

A Comparative Analysis of MacOS and Windows: Assessing Product Evolution, Influence, and Strategies

Overview of the Personal Computing Industry [Shariah]

The personal computing industry has evolved from limited-use machines to powerful devices with the ability to support both work and everyday life. Initially, computers were primarily used by professionals and hobbyists, but the shift to developing more user-friendly graphical user interfaces (GUIs), expanded their market tremendously. Apple and Microsoft played critical roles into this groundbreaking shift by offering users more accessible graphical user interfaces, starting a new era of personal computing. The 1984 Macintosh was the “first successful mouse-driven computer” (Timeline of Computer History, n.d.), that provided users with the ability to click on icons that represented the various software applications offered along with this new personal computer design. Apple simulated the desktop environment complete with “file folders, a calculator and other office tools” (Stanford University, 2000), enabling users to move the mouse, a small pointing device, to “click” on the icons of the provided programs to run the programs. With this newly added functionality this enabled users to no longer be forced to “memorize the numerous and confusing keyboard commands of conventional computers” (Stanford University, 2000), resulting in swifter user adaptation. Microsoft quickly followed suit in 1985 by introducing Windows 1.0, a DOS application that uses the “MS-DOS Executive” as the launch pad for “applications that were displayed in side-by-side windows” (PC Mag, n.d.). Windows 1.0 included applications like clipboard, notepad editor, calendar, Windows Paint and Windows Write, “but it took five more years before a new version of Windows caught on (see Windows 3.0).” (PC Mag, n.d.). With faster devices and better connectivity, operating systems played a prominent role in driving competition, innovation, and how users adapt to and interact with computers.

Brief Introduction: macOS and Windows [Shariah]

The rivalry between Apple’s macOS and Microsoft’s Windows operating systems has been one of the most defining dynamics in the personal computing industry. Since the 1980s, both platforms have competed for dominance in functionality, user

experience, and market share. Each platform has adopted a unique approach to system architecture, hardware integration, and software development, shaping user preferences and industry trends. This paper aims to investigate the evolution of macOS and Windows, dissecting their diverging strategies and innovations that have influenced the growth of the personal computing industry and the broader tech industry.