

Apple telegraphs iPods; fans see Beatles, tablets

September 7 2009, By JESSICA MINTZ , AP Technology Writer



(AP) -- Once again, it's time to peer into Apple Inc. CEO Steve Jobs' cup and try to read the tea leaves.

Apple, as usual, has said almost nothing about the new products it plans to unveil at an invitation-only affair Wednesday in San Francisco. Playing their part, bloggers and [Apple](#) fans have filled the vacuum with "leaks," rumors and wish-list items that, while often far-fetched, can't completely be ignored. Sometimes, just sometimes, a bit of truth shines through.

In recent years, the Cupertino, Calif.-based company has used its

September event to unveil new [iPods](#), which have grown smaller, sleeker and more powerful with each new generation.

This year's event is along the same lines, if Apple's e-mail to reporters is any indication.

The invitation looks like an [iTunes](#) gift card and features one of Apple's iconic, iPod-toting silhouettes and the words, "It's only rock and roll, but we like it," a reference to a 1970s Rolling Stones song.

That still left room for creative speculation. Detail-starved bloggers took a close look at the image and noted that the headphones jack into the large-ish iPod at the bottom - making it an [iPod Touch](#), not an iPod classic. The observation has added weight to one rumor that Apple could discontinue the classic, the only model left to use a hard drive instead of [flash memory](#).

Of course, other rumors postulate an even bigger hard drive on an updated iPod classic, which already boasts a 120-gigabyte [hard drive](#), far beefier than any other iPod. Still more speculation, this time based on what appear to be photos of new iPod cases, call for built-in digital cameras on Touch and Nano models.

Apple watchers are also looking out for the ninth incarnation of iTunes, the media management software that helps people keep track of their music, videos, podcasts and data and send it to iPods and iPhones.

"Leaked" screen shots of unknown origin and varying quality have cropped up online that indicate iTunes might be melded into social networking sites including Facebook and music-enthusiast network Last.fm. According to the buzz, iTunes 9 may also get better at helping people organize their iPhone and iPod Touch applications, and support Blu-Ray disc playback.

One of the more solid predictions is that Apple will be packaging digital albums with videos, liner notes and album art that could be viewed in iTunes - to help revive consumers' interest in buying more than just one or two tracks. The Associated Press and other media reported in July that Apple and the four major recording labels were working on launching this package in the fall.

Two of the flashiest predictions have lost steam in the run-up to 9/9/09. For a while, the date itself seemed to portend that Apple might finally have scored the right to sell the Beatles' music on iTunes. A digitally remastered collection of the Beatles' oeuvre is due out on CDs on the same day, as is an all-Beatles edition of the popular play-along video game "Rock Band." Beatlemania-infected Apple fans also point to the recurrence of the number nine in band lore.

But the use of the Rolling Stones line in the invitation has quieted most proponents of this scenario. It might just be standard Apple misdirection, but a person familiar with the situation told the AP there's no Beatles-Apple deal. The person was not authorized to talk about the matter and spoke on condition of anonymity. A statement from EMI, the Beatles' record label, said simply that discussions on digital distribution continue.

Analysts with contacts in Apple's supply chain have predicted all year that the company will come out with at least one "tablet"-style device resembling a giant iPod Touch, based on Apple's purchases of screens that are bigger than an iPod but smaller than a MacBook. Blogs and message boards lit up when it seemed Apple was finally ready to show it off. But analysts including Piper Jaffray's Gene Munster and Shaw Wu of Kaufman Bros. both see a 2010 release as more likely.

One more thing: CEO Jobs hasn't presided over one of these pep-rally-style product launches since Apple gave its laptop line a light makeover

last October. His lieutenants, Tim Cook and Phil Schiller, Apple's COO and top marketing executive, have been holding their own. But now that Jobs is back from his nearly six-month medical leave, fans are still holding their breath for an appearance from the maestro.

©2009 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: Apple telegraphs iPods; fans see Beatles, tablets (2009, September 7) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-09-apple-telegraphs-ipods-fans-beatles.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--