

Apple fans buy iPad on 1st day, some wait hours

March 16 2012, By KELVIN CHAN and ROBERT BARR , Associated Press



Japanese Ryota Musha, 41, right, and Hisanori Kogure, 31, show off new iPad tablet computers they purchased, in Tokyo Friday, March 16, 2012. Sales of the third version of Apple's iPad began Friday morning in Japan. (AP Photo/Koji Sasahara)

Apple's latest iPad drew die-hard fans to stores in the U.S. and nine other countries Friday, many of whom lined up for hours to be among the first to buy one.

The third version of the [iPad](#) went on sale there at 8 a.m. local time, with 25 other countries getting it a week later. The new model, at prices starting at \$499 in the U.S., comes with a faster processor, a much sharper screen and an improved camera, though the changes aren't as big

as the upgrade to the iPad 2.

"I don't think it's worth the price but I guess I'm a victim of society," Athena May, 21, said in Paris.

About 450 people lined up outside Apple's Ginza store in downtown Tokyo. Some had spent the night sleeping outside the store. In Madison, Wis., people brought reclining lawn chairs for naps, while a few played games on older iPads.

Dipak Varsani, 21, got in line in London at 1 a.m. Thursday local time and said he was drawn by the new device's better screen.

"You've got clearer movies and clearer games," he said. "I use it as a [multimedia device](#)."

In Hong Kong, a steady stream of buyers picked up their new devices at preset times at the city's sole [Apple store](#) after entering an online lottery.

The system, which required buyers to have local ID cards, also helped thwart visitors from [mainland China](#) - Apple's fastest growing market - who have a reputation for scooping up Apple [gadgets](#) to get them earlier and avoid sales tax at home. A release date in China has not yet been announced.

Kelvin Tsui, a 26-year-old hospital worker in Hong Kong, was allowed to buy two and planned to sell the second to make money.

Two years after the debut of the first iPad, the device's launch has become the second-biggest "gadget event" of the year, after the annual [iPhone](#) release. Customers could have ordered iPads ahead of time to arrive at home Friday, but many came out in person for the atmosphere.

"People always stop to talk to us," Harry Barrington-Mountford, 22, said in London. "I am exhausted though. I have only had about 45 minutes of sleep."

Christos Pavlides, 24, got to a downtown Philadelphia store at 10 p.m. Thursday and was the first in line. He already owns the two previous iPad models and several iPhones and figures the new iPad was next.

Despite competition from cheaper tablet computers such as Amazon.com Inc.'s Kindle Fire, the iPad remains the most popular tablet computer. Apple Inc. has sold more than 55 million iPads since its debut in 2010.

For some customers, standing in line was the only chance to get a new iPad on Friday. Apple quickly ran out of supplies it set aside for advance orders. The company was telling customers Thursday to expect a two- to three-week wait for orders placed through its online stores. Some buyers feared even longer waits.

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