

Apple Continues Work to Meld iOS and OS X

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Apple stayed true to its developers and kept its aptly named Worldwide Developer Conference to upgrades of its mobile and desktop software.

Tim Cook did not unveil a new "iWatch" and there wasn't any Apple TV refresh, but the company did manage to set the stage for future products and software by giving developers a new Software Developer Kit (SDK), as well more unified mobile and desktop platforms.

One could argue that an initiative called "Continuity" was the star of the show. Continuity furthers Apple's work to provide more seamless interaction between iOS and OS X.

A number of enhancements to the company's desktop platform make it not only look more like iOS, but also make it behave more like an iPhone. For instance, OS X "Yosemite" will allow end users to place and receive phone calls directly from their Mac laptops and desktops through a connection with their iPhones. Macs will also be able to field actual text messages from Android phones.

Apple said Yosemite will be available this fall, but the company has also opened a Beta program to the public.

Yosemite will bring with it iCloud Drive, where users can store and sync all types of files across devices. The company said the Drive software will also work on Microsoft's Windows operating system.

Continuity is built on technology that allows Apple products to "sense" one another. The function will enable Apple users to more easily set up a Wi-Fi hotspot using their iPhone, hand off tasks or AirDrop files between Apple devices.

While unveilings of the latest iterations of Apple's mobile and desktop platforms were expected at today's event, few knew exactly what Cupertino had in store for the 25th anniversary of the annual developer conference. Vague rumors had emerged for weeks preceding today's keynote that Apple might take the wraps off anything from a new TV product to a home automation platform.

Among other announcements included in the new operating systems, Apple did follow through with a platform for connecting third-party home automation products to the iPhone. Called HomeKit, the platform features a common protocol, secure pairing and the ability to control individual or groups of devices throughout the house including integration with Siri. As an example, Apple says HomeKit could allow users to tell Siri they are "going to bed" and the system would then dim the lights, lock doors, close the garage door and set the thermostat.

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Monday's presentation was entirely lacking in new hardware but then most reports have concluded that Apple will unveil new iPhones, possibly a smartwatch and maybe even an Apple TV refresh later this fall.

Shares of Apple were down 1 percent to \$625 in afternoon trading.

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