

SCUM Book Review

“Apple Confidential 2.0”

By Owen W. Linzmayer

Review by Dan Bellack, SCUM

Apple Computer has amazed industry watchers for over a quarter of century. Like a lot of other people, I have had the wonderful opportunity to see this much of their colorful history unfold firsthand. Although I never worked directly for Apple, I was a member of the computer industry infrastructure from the middle ‘60’s through the ‘90’s and had frequent contact with Apple folks, beginning with the “two Steves” and continuing on to dozens more marketing, marketing communications, and technical people.

Since the day in 1976 when I watched the Apple logo being designed from my vantage point as a V.P. of the ad and P.R. agency hired by Steve Jobs, I have had an insatiable appetite for Apple insider stories. The advanced publicity on this book promised me just that. I am delighted to say that it fulfilled all my expectations from the day that I began reading it. It was like running into to ultimate insider who couldn’t wait to tell me “everything I ever wanted to know” about Apple.

What I Liked Most

I think what I liked most was the feeling that I learned a lot of new stuff. I thought that I had a fairly good personal knowledge of what happened during the early days. I found that I had a lot to learn. As I turned the pages of “Apple Confidential 2.0” I was continually saying to myself, “Wow, I didn’t know that!”

Sprinkled throughout the book are great quotes that give a real flavor for what the Apple insiders were thinking and feeling at critical times during the company’s development. I was surprised by the amount of candor exhibited by a number of reminiscences. It gave me a feeling of really being “on the inside.”

Beyond the story telling capabilities of the author, his meticulous research provides us Mac fanatics with really neat detailed timelines for equipment releases, business milestones, and personal accomplishments of the key players.

In addition, you can trace the Apple-related happenings within the infrastructure and competitive companies, thereby fleshing out an interesting overview of its impact on the world outside of the walls of Apple.

A Good Reference Source

I found the book was intelligently laid out. Even though it contains enough information to satisfy even the most voracious consumer of Mac trivia, I found that I could easily navigate and find just right stuff that I wanted to know at the moment, leaving the remainder of the feast for another sitting.

There was a wealth of visual information. Over the years, I have found that I am a “visual learner.” I tend to remember what I see more than what I hear. In the case of books, I am continually drawn to photos, maps, etc. In this book, I feasted on an incredible collection of photos of Apple equipment, pictures of the characters in the Apple saga, stills from TV commercials, reproductions of print advertising and promotion, and, of course, computer screen shots.

A Must Have

Bottom line, if you consider yourself a true Mac believer, aficionado, knowledgeable insider, whatever, this book has to be on your shelf. From No Starch Press in San Francisco, CA, it is available through O'Reilly where as a MUG member you can qualify for a 20% discount off the cover price of \$19.95.

Get it and then settle down in your favorite chair and launch your own Apple insider journey.