Steve Jobs' creations simplified life, Apple enthusiasts say in mourning his death

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The news that Steve Jobs was dead came to Larry Grinnell of Greenacres on Wednesday in the way of the world that Steve Jobs wrought - with a buzz.

"I have an app on my iPhone," Grinnell said. "It flashed up as soon as they got confirmation."

Word of the Apple co-founder's death of pancreatic cancer hit hard for the company's most rabid fans. They talk on Jobs' creations, read on Jobs' creations, type on Jobs' creations and swear by Jobs' creations.

"I can tell you right now, if there would be only PC computers, I would still live without a computer," said Joerg von Veltar, the founder of the Palm Beach Phoenix Apple User Group.

Jobs' genius, Apple fans say, was the ability to envision simpler and simpler devices that tamed a world that was growing only more complex.

His fingerprints are on most of the technology that powers modern life - the personal computer and the iPod, the smart phone and the iPad, even the movies that shaped generations of children. In 1986, Jobs bought Pixar and poured his own money into it. Eventually the investment bloomed, and the company produced a stream of iconic movies for children, including Toy Story, A Bug's Life and Finding Nemo.

"Apple and Steve Jobs just had this innate way of knowing what was right, and an innate way of knowing what people wanted and needed before they needed it," said Grinnell, 57. "So when it hit the market, it was just this huge eureka moment: Oh! Yeah! That's it!"

On Twitter, where the most popular "trending" topics change by the hour, "ThankYouSteve" and "iSad" were still high on the list a day after his death. On Facebook, people posted revisions of the Apple logo, a stylized apple with a detached leaf and a half-moon bite taken out. One added a frown and tears to the apple. Another replaced the bite with a silhouette of Jobs himself.

President Obama said Jobs exemplified American ingenuity. Mexico's President Felipe Calderon bemoaned the loss of "one of the most visionary minds of our times." India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said he was "deeply saddened."

Jobs' impact has been "profound," said Florida Atlantic University professor Joey Bargsten.

"He has been a key figure in the convergence of science, technology and the arts," Bargsten said.
"Anybody can make things complicated," said state Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater, an Apple fan from North Palm Beach. "Steve Jobs decided to make things easy."

There'll never be anyone else like him, said Bruce Foote, 71, of Gulf Stream.

"I was watching Fox News and it flashed in on the screen and my heart dropped," Foote said. "I didn't know the man - the only contact I have is watching him when he did his presentations on TV and the clips that they put on the web site - but I had just such respect for what he has accomplished that it hurt."

At Apple Stores in Palm Beach County and around the world, there were signs of grief.

In Hong Kong, people scribbled "RIP" and "We miss Steve" and longer notes of condolence on Post-It notes, and stuck them to an iPad display.

And outside the Apple Store in Wellington sat a more modest tribute - three bouquets of flowers, sitting below a dangling MacBook Air.

"It's kind of weird being in the store right now," said Robin Galloway, who was visiting Palm Beach County from her home in Montana. (There is no Apple Store in Montana, she noted.) "It's sad."

"He didn't miss a trick. He made us happy," added her husband, Steve. "We were computer dummies, and now we're less dummies."

*The Associated Press contributed to this story.*