

Australians first to get hands on new iPhone

September 20 2012, by Martin Parry



Gadget lovers in Sydney wait in line to get their hands on the new generation iPhone 5, which was released today. Some had been camped out since Tuesday.

Gadget lovers in Australia were the first to get their hands on the new generation iPhone 5 Friday, with the queues snaking around Apple's store in Sydney suggesting another huge hit for the company.

Some had been camped out since Tuesday to be the first to test the new device, which has a bigger screen and a slimmer body, and which Apple chief Tim Cook said was a big leap forward for the iPhone.

Despite warnings from experts that the new phone is not the game-changer Apple needs if it is to remain on top of the heap, crowds appeared to be bigger than for previous launches of the iconic smartphone.

The faithful filmed the experience on their iPhones and iPads as staff inside clapped and cheered when the doors opened at 8:00am (2200 GMT Thursday).

But the event was also hijacked by companies looking for free publicity, with the first dozen or so in the queue wearing promotional T-shirts and caps or carrying advertising materials.

"Seven of us are here from our company, since midday Tuesday," said Todd Foot, 24, who was first in the line and works for an organisation that compares and reviews mobile phones.

"We wanted to be the first in the world to be able to compare it with other smartphones. We've actually had telephone hook-ups with the first in the lines in New York and London. It's been a bit crazy."

While hundreds eagerly awaited their new phone, Francis Le and a handful of others formed a separate queue to highlight the "folly of consumerism".

"There is no better example of the excesses of our consumer society than an iPhone launch," he said.

"We want to highlight the disparity between those who wait overnight for unnecessary phone upgrades and those who wait for food, water and safety."

Apple received more than two million orders for the hotly anticipated

gadget in the 24 hours after it began pre-sales online on September 14, pushing many deliveries back into October because of the unprecedented demand.

Australian media said many consumers who wanted to buy the phone advertised online for people to stand in the queue for them, paying anything from Aus\$40 (US\$42) to several hundred dollars.

The company, whose shares soared past US\$700 in anticipation of the launch, unveiled the new phone at a San Francisco media event on September 12 and promised that it would be available in 100 countries by year's end.

As well as Sydney, it goes on sale Friday in the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore and Britain.

Some analysts have tipped Apple to sell 10 million units globally in the opening days and 50 million before the end of 2012.

Made of glass and aluminium, the gadget features a new design to nestle in the palm to naturally align with thumbs and works on the faster mobile Internet networks known as LTE.

But amid the hype, Melbourne research firm Ovum said relatively minor tweaks to the hardware and an operating system that is starting to show its age risk leaving the company trailing competitors such as South Korea's Samsung, and Google.

And the launch came with Apple facing growing criticism from users around the world that the tech giant's new mapping system is riddled with errors.

A day after the new iOS6 system was released, users from countries

including the United States, Britain, China, France and Japan protested that the new maps misplace some landmarks and leave others off altogether.

The iOS6 comes pre-installed on the iPhone 5.

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