

# Apple to unveil next-generation iPad

March 2 2011, by Glenn Chapman

---



Apple was expected to unveil a second-generation iPad on Wednesday as rivals struggle to compete with the original model that has ruled the market since its release last year.

As rival manufacturers scramble to bring their own touchscreen tablet computers to market, Apple is poised to unveil its next-generation iPad on Wednesday.

Apple chief executive Steve Jobs took the wraps off the hot-selling device in January of last year but he appears unlikely to make an appearance this year after going on indefinite medical leave in January.

The Internet has been abuzz with speculation over whether Jobs, 56, will show up and what the maker of iPhones, iPods, iPads, and Macintosh computers has in store at the invitation-only event in San Francisco.

Cryptic invitations provided the date, time and location of the event and displayed an image of a March 2 calendar page peeling back to reveal a corner of an iPad.

The message on the page reads "Come see what 2011 will be the year of."

Technology analysts have taken to referring to 2011 as the "Year of the Tablet."

All bets are on Apple showing off an improved version of the iPad that Jobs introduced at the same downtown San Francisco venue a little over a year ago.

Apple sold nearly 15 million iPads last year and overall sales of tablets, which can be used to surf the Web, read electronic books, watch video and more, are forecast by market research firm Gartner to hit 55 million units this year.

Goldman Sachs analysts, in a note to investors, said they expect Apple to "announce the second-generation of its game-changing iPad" at the event which begins at 1:00 pm local time (1800 GMT).

"We expect the device to provide an early line of defense against the wave of tablet competitors arriving in coming months," they said.

The Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas earlier this year was rife with gadget manufacturers showing off tablets which they were racing to get into a market set ablaze by the iPad.

Motorola Mobility chief executive Sanjay Jha said Monday the US telecom maker is pleased with early sales of the Xoom, its iPad rival.

"They're off to a good start," Jha said of sales of the Xoom, which costs

between \$600 and \$800.

The Xoom is the first tablet powered by "Honeycomb" software crafted specifically for such devices by Internet powerhouse Google, and has been heralded as a viable challenger to the iPad.

Another rival, South Korea's Samsung, has announced plans to come out with a large-screen version of the Samsung Galaxy Tab, also powered by Honeycomb.

The second-generation iPad is expected to be slimmer with increased memory, a more powerful computer chip, and front and rear-facing cameras giving it the "FaceTime" video-conferencing ability featured on iPhone 4 smartphones.

"In today's consumer marketplace, you can't go very long without an upgrade," said Gartner Research analyst Ken Dulaney. "And the other tablets have at least caught up to last year's model."

Dulaney expected much of the event to be focused on improved software, with only minor changes to iPad hardware.

"The product was so good out of the shoot that I don't think there is a radical change forthcoming," Dulaney said. "You make your money off hardware, but the power and control comes from software."

Van Baker, also a Gartner analyst, was certain Wednesday's news will be an iPad boasting iterative improvements but no startling changes and no adjustment in price.

"The 'wow' has already been done -- for all intents and purposes Apple owns the tablet market right now," Baker said.

"Everybody is talking about the Xoom, but who the heck wants to pay 800 bucks when you can get a perfectly good iPad for 500 bucks?" he asked.

The \$600 Xoom is only available with monthly data plans that easily add hundreds of dollars a year to the cost of using the tablets.

The six iPad models range in price from \$500 to \$830 with the three higher-priced models having 3G mobile telecom connection capabilities.

Lower-priced iPads are designed to take advantage of connections at wireless Internet hotspots.

(c) 2011 AFP

Citation: Apple to unveil next-generation iPad (2011, March 2) retrieved 8 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-03-apple-unveil-ipad.html>

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.