notes apps were just screenshots so there's definitely stuff to work on.

Bad News? The text input was way clunky. It was predictive but tapping out a message was somewhat arduous. A stylus, however yucky, would be welcome.

They didn't allow us to take any pictures despite the fact that we begged.

Now I'm off to hit the Exhibition Floor.

Peace!

Wednesday, January 17th, 2007

While in San Francisco last week to attend MacWorld, I had the misfortune of setting eyes on a Zune. I didn't see it all week and then on my last day, I stepped into Virgin Records, and they had a few of these things lying around.

I seriously could not believe it. The Zune has got to be the most ugly device EVER. My face went into contortions and I couldn't stop; my nose and eyes and mouth had lives of their own.

There was a guy standing next to me looking at the Zune and he watched me for a while and finally said, "Pretty cool, huh?" I was incredulous. I said, "Uhhh, NO!" and scrambled to create distance between myself and him. After a while, I overheard him asking a Virgin employee where the Wrestling DVDs were. Figures ...