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Take me to...

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# THE IRISH TIMES

In the Newspaper  
Daily

- Front Page
- Ireland
- World
- Finance**
- Features
- Sport
- Opinion
- Letters
- Crossword
- Article Index

Weekly Index

- MONDAY
  - Health
- TUESDAY
  - Education and Living
- WEDNESDAY
  - Motors
  - An Teanga Bheo
- THURSDAY
  - Science Today
- SATURDAY
  - Weekend
  - News Features
  - Obituaries

Search

Search the newspaper archive...

Finance

Fri, Oct 06, 00

## Apple founder may be insecure at core

Steve Jobs comes across as a gunslinger but is that just the brash cover of some one desperate to prove themselves a resounding success?

By NIALL MCKAY

Best-selling author of the novel Anywhere But Here, Mona Simpson, and Apple Computer founder and saviour, Steve Jobs, were separated at birth. It's true.

His parents put him up for adoption and kept Mona Simpson, said Alan Deutschman, Vanity Fair contributor and author of a new biography called The Second Coming of Steve Jobs. It's a pretty strong argument that genetics plays an important role in the making of a person.

Deutschman's book details Mr Jobs's career from his forced departure from Apple Computer, the company he founded, through the creation of his next two companies NeXT Computer and Pixar (the special effects company that produced Toy Story).

It finishes back with Mr Jobs triumphant return to Apple Computer, where he oversaw the creation of the iMac and the Think Different advertising campaign, which is credited with the subsequent revival of the ailing computer company.

Indeed, it's not the first book about Mr Jobs. Simpson's A Regular Guy is also reported to be loosely based on her biological brother and caused a rift between the two. And if that was not enough attention for a guy who is supposed to have a huge ego, there was the television miniseries called The Pirates of Silicon Valley about the power struggle between Mr Jobs and Microsoft founder Mr

Bill Gates.

Still, Deutschman's book says that that Mr Jobs was the first businessman to be viewed as a rock star. Certainly, the technology age has brought about a cultural change that probably gives the flower power generation (that is, those who are not involved in tech companies) the creeps. Today's trade shows are probably the equivalent of yesterday's rock concerts.

Thousands of twenty- to-thirtysomething chino and polo topwearing executives go to tune in, turn on and make lots of money by listening to the likes of Mr Jobs deliver a keynote speech, rather than expand their consciousness by listening to good music and the likes of Timothy Leary.

However, it has not been an easy journey for the billionaire visionary, according to Deutschman. "When Jobs was forced out of Apple Computer in 1985 he was so deeply depressed that some of his friends were worried that he would kill himself."

He toyed with various ideas like flying on the space shuttle and moving to Russia, but finally started NeXT Computer.

"He had \$100 million dollars in the bank but he still hadn't proved himself," said Deutschman. "He wanted to prove that he could really run a major corporation."

Indeed, high-achievers such as Steve Jobs (despite the apparent arrogance) are basically insecure. That is why, he says, Mr Jobs is so driven and so abusive to the people that he works with. "He works very well with people in their 20s because they are still young enough to want to change the world," said Deutschman. "But by the time they get to their 40s they think 'I don't need this shit' and quit."

Deutschman's book also delves into Mr Jobs's personal life and tries to deconstruct the man behind the icon. He talks about Jobs's conflicting messy personal life and his interest in Zen Buddhism.

For example, Mr Jobs might have made Time Magazine's Man of the Year were it not for his messy personal life, including a daughter born out of marriage and his affairs with singer Joan Baez and artist Maya Lin.

Still, Mr Jobs is defiantly one of the more interesting characters in the high-tech industry. For one thing he actually has a personality, and for another he has done some great things like given us the Apple Computer. He is, however, of another age when Silicon Valley was full of

notable characters who were as famous for the things they did out of work as those they did in work - people like Phillippe Kahn, the saxophone-playing Frenchman who was the genius behind the application development tools company Borland, and Doug Michaels, the creator of the Unix company, the Santa Curse Operation.

Now there was a rock star life style but I better say no more in case I land our esteemed journal in legal hot water.

Nowadays who do we have?

Niall McKay can be found pursuing a rock star life style in Silicon Valley and at [www.niall.org](http://www.niall.org)

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