

Much-awaited Apple iPad hits US on Saturday

March 30 2010, by Glenn Chapman



A man tests the new Apple iPad during an Apple Special Event January 27, 2010 in San Francisco, California. The Apple iPad launches in the US on Saturday with an apparent deluge of early online orders indicating that the tablet computers will be another big hit for the company.

The Apple iPad launches in the US on Saturday with an apparent deluge of early online orders indicating that the tablet computers will be another big hit for the company.

The iPad "connects users with their apps and content in a far more intimate and fun way than ever before," Apple chief executive [Steve Jobs](#) said Monday in a statement.

"We can't wait for users to get their hands and fingers on it this weekend."

Apple promised that its latest creation will be available in the company's retail shops and at Best Buy consumer electronics chain stores beginning at 9:00 in the morning in respective US time zones.

People who ordered iPad devices early should receive them on Saturday as well.

Demand for iPads has evidently blasted past Apple expectations and as of Monday notations at the online Apple Store alerted buyers that new orders would not be shipped until April 12 or "late April" depending on models.

"It does have the appearance that Apple has another pretty big hit on its hands," Altimeter Group partner Michael Gartenberg told AFP on Monday.

"It never hurts initially to have demand outstrip supply by a little bit. As a general rule, people want what they can't have."

Apple likely wants to make certain that there are iPads on store shelves for people that show up on Saturday wanting to get their hands on a device that Jobs said must be held to be truly appreciated. Related article: Groundbreaking products by Apple

Apple has not released details of how many iPads will be available for the Saturday launch but some estimates put the figure as high as a several hundred thousand.

"My guess is that the numbers are going to be pretty impressive," Gartenberg said of the iPad sales debut.

"This is significant considering these are people who haven't seen or touched an iPad and are simply going on Apple's word."

Jobs unveiled the iPad in San Francisco on January 27, billing it as a "revolutionary" device that will carve out a home between smartphones and laptop computers. Facts: The new Apple iPad

The iPad allows users to watch video, listen to music, play games, surf the Web or read electronic books.

The iPad also runs most of the 150,000 applications made for the iPod music player and the iPhone. Apple has promised that the device would come with "12 new innovative apps designed especially for iPad."

While Apple is making a powerful debut in the tablet computer market "everyone and their brother" will be fielding competing devices by the end of this year, according to analyst Rob Enderle of Enderle Group in Silicon Valley.

A major Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas early this year was rife with companies showing off new tablet computers. The iPad poses an immediate threat to Amazon.com's popular Kindle electronic readers.

"It isn't certain Apple will dominate the tablet market," Enderle said. "The key part will be content. If Apple doesn't get the content deals, the iPad stays with Apple fans."

Newspapers and magazines are eagerly tailoring interactive, digital editions in a hope that the iPad heralds a new way to deliver content and bring in revenue.

The iPad model featuring Wi-Fi wireless connectivity will be available in Apple's US stores from April 3 and the model that offers both Wi-Fi and 3G cellular connectivity in late April, Apple said.

The company said both the Wi-Fi and 3G models will be available in

Australia, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Spain and Switzerland in late April and in additional countries later this year.

Apple will start with modest numbers of iPads and use feedback to solve problems revealed by real-world uses, according to Enderle.

"Basically, you are paying to be their beta test," Enderle said of those rushing to be among the first with an iPad. "There will be breakage. They will work it out, drop the price, and then ship in volume."

Based on past Apple tactics, the company is likely to cut iPad prices three months or so after its debut, the analyst predicted.

Facts and figures on the new Apple iPad

These are the principal features and pricing of the new "iPad" touchscreen tablet computer making its debut Saturday in the United States:

- about the size of a letter-sized sheet of paper, the iPad is half an inch (1.3-cm) thick and weighs 1.5 pounds (0.7 kilograms). It has a color 9.7-inch (24.6-cm) LED-display screen that allows for viewing video in high-definition
- 16, 32 and 64 gigabytes of flash memory
- a 16-gigabyte Wi-Fi version will be available in late March worldwide for 499 dollars. The 32GB Wi-Fi model will cost 599 dollars while the 64GB Wi-Fi model will cost 699 dollars
- iPad models equipped with Wi-Fi and 3G will be available in late April in the United States and selected countries. The 16GB model will cost 629 dollars, the 32GB will cost 729 dollars and the 64GB model will

cost 829 dollars

- battery life of up to 10 hours from a single charge
- runs almost all of the over 150,000 applications for the iPod Touch and iPhone available in Apple's App Store
- an online "iBookstore" to complement the iTunes music store. iPad syncs with iTunes so applications and content downloaded from the App Store, iTunes Store and iBookstore will be automatically synced to a user's iTunes library
- a virtual touchscreen keyboard and the ability to hook up an external physical keyboard
- iWork, a productivity suite of applications for creating presentations or working with spreadsheets and charts
- powered by A4, a next-generation chip which Apple said provides exceptional processor and graphics performance
- a Software Development Kit for iPad developers to create applications

iPad latest of many groundbreaking products by Apple

Apple's [iPad](#) touchscreen [tablet computer](#) hitting the US market on Saturday will be the latest cultural milestone from the Cupertino, California-based company.

Here are some of its other best-known products:

- o Macintosh computers: The first Macintosh computer was launched in 1984 and the line has grown to include iMac all-in-one desktop machines as well as stylishly sophisticated MacBook laptops.
- o The iPod: Introduced in 2001, the hip personal music player revolutionized portable digital entertainment, culminating with its touchscreen iPod Touch MP3 player.
- o The iTunes Store: Launched as the iTunes Music Store in 2003, Apple's online shop sells music, movies, and television shows for computers and its mobile devices.
- o The iPhone: Apple introduced its first iPhone in 2007, combining iPod features and Internet connectivity in a touchscreen smartphone that swiftly became the mobile device of choice.
- o The App Store: [Apple](#) began letting outside developers customize applications for the iPhone and iPod Touch in 2008, opening an online App Store now stocked with more than 150,000 fun, functional and hip mini-programs.

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