

# Apple's iPhone 4 makes stellar world debut

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A man holds his iPhone 4 in front of a mobile phone store in Tokyo. Apple fans mobbed stores in Japan, Europe and the United States in an iPhone 4 frenzy that promised blockbuster sales despite some opening day blemishes.

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Hundreds of people queued up through the morning on Thursday outside the [Apple store](#) in downtown San Francisco, where one person reportedly sold a place in line for 400 dollars and another swapped a spot for an [iPhone 4](#).

Some online complaints about iPhone 4 signal strength being hampered by a troublesome antenna design did not deter those in the queue.

"It's all rumors until we get them," Robert Freedman of San Francisco said as he waited to get his hands on an iPhone 4 to replace a model he had "beat the heck out of."

"People are walking out with them and saying they are using it and everything is fine," Freedman said.

Features luring people to the iPhone 4 include high-definition screens and "Face Time," which uses a forward facing camera to enable video chat.

"I've been an Apple head since I was a teenager," said Richard Polote, a 26-year-old San Francisco man who had been waiting outside the store since 2:30 in the morning.

"I feel pretty confident that whatever problems do arise, Apple will solve them in a timely fashion with upgrades or whatever."

Some new iPhone 4 owners were chagrined to discover that cupping their new smartphones so that their palms covered the lower left corners choked off the strength of the telecom service signals, according to videos posted online.

Apple designed silver edging on handsets to be part of the antenna system to improve signal strength.

The problem could be fixed by moving one's hand or encasing iPhones in rubber "bumper" frames that Apple sells for 30 dollars. Apple did not respond to an AFP inquiry for comment.

"I think these issues will sort themselves out," said Gartner technology analyst Van Baker. "It is a very impressive phone."

Based on the intense launch-day demand for the iPhone 4 the analyst thinks Apple will sell them as quickly as they can make them.

"Apple told me today they are building them as fast as they can," Baker said. "Expect a serious constraint on supply, which in turn will add to the hype of people desperately wanting to get one."

Whatever launch day sales figure Apple reports "is going to be huge," the analyst predicted.

In Paris, Senegalese businessman Bassirou Gueye joined some 350 people queuing before the opening of Apple's flagship store in the city, located in the chic underground shopping mall of the Louvre museum.

"I made a special trip to Paris to buy the iPhone 4. I'm interested in its high-tech features," said Gueye, a self-avowed Apple aficionado who already owns half a dozen brand-name devices.

Some buyers in France, however, reported problems activating their new phones because of technical problems with operator France Telecom.

In Germany, there were long queues at Apple stores and phone company Deutsche Telekom complained it did not have enough handsets to meet demand.

"By lunchtime iPhones in the high tens of thousands have already been sold. In Munich we have sold out," said Deutsche Telekom spokesman Dirk Wende.

Some 500 customers waited in line outside Apple's flagship Regent Street store in London when it opened its doors -- far more than those who queued for the launch of the iPad tablet last month.

Japan's eastern time zone put it first in line to sell the phone and hundreds braved sweltering humidity outside Apple's store in the Ginza district to get hold of the smartphone.

"I am truly amazed there were huge lines in Tokyo," Baker said. "It matches the original iPhone roll-out and that just blows me away."

The original iPhone launched in 2007 brought smartphones to the masses. Apple has sold more than 50 million of the handsets in the past three years.

But its latest version enters a crowded market full of rivals boasting bigger screens and running on Google's open-source Android operating system, which is more accessible to developers than Apple's tightly guarded system.

Sales of a white iPhone 4 model have been delayed to the second half of July because of unspecified manufacturing difficulties.

Carriers in the United States and France were forced to suspend early orders because of heavy demand. [Apple](#) said last week that it set a single-day record of 600,000 orders for the new smartphone.

The new [iPhone](#) will be available in 18 other countries in July and 24 more in August.

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