

Can Apple wow a core fan?

Tustin man awaits watch, phone debut.

BY MARNI USHEROFF
STAFF REPORTER

Marty Vasquez owns an iMac, MacBook Pro, iPhone 5 and iPad2. He even has Apple TV - both at his Tustin home and in his office.

Apple fan sites Mac Rumors and Cult of Mac are bookmarked on Vasquez's browser, and he's beta test-

ing Apple's new operating system, Yosemite.

So, no surprise, Vasquez will be closely watching today's Apple product announcements on a livestream.

But he isn't too wound up yet (pardon the pun) about the biggest news that's ex-

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PAUL RODRIGUEZ, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A big fan of Apple products since 2003, Marty Vasquez will watch today's event closely.

APPLE: A need to wow its fans

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pected, the unveiling of a long-awaited “smartwatch” that some experts believe will be able to track health and fitness statistics and make mobile payments. Vasquez needs to see more before he’ll add the so-called iWatch to his collection of Apple gadgets.

“If it’s only an extension of your phone and only shows when someone’s calling and a camera like Dick Tracy, what’s the point?” asks Vasquez, 30, a creative director at the Integrity Media marketing agency in Irvine. “But if it replaced your phone, it’s a whole different scenario. To have to carry a whole other device seems silly to me.”

Every year, Apple brings together tech journalists (and this year, reportedly, fashion editors and bloggers) to show off the latest versions of its phones and tablets – and once in a while, introduce something entirely different.

FRENZY OF SPECULATION

The anticipation and leaks leading up to the events rival that of a royal birth. Fans and tech gurus speculate about the slightest adjustment in screen size or a change in color.

Indeed, if Vasquez sounds lukewarm about a possible iWatch announcement, it’s because he’s more interested in what the company has to say about the upcoming iPhone 6.

“Unless they come up with something revolution-

ary and not evolutionary, they’ll lose out,” he says. Vasquez recalls watching the iPhone 5 livestream in 2012 waiting for the “and one more thing” moment – the climactic surprise made famous by the late Steve Jobs – but being underwhelmed by the phone updates.

SOLD ON APPLE

Vasquez’s roots as an unofficial tech evangelist go back to his youth. “I was the tech kid nerd that my family always asked, ‘What computer do I get? What software do I need?’ ” says Vasquez.

Around 2003, he became frustrated with his PC.

“I spent so much time dealing with viruses and malware always doing maintenance on it,” Vasquez recalls. “I said forget it; I’m going to get a Mac.”

He did his research and fell in love with Apple’s design. “It was so intuitive and so incredibly simple. I thought there has to be catch here. But it surprised me how great it was.” He insists his original Power Mac desktop was the most reliable computer he’s ever owned.

Apple has even sold him things he hadn’t realized he needed.

“I still don’t know what I’m doing with an iPad,” Vasquez jokes. “I use it a lot browsing in bed or on the couch. Apple is brilliant at creating products that people don’t need yet they have to have.”

But after his under-

whelming experience watching the iPhone 5 unveiling, he switched to an Android phone in 2012. Vasquez liked the Swype keyboard on his Note 2, which allowed him to quickly drag his finger rather than typing. He also appreciated being able to use additional memory cards, swap out an old battery and make calls over Wi-Fi when he’s in the dead spot in cell coverage at his office.

For those reasons and more, phones built around Google’s operating system have seized ground from Apple in recent years.

GAINING GROUND

Android’s global smartphone market share grew to 84.7 percent in the second quarter of 2014, up from 36.1 percent three years earlier. Apple slipped from 18.3 percent to 11.7 percent in the same period, according to IDC Worldwide Mobile Phone Tracker.

Vasquez says he switched back to Apple and an iPhone 5 only because of problems with his carrier.

Now he’s ready – again – for a new phone.

“I really like the design of the HTC (Android phone) because it looks a lot like the Apple products, but there’s nothing that’s really blown my mind right now,” Vasquez says. “If the iPhone 6 is really compelling, I’d probably jump aboard. If nothing blows me away, I’ll hold out.”

CONTACT THE WRITER:
musheroff@ocregister.com