n Wednesday, March 27,   Apple Computer
nnounced that it expected to post a record
$700 million loss for the current quarter.
Over half of that loss, it alleges, would be a
result of inventory write-downs. Due to slow
sales for its low-end computer systems, Apple
has been heavily weighed down by almost $1
billion in unsold inventory.

Ironically enough, the market reacted favorably
to the news. Apple's stock rose $1.375 to $25.25
per share that day, and the company's outlook was raised from "negative" to "developing"
by Standard & Poor's, an industry ratings organization.

Analysts respect the decision to write off $700 million as the first of many steps in the right
direction for new Apple CEO Gilbert Amelio. Like IBM, which in 1993 declared a $8.9 billion

loss and then rejuvenated itself, Apple is expected to cut more jobs and continue to restructuring and streamline its efforts.

The public announcement of expected loss was long on promises for change but short on details. In a "Coffee Klatch" coversation reported in Guy Kawasaki's EvangeList last week, an Apple employee summarized Amelio's comments about the future direction the company will take. Some highlights:

pple can't afford to compete head-on in all markets with the Compaqs of this world. Instead, it must offer a superior product at slight premium in price.

melio estimates that Apple supports something like 100,000 unique configurations of hardware and system software. In the future, a standardized interface between the OS and the basic motherboard will be implemented so that the system software will not have to adapt to every new chip put in place.

ast month at CeBit—the largest computer trade show n the world—Apple announced the Newton MessagePad 130. Branded as a "high-end option" by Apple, the new $799 US device is the first MessagePad to feature user-controllable backlighting and a new, nonglare screen. The device also eclipses its older sibling, the MessagePad 120, by offering an additional 512K of RAM, for a total of 2.5MB (1,361K nonvolatile user RAM).

The MessagePad 130 will be bundled with Newton OS 2.0, and, in the United States, with the following products: Newton Backup Utility for Windows and Mac OS-based computers, and the requisite serial cables; Pocket Quicken 1.2; CompuServe mail client (due this Spring); and Newton Tour reference software.

"As pioneers in the PDA market," said Sandy Benett, acting vice-president of Apple's Newton Systems Group, "we're listening closely to the market to ensure we deliver products that meet our customers' needs. The MessagePad 130 is the result of this feedback."

The MessagePad 130 will be available worldwide this April. A US ($799), International, and German version is expected. Pricing will vary outside the United States.

pple revamped its color imaging lineup last month with the introduction of a zippy new color scanner (see our story: "Apple's new Color OneScanner 600/27"), and two new color inkjet printers. The new printers are quite affordable, with the Color StyleWriter topping out at around $280 US and the Color StyleWriter 2500 at about $100 more. To compliment these new products, Apple announced the availability of the StyleWriter EtherTalk Adapter, an easy-to-use printer networking device that allows Macintosh users to share StyleWriter or Color StyleWriter printers on an EtherTalk network.

Both new StyleWriter models include desktop printing software, the ability to print two or four reduced-sized documents on a single page, 64 TrueType fonts, and the capability of dropping shaded or solid "watermarks" onto the background of a page. They also support Apple's ColorSync 2.0 color matching system. The Apple Color Printing CD is included with every purchase (in the United States). Software applications on the CD include CardShopPlus!, Calendars and More, and StickerShopPlus! from Mindscape Software, plus 12 extra TrueType fonts from Bitstream, and a discount offer for the Personal Publishing Toolkit from Adobe and GDT Softworks, Inc.

he Color StyleWriter 2500 replaces the Color Style-
Writer 2400 and offers true black and vibrant color
output at a resolution of 720 by 360 dpi. It automatically
chooses the optimal ink density for the paper type selected,
resulting in smooth, high-quality output. In addition to a color
ink cartridge featuring a separate true-black ink tank, users can choose an optional high performance black-only cartridge for convenience. The Color StyleWriter 2500 features water resistant ink for reliable quality, and offers exceptionally fast speeds of five pages per minute for high-performance black printing, and 0.66 pages per minute for color.

he Color StyleWriter 1500 becomes Apple's most affordable printer for the Macintosh. It offers the option of an all-in-one color cartridge for color printing, and is the only color printer in its class to offer a black-only cartridge for fast black and white printing. The printer

comes with both a color and a black ink cartridge and a serial cable, so it's ready to print color right out of the box. It offers laser-quality black and white printing at a resolution of 720 by 360 dots per inch (dpi), and 360 by 360 dpi for color and grayscale. The Color StyleWriter 1500 offers near laser speeds of up to three pages per minute for black and 0.3 pages per minute in color.

he new StyleWriter EtherTalk Adapter connects StyleWriter
or Color StyleWriter printers directly to an EtherTalk network
and eliminates the need to dedicate a Macintosh computer as a print
server. The adapter requires no additional software, relying instead on
the standard printer driver that comes with the printer. It supports both 10Base-T and 10Base-2 (ThinNet), EtherTalk local area networks, and offers five LED displays for monitoring the network connection status and easy troubleshooting. Printers supported by the adapter include the Color StyleWriter 2500, the Color StyleWriter 2400, the Color StyleWriter 2200, the Color StyleWriter 1500 and the StyleWriter 1200. Apple expects worldwide availability of the StyleWriter EtherTalk Adapter by early April. It is expected to sell in the US for around $189.

ot on the tail of Hewlett-Packard's
ew HPScanJet4P (see the QuickBit story:
"New HP ScanJet4P"), Apple Computer has
announced immediate worldwide availability
of the Color OneScanner 600/27.

Pivotal to the Color OneScanner 600/27 is a
breakthrough software component called the OneScanner Dispatcher. The OneScanner Dispatcher software allows effortless scanning, editing, printing, faxing, copying, archival of images and documents, and Optical Character Recognition (OCR). OneScanner Dispatcher integrates seamlessly with the user's other office products, turning the scanner, any MacOS compatible computer, monitor, printer, and fax/modem setup into a "power office" by allowing the user to control all functions from a memory-efficient central interface.

In addition, the new scanner comes with the award-winning TextBridge 3.0 OCR software from Xerox. With TextBridge 3.0 OCR, mainstream users can accurately and easily turn documents into editable, formatable text for further word processing or desktop publishing without retyping. The scanner also comes with a Photoshop- compatible plug-in scan module to provide scanning from within Photoshop, and supports a wide range of file formats, including PICT, TIFF, JPEG, EPS and Windows BMP.

The new 27-bit scanner recognizes up to 134 million colors, making it capable of sending a broader gamut of color information to the computer and resulting in more detailed images. It comes with Apple's color matching software: ColorSync 2.0. The OneScanner 600/27 offers 300 by 600 optical resolution and an interpolative resolution of 2400 by 2400. The single pass scanning process protects originals from heat damage with a cool Xenon bulb that offers a daylight balanced light source for better image quality.

An option on the Color OneScanner 600/27 is an automatic document feeder. The unit's lid can be removed and the feeder easily snaps into place. The feeder is capable of bulk loading up to 20 pages and can scan 8 1/2 by 14 legal size documents.

The Color OneScanner 600/27 is expected to sell in the US for less than $600. The auto document feeder option will be $350 US.