

Death of icon Jobs feeds iPhone mania

October 14 2011, by Dave Clark



A customer holds up her newly bought Apple iPhone 4S on the day of its release outside a Softbank shop in Tokyo on October 14. Stores worldwide were gripped by the now familiar scene of gadget geeks scrambling for Apple's latest smartphone, the US giant's first new release since the death of co-founder Steve Jobs.

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gadget geeks scrambling for Apple's latest smartphone, the US giant's first new release since the death of co-founder Steve Jobs.

The iconic chief executive's death brought a more sombre air than usual to some of the Apple shops celebrating the launch of the iPhone 4S, with fans laying flowers alongside the long queues waiting for their chance to buy.

Apple users have always seen themselves as an elite group, and their sense of community was boosted by the tributes for Jobs and jokes about the debacle suffered by Apple rival Blackberry, whose mobile network was disrupted this week.

In Frankfurt, scuffles broke out in the queue as shoppers camped overnight, in Paris several of the most prized versions of the model sold out at dawn and in London more than 300 fans mobbed the brand's biggest store.

Some love Apple's range of computers, smartphones and media tablets because they have changed the way consumers relate to technology. In some cases, they have changed users' entire way of life.

"I used to work as a bin man, then I submitted an app that achieved success in 2009. Without Apple as a company I would still be emptying dustbins," said Rob Shoesmith, 30, from Coventry in central England.

Battle of the smartphones

Apple's iPhone 4S goes on sale in seven key markets Friday

Smartphone market share, %
By shipment volumes, 2nd quarter 2011

Apple
Operating system: iOS
19.1

Y-o-y growth, %
141.7%

Samsung
Android
16.2

380.6

Nokia
Symbian
15.7

- 30.4

Blackberry
(Research in Motion)
Blackberry OS
11.6

10.7

Others
26.4
119.5

HTC
Android
11.0

165.9

Source: IDC

AFP

Chart showing market share of major smartphones worldwide. Apple's latest smartphone iPhone 4S goes on sale in seven major markets Friday.

Others were still in awe of Job's achievement and in shock at his death.

"It did actually make me want the iPhone more," said 42-year-old forex trader Duncan Hoare. "I was devastated, I didn't actually believe it. He was Apple, the creativity he gave to Apple products is what made them."

In Paris, the Apple store had barriers in place to contain the crowds --

both locals and tourists -- who kept vigil overnight until its 8:00 am (0600 GMT) opening, before rushing the shelves.

Each customer was given a reference number to regulate the queue but also to avoid disappointment.

"If you want the 64-gigabyte model, in black or in white, you'll have to come back tomorrow," a security guard cried.

Friday's launch was not to extend to all corners of the planet, but the phones themselves soon will, with Brazilian tourist Ricardo up at 5:00 am at the Paris store to be sure he could be the first to bring one home.



Apple's Senior Vice President of Worldwide product marketing Phil Schiller discusses the new iPhone 4S at the company's headquarters on October 4. On Friday the iPhone 4S also launches in Germany, France, Britain, the United States and Canada, before rolling out in 22 more countries by the end of

October.

The party had begun at sun-up on the other side of the world, as hundreds queued outside Apple's flagship stores in Sydney and Tokyo, filming themselves on their iPhones as staff inside clapped, cheered and chanted.

"It feels amazing, it is one of the greatest feelings in the world so far," said Tom Mosca, 15, who was first through the door in Sydney after queuing for more than three days to snare an iPhone 4S.

"I did it for Steve Jobs as a tribute. I was very sad at his passing," he told AFP on the pavement outside, where flowers surrounded a picture of the Apple icon who died last week aged 56 after suffering from cancer.

The iPhone 4S is already a record-breaker for an Apple product, with more than one million sales in the first 24 hours of pre-orders last week.

Bidding to build on the proven track record of the best-selling smartphone, Apple says the latest iteration boasts faster speeds, a voice-controlled assistant called Siri and an improved camera.

For some it looks too similar to its predecessor and many fans, investors and analysts were initially underwhelmed following its October 4 unveiling, but sales are expected to benefit from an outpouring of sympathy for Jobs.



Japanese customers queue up to buy the new Apple iPhone 4S on the day of its release at a Softbank shop in Tokyo on October 14, 2011. Apple fans in Australia and Japan on Friday became the first to get their hands on the new iPhone as the US technology giant unleashed its first device since the death of co-founder Steve Jobs.

In Japan, service provider Softbank will for the first time no longer be the exclusive iPhone carrier as rival KDDI joins the fray. Both held separate countdown ceremonies in Tokyo's Omotesando district to celebrate its launch.

More than 200 people queued at the Softbank store for the morning launch of the new model, with silver confetti showering down as fans cheered.

"I met Steve for the last time in June," Softbank president Masayoshi Son said. "He looked thin but his eyes were sparkling, talking about his work with passion. Let's praise this great piece of Steve together."

Despite the fanfare, huge questions now hang over the future of Apple, with the spotlight on Tim Cook, who was made chief executive of the California-based company in August after Jobs's resignation.

The performance of the new iPhone will be seen as an early test for Apple's life after Jobs, the creative visionary whose death was mourned worldwide by government leaders, industry titans and ordinary fans alike.

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