t November’s Comdex, the world's largest computer industry trade show, Apple maintained a much greater presence than usual and made a number of significant announcements aimed squarely at curing the company's beleaguered image.

pple, IBM and Motorola finally unveiled the long-awaited “PowerPC Platform.” The set of specifications, formerly referred to as the Common Hardware Reference

Platform (or CHRP), define a unified architecture that combines the hardware fea- tures of the Power Macintosh and other PowerPC-based PCs. Systems manufactured to the PowerPC Platform specifications will be able to run multiple operating systems tailored to the PowerPC Platform standard, including the Mac OS, IBM's OS/2 Warp, Windows NT and Sun Solaris.

Among the many industry leaders announcing support for the PowerPC Platform was Power Computing Corp. “[The PowerPC Platform] is a fundamentally important and exciting step in the evolution of computing,” said Stephen Kahng, Power Computing's President and CEO. “[The PowerPC Platform] will usher in a new era for the Macintosh OS-making the greatest operating system in the world available to all computer users.”

ccording to recent data published by Dataquest Inc. and Interna- tional Data Corporation (IDC), Apple has reclaimed the number one position for domestic volume shipments of personal computers. Survey figures indicate that Apple was responsible for 13.1% to 13.9% of all personal computers shipped in the United States in the third calendar quarter of 1995, surpassing both Packard Bell and Compaq by a full percentage point (or more).

“Contrary to popular belief,” said Eric Lewis, IDC's manager of Personal Systems Research, “Apple is not losing market share.”

“Apple has shipped over 20 percent more units world wide each quarter for the past three quarters,” beamed James Buckley, president of Apple Americas. “Our units increased over 50 percent in the US in the last quarter alone.”

he Newton OS 2.0, demonstrated at November’s Comdex, is slated to ship with MessagePad 120s beginning December 1st. The $699 US unit will include Apple's Newton Backup Utility for Mac OS-based computers and Intuit's Pocket Quicken. (The Newton Backup Utility for Windows-based PCs will ship in January 1996.)

For $89 US, Newton 2.0 customers will be able to purchase the new Newton Keyboard, to get information into their PDAs more quickly and easily than hand- writing. Apple will also offer a $69 US 'Newton Press' application that can create Newton books by simply dragging and dropping text files, graphics, email or reference information on the Newton Press icon.

The new Newton operating system, which features easier access to email services, improved handwriting recognition and the ability to receive faxes, was developed in response to feedback current Newton platform developers and customers.

pple demonstrated two new technologies at Comdex which will soon make an appearance in Macintosh and Macintosh-compatible systems.

The Super Density (SD) disc format, announced by the SD Alliance on September 15, offers 8 to 15 times the storage capacity of today's CD-ROMs. The greater capacity of the disc permits the creation of more compelling multimedia titles, with increased video content and smoother, faster playback of that video. Apple demonstrated the technology on a Power Macintosh 6220 system running an SD-ROM disc which combined the content of six CD-ROMs.

“This technology has captured the excitement of Hollywood and Silicon Valley,” said David Nagel, Apple senior vice president of Worldwide Research and Development. "Because SD enables storage of extremely high-quality movies with multiple sound and text tracks, the SD format provides a qualitative improvement in the ability to deliver digital content"

Though no date has yet been set, Apple intends “to support the SD format as early as commercial SD-ROM drives become available in adequate quantities.” SD-ROM drives will be backwards compatible, allowing owners access to all of their existing CD-ROMs.

The SD standard is expected to replace traditional video cassette players, offering much improved picture quality that won't deteriorate with continued playback.

Apple also showed off a new DOS and Windows Compatibility Card for PCI-based Macintoshes and Macintosh-compatibles. The new card will offer either a high speed 486DX or Pentium processor, and is expected to ship in the first half of 1996.

pple Computer and IBM Corporation have announced that heir joint venture, Kaleida Labs, will be shut down and the venture's core technologies, including multimedia program-ming language ScriptX, will be transferred to a development team within Apple. The New York Times has also reported that Apple and IBM’s other joint venture, Taligent, will also be closed.

In press releases the companies maintained that a number of employees in the folded firms will be offered jobs at Apple and IBM. Apple and IBM plan to continue to develop products based on ScriptX core technology, and will have full licensing rights to exploit existing and future technologies from the joint development. For example, Apple plans to

integrate ScriptX with other complementary Apple new-media technologies, such as QuickTime and QuickDraw 3D software systems, and to work with third-party tools and other software vendors to ensure that ScriptX delivers an object-oriented, cross platform development environment. IBM is integrating ScriptX technology into its multimedia visual building tools. IBM first demonstrated this integration in an advanced visual-builder technology earlier this year. This technology is schedule to be introduced as a beta product in early 1996. Support for ScriptX customers will continue uninterrupted through the existing multimedia and developer support structure within Apple.

The new ScriptX development team, which will be located at Apple's Cupertino headquarters, will have responsibility for further development of ScriptX-based technology.