

Anticipation builds ahead of Apple event

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An iPod is pictured playing a commercial at an Apple Store in San Francisco, California. A frenzied rumor mill worked overtime in anticipation of Apple's latest media event Wednesday with Beatles on iTunes, a tablet computer, an appearance by Steve Jobs, all mooted as stars of the show.

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With its usual air of mystery, the California-based company invited journalists to the event -- to be held at 10:00 am Pacific time (1700 GMT) at a downtown San Francisco theater -- but did not reveal what it would be about.

The invitation featured a picture of a woman in silhouette dancing with an iPod in her hand and a single line from a Rolling Stones song: "It's only rock and roll, but we like it."

The company co-founded by Jobs and [Steve Wozniak](#) more than 30 years ago is traditionally secretive about its projects, revealing them only at launch and guarding zealously against leaks.

Despite the Rolling Stones reference in the invitation, the buzz on [Silicon Valley](#) technology blogs and fan sites has been that [Apple](#) may finally announce the availability of the Beatles on iTunes, its online music store.

A digitally remastered catalog of the music of the "Fab Four" is scheduled for release the same day, as is the videogame "The Beatles: Rock Band," which is expected to be a smash hit worldwide.

Backing up the Beatles connection is the scheduling of the Apple event for September 9, 2009 or 09/09/09.

"Number nine, number nine, number nine," as fans of George Harrison, John Lennon, Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr know, is the phrase chanted repeatedly on The White Album.

"Getting the Beatles in iTunes is something that's been expected for some time," said technology analyst Rob Enderle of Silicon Valley's Enderle Group. "This may be when they finally do it."

Enderle said he did not think it likely Apple would use the event to unveil a long-rumored touch-screen tablet-sized computer that can surf the Internet and also serve as an [electronic book reader](#) like Amazon's Kindle.

"There's been a lot of expectation that they may launch the iPad but I just don't think Steve's had enough time since his return to look at it," he said.

Apple chief executive Jobs returned to work in June from a nearly six-month medical leave of absence during which he received a liver transplant.

The visionary behind the Macintosh computer, the iPhone and the iPod, Jobs underwent an operation for pancreatic cancer five years ago.

Enderle said upgraded iPods may be on display at Wednesday's event.

"We may see enhancements to the iPod line to get people putting them back on their Christmas list again," he said. "The iPod touch might get a camera, which would be a natural for that device."

As for an appearance by the 54-year-old Jobs, who hasn't been seen in public since October of last year, Enderle said "I would be very surprised if they didn't have him there in some shape or form, maybe videoconference him in.

"If it were me that's the way I'd do it," he said.

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