

Apple unveils new Macs, iPad ahead of holidays (Update 3)

October 22 2013, by Barbara Ortutay



Phil Schiller, Apple's senior vice president of worldwide product marketing, introduces the new iPad Air on Tuesday, Oct. 22, 2013, in San Francisco. (AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez)

Apple Inc. is refreshing its iPad lineup and slashing the price of its Mac computers ahead of the holiday shopping season, as it faces an eroding tablet market share and growing competition from rival gadget makers.

Apple unveiled a new, thinner, lighter tablet called the "iPad Air" along with a slew of new Macs Tuesday at an event in San Francisco. The iPad Air weighs just 1 pound (0.45 kilogram), compared with 1.4 pounds (0.64 kilogram) for the previous version. Apple marketing chief Phil Schiller called the tablet a "screaming fast iPad." He said it is eight times faster than the original iPad that came out in 2010.

The iPad Air will go on sale Nov. 1 and start at \$499 for a model with 16 gigabytes of memory. Apple plans to phase out its third and fourth generation iPads while the iPad 2, which launched in 2011, continues selling at \$399. A new iPad Mini, meanwhile, will be available later in November starting at \$399 for a 16-gigabyte model. It has a retina display designed to give it a clearer, sharper picture and the same 64-bit chip that powers the iPad Air.

The iPad's market share has been eroding compared with cheaper rivals running Google Inc.'s Android operating system. Research firm Gartner Inc. estimates that Android tablets will end 2013 with a 50 percent share of the worldwide market versus 49 percent for the iPad. Just two years ago, the iPad commanded a 65 percent market share compared to 30 percent for Android tablets.

Apple sold 14.6 million iPads in the June quarter, down 14 percent from the same time last year. It was the first year-over-year decline in iPad sales. Nonetheless, Apple CEO Tim Cook touted that Apple has sold 170 million iPads since the tablets launched three years ago.



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Tim Bajarin, a Creative Strategies analyst who's followed Apple for more than three decades, said the 64-bit chip in the new iPads makes them the most powerful tablets on the market. Keeping the iPad 2 on store shelves also makes sense, according to the analyst.

"That's the one that's a big hit in Asia and emerging markets," Bajarin said. "It's still got a lot of traction."



Eddy Cue, Apple's senior vice president of Internet Software and Services, speaks on stage about apps before a new product introduction on Tuesday, Oct. 22, 2013, in San Francisco. (AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez)

Apple also refreshed its computer lineup. A new, 13-inch (33-centimeter) MacBook Pro with Retina display is thinner and lighter, Schiller said, adding that the laptop has up to 9 hours of battery life, enough to watch the entire trilogy of 'The Dark Knight' on one charge. The notebook's new price is lower: \$1,299, compared with \$1,499 for the previous version.

A larger MacBook Pro, with a 15-inch (38-centimeter) monitor and 256 gigabytes of storage starts at \$1,999, compared with \$2,199 for the previous version.

The Mac Pro, a high-end desktop computer aimed at what Apple calls "power users," will be available in December for \$2,999.



Apple CEO Tim Cook speaks on stage before a new product introduction on Tuesday, Oct. 22, 2013, in San Francisco. (AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez)

The company also said that its latest computer operating system, Mavericks, is available free of charge.

"Between the iPad and iPhones, I think they'll have a monster holiday season," Bjarin said.

Apple also gave updated statistics related some of its other products. The company said that nearly two-thirds of its mobile devices are running iOS7, the revised operating system it released in September. Twenty million people have listened to iTunes Radio about a month after its release.



Phil Schiller, Apple's senior vice president of worldwide product marketing, speaks on stage before a new product introduction on Tuesday, Oct. 22, 2013, in San Francisco. (AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez)

Shares of Cupertino, California-based Apple slid \$2.64 to \$518.79 in afternoon trading following the event.



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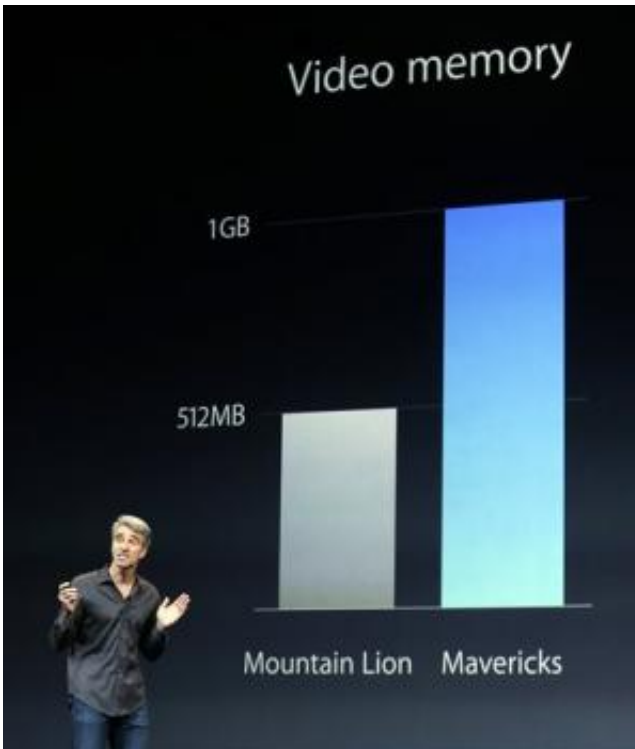
Apple CEO Tim Cook speaks on stage before a new product introduction on Tuesday, Oct. 22, 2013, in San Francisco. (AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez)



Craig Federighi, senior vice president of Software Engineering at Apple, speaks on stage before a new product announcement on Tuesday, Oct. 22, 2013, in San Francisco. (AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez)



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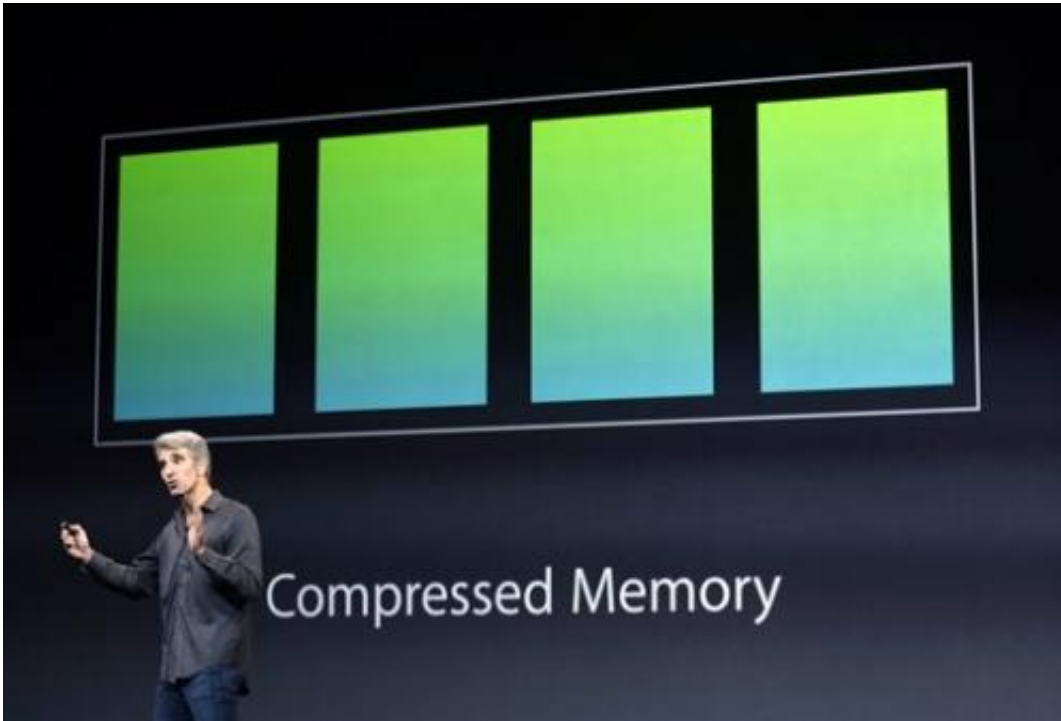
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