

Long queues for iPhone 5 rollout despite map glitches (Update)

September 21 2012, by Katy Lee

Apple's iPhone 5 hit stores around Asia, Europe and North America Friday, with long queues of devotees undeterred by a lukewarm welcome from experts and complaints about the smartphone's new mapping system.

The lines of eager fans outside stores looked set to make the latest iPhone another commercial success for the trend-setting US tech giant, with Apple saying it had received more than two million orders online.

Australians were the first to get their hands on the device. In Sydney faithful fans filmed the experience on their iPhones and iPads as staff inside clapped and cheered when the doors opened at 8:00 am (2200 GMT Thursday).

Companies looking for publicity took advantage of the media frenzy accompanying the launch, with the first dozen or so in the queue wearing promotional T-shirts 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 reviews mobile phones.

The same was true at Apple's store on London's Regent Street, where at the head of the queue, Richard Wheatcroft and George Horne camped out for a full seven nights to promote their bakery, staffed by victims of domestic violence.

"We decided to buy four iPhones and auction them off. Anything raised will go towards the bakery," Wheatcroft told AFP. "We're just putting them on eBay now and then we're going to get some sleep."

Compared to the iPhone 4S, Apple's new smartphone boasts a bigger screen, stronger battery and faster connection to the latest 4G networks.

It is lighter and slimmer, and its operating system iOS 6 contains tweaks designed to improve the user's experience.

But many analysts say Apple has fallen short as other companies such as Samsung improve rival offerings powered by Google's Android operating system.

"Unless Apple ups its device innovation game, we may be seeing Apple's iOS empire approaching its zenith," Tony Costa of Forrester Research said.

Apple has also been hit by a barrage of criticism after it ditched Google's maps application in favour of an inhouse system that is reportedly riddled with errors.

Many users have protested that the new maps misplace some landmarks and leave others off altogether.

The maps are included in the iOS 6 system, which comes pre-installed on the new iPhone and became available for download by existing iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch users on Wednesday.

But enthusiasm among early-bird shoppers was undimmed as stores opened in Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, France, Germany, Britain, the US and Canada.

Ryoho Yamashita, a 23-year-old student, had queued since midnight at a Softbank store in Tokyo and said there had been a celebratory atmosphere among those waiting.

"It's like a festival that I enjoy every year," he said.

In Hong Kong, grey-marketeers pounced on anyone who emerged from the city's official Apple store, offering a premium for their purchase in the hope of reselling it for even more given short supplies of the coveted phone.

In France, Apple's flagship Paris store was doing a roaring trade as a threatened strike by workers over a pay dispute failed to materialise, while some fans in the Netherlands were heading across the border to buy in Germany.

The phone is not released in the Netherlands until next Friday, with Apple planning to roll it out in 100 countries by the end of the year.

London police, meanwhile, were seeking a Pakistani shop assistant over the theft of 252 of the phones from a store in Wimbledon, south London.

Samsung says it is considering adding the new iPhone to a patent infringement case as part of a long-running global legal battle between the rival electronics giants.

"Our company considers adding Apple's iPhone 5 to the (patent infringement) case... but we cannot say when," a Samsung spokesman told AFP.

"Our decision will be made after our company has analysed the iPhone 5 to see what aspects of its device constitute patent infringement."

Apple shares rose to \$702.99 on Friday, up 0.6 percent, as markets opened in New York.

Some analysts have tipped the company to sell 10 million units globally in the opening days and 50 million before the end of 2012, giving a small but welcome boost to the US economy.

(c) 2012 AFP

Citation: Long queues for iPhone 5 rollout despite map glitches (Update) (2012, September 21) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-09-iphone-rollout-glitches.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.