

Tech-savvy Indians cry out for Apple's attention

March 22 2011, by Pratap Chakravarty



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Namrata, a Delhi University student, turned an iPad tablet computer round in her hands at an electronics store in the city. It is Apple's latest must-have item -- yet it is already out of date.

"No, I'll wait for the iPad 2," she said, putting it back on the shelf, aware that the improved version has already gone on sale in the [United States](#). "Perhaps my aunt in Australia will be able to send me one soon," she said.

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information, entertainment and the latest craze in consumer culture.

But the original iPad finally arrived in India a full nine months after it was available in the United States -- and the iPad 2 has no scheduled release date in the country of 1.18 billion people.

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Popular tech [blogger](#) Soumyadip Choudhury targeted Jobs, accusing him of using India as a dumping ground for out-of-date Apple technology.

"Is India, for Apple, only a market where you can hold your clearance sale, just before you are ready with the product's next generation?" he wrote on his blog, addressing Jobs directly.

"You officially began selling your blockbuster tablet device (the original iPad) in India exactly 30 days before announcing the new one (iPad 2)," Choudhury said.

The [iPad 2](#) is selling in the United States at about the same prices as the iPad 1, ranging from \$499.



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"You have not only miffed Indian consumers with your delayed-till-it-is-obsolete releases but also with your unreasonable pricing," Choudhury wrote.

The [iPad](#) 2 is thinner, lighter and faster -- but, with no release scheduled in India, the country's vast ranks of Apple fans have been left to buy the old model, priced between about \$540 and \$920, or else import the new one.

"This surely has inhibited non-Apple consumers from buying Apple products," online technology magazine Pluggd.in founder Ashish Sinha told AFP.

"There is a huge demand for Apple products in India -- especially the information technology sector, which is high on consuming gadgets."

An Apple spokesman who asked not to be named said that the company did not disclose sales figures for India or discuss future release dates for products. He also declined to comment on criticism of Apple's strategy in India.

Blogger Archana Shukla said that Apple was reluctant to "reach out to local customers" in India.

"The silence is intriguing, especially at a time when most top-league multinationals are ramping up their operations and going all out to woo Indian consumers," she said.

The US-based information technology research firm Gartner suggests that Apple has been making a judgement call, balancing the unpredictability of the present Indian market and its future potential.

"Apple always targets the niche market and never focuses on the mass market," Gartner's principal research analyst Vishal Tripathi told AFP.



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"It seems Apple is not getting the right signal from the market or is strategically missing the growth opportunities India offers," the analyst from the Connecticut-based firm said.

"Apple knows that hardcore [Apple](#) lovers will get the devices from abroad but what they are missing out on is new potential buyers."

Other companies are hoping to take advantage of Apple's apparent reluctance, with Samsung's Galaxy Tab and Motorola's Xoom, both priced around \$650, vying to grab India's [tablet computer](#) market.

"It is a nascent market but we see the tablet segment growing to one million this year as there are some exciting clients here," Samsung spokeswoman Ruchika Batra told AFP.

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