

Re: Macs in Astronomy Updated; Canon 20D under Mac & Windows

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Davoud wrote:

- > *Here's a piece of emotional bias that confronted me recently:*
- >
- > *"At Genentech Inc., a multibillion-dollar biotechnology firm in South*
- > *San Francisco, Mark Jeffries oversees nearly 2,500 Macs... He remembers*
- > *a virus that shut down operations at a couple of his company's*
- > *competitors in 2003 because of their total dependency on Windows while*
- > *Genentech's business continued unaffected. He says the company's top*
- > *executives took note of that event, and it reaffirmed their commitment*
- > *to the Mac.*

I can't say that I wouldn't have reacted that way if it happened to me, because I'm human (and I therefore like my choices to be vindicated), but it is not a logical conclusion to draw. Any virus is unlikely to be cross-platform; hence, if it affected Windows, it wouldn't affect Macs in all probability. If it were a Mac virus, the Macs would have been affected, and not the Windows machines. Would the Mac users then be justified in jumping ship for Windows?

It could be that in addition, Mac viruses are less common, but that conclusion can't be drawn from this anecdote.

I mentioned elsewhere in this thread (or a related one, I forget which) that many computer science researchers do use Macs, especially since the introduction of OS X. I hasten to point out that this is generally **not** because of security issues, but because of the user interface, maintainability, and other concerns that might have bearing on security, but are not the security issues themselves. OS X helped introduce many of them to Macs because of their familiarity with FreeBSD.

By the way, I use Linux predominantly, but I have some reasonable amount of experience with XP, and it's actually pretty good, provided one takes the minimal amount of time to click an icon every now and then to update the system. (I do that with Linux, too.) I'm not sure why anyone would think that OS X is immune from that sort of thing.

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- > *"The Mac is secure, if not bulletproof," Jeffries says. That's because*
- > *OS X was developed after the widespread adoption of the Internet, so*
- > *Apple 'designed it to be secure by default.'"*

He can say that, but just because it was designed that way does not make it actually secure. FreeBSD has vulnerabilities; hence, OS X has (most of) the same vulnerabilities.

- > *This emotional outburst comes from the same article:*
- > *"Kim Vichitrananda, a desktop support engineer for 800 PCs and 250 Macs*
- > *at The Dallas Morning News, acknowledges that Windows has comparable*
- > *applications for the publishing market. But, she says, "those*
- > *applications don't run as robustly on Windows. They're not as fast or*
- > *as seamless as on the Mac. We could not replace Macs for PCs."*

I see six of one, half a dozen of the other; I know plenty of users who find it easier to locate what they want for Windows than for Macs. It's a reason to prefer one platform over the other for personal use, but it doesn't support any kind of general, objective superiority.

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