

Microsoft, partners to push tablet computer rivals to iPad

July 12 2010, by Chris Lefkow



The Microsoft logo is displayed over the Microsoft booth in Las Vegas on January 2010. Microsoft is teaming up with nearly two dozen hardware makers to release Windows-based tablet computers, Microsoft chief executive Steve Ballmer said Monday, devices like Apple's popular iPad.

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"This year one of the most important things that we will do in the smart device category is really push forward with Windows 7-based slates and Windows 7 phones," Ballmer said.

"Over the course of the next several months you will see a range of Windows 7-based slates that I think you'll find quite impressive," Ballmer said in the opening speech at the Microsoft Worldwide Partner

Conference here.

"This is a terribly important area for us," he said. "We are hardcore about this."

"They'll come from the people you would expect -- from Asus, from Dell, from Samsung, from Toshiba, from Sony -- Windows 7-based slates," Ballmer said.

"They'll come with keyboards, they'll come without keyboards, they'll be dockable, there'll be many form factors, many price points, many sizes," he said. "But they will all run Windows 7. They will run Windows 7 applications. They will run Office."

A slide of Windows 7 "slate" partners displayed by Ballmer listed 21 hardware manufacturers including the ones mentioned by the Microsoft CEO. Others included Fujitsu, Hewlett-Packard, Lenovo, Panasonic and Pegatron.

Apple has sold more than three million iPads since it went on sale in April and Microsoft and other technology giants have been seeking to develop products to rival the touchscreen device from the California gadget maker.

Ballmer also said Microsoft had "missed a generation with Windows Mobile," its cellphone operating system which has been losing ground to Apple's iPhone, the Android platform from [Google](#) and the Blackberry from [Research in Motion](#),

"We really did miss almost a release cycle," he said. "But Windows Phone 7 has received really great reviews, really quite remarkable reviews."

Mobile phone partners listed on the slide displayed by Ballmer included Dell, Taiwan's HTC, Garmin, Asus, LG, Samsung, Sony Ericsson and Toshiba.

Last month, Microsoft announced that it was killing the "Kin" line of mobile telephones it unveiled in April which were being manufactured by Japan's Sharp.

The Microsoft CEO also stressed the software giant's commitment to Internet-based "cloud" computing.

"The cloud continues to bring new opportunity," he said. "The cloud enables us to help our customers streamline their operations and improve their agility.

"The world of tomorrow is a world of a smart cloud talking to smart devices," he said, where you can "roam your information across the Internet."

"We are at an inflection point in technology history," Ballmer said. "For customers, cloud computing creates tremendous value, which translates to massive opportunity for Microsoft and its partners."

Microsoft said Monday that Dell, eBay, Fujitsu and Hewlett-Packard were deploying a Windows Azure appliance described as the "first turnkey cloud platform for large service providers and enterprises to deploy in their own data centers."

Dell, the Texas-based computer and computer services company, said the Windows Azure platform will allow it to deliver cloud services for its enterprise, public, small- and medium-sized business customers.

[Microsoft](#) also said Monday that more than 150 million licenses have

been sold for [Windows](#) 7, its computer operating system launched in October as a successor to the much-maligned Vista.

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