

Eyes on Apple for new iPads at US event

October 22 2013, by Glenn Chapman



People queue outside an Apple store to purchase the iPhone 5s and 5c in Hong Kong on September 20, 2013

Apple is on Tuesday expected to show off slick new iPads to take on rival tablet makers during the prime year-end holiday shopping season.

The culture-changing California company has revealed little about an invitation-only event in San Francisco, but analysts believe a spotlight will shine on the iPad line.

"Job One for Apple is to get something out there on the large-size iPad

that gets people excited, then obviously from a specification focus, the Mini needs to catch up with what everybody else has done," NPD analyst Stephen Baker told AFP.

"There are a lot of other things happening in that large-size tablet space and there is a huge amount of choice in smaller devices."

Industry tracker Gartner on Monday forecast that global tablet shipments will reach 184 million units this year in a 53.4 percent rise from last year.

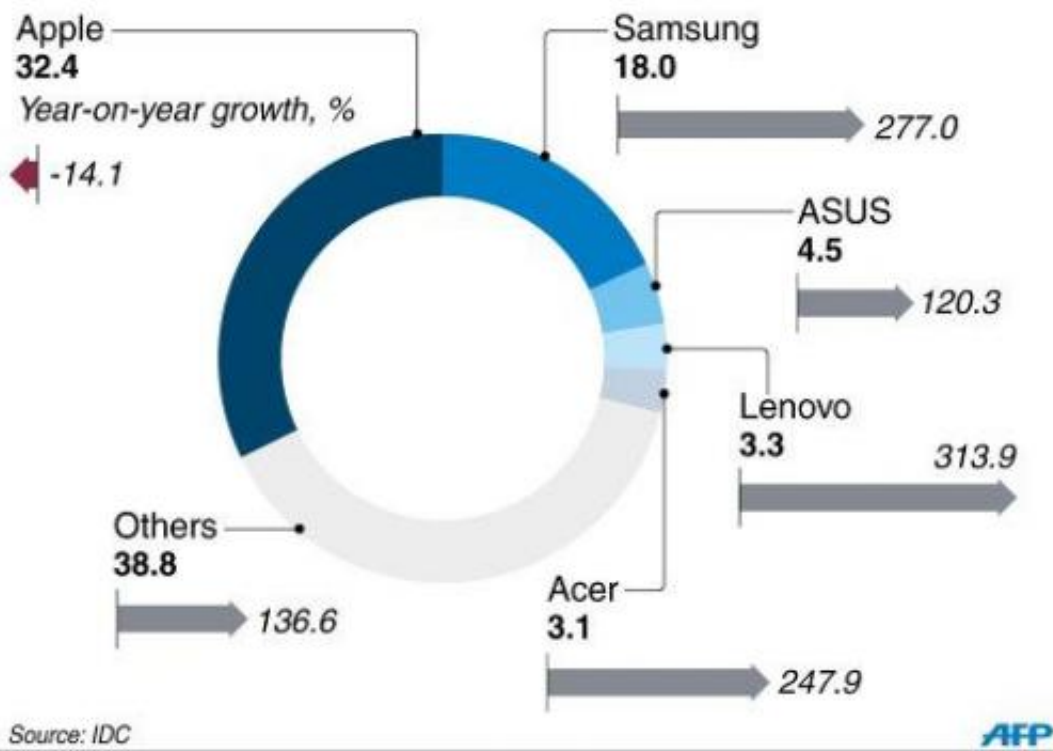
The high-end of the market, where iPads dominate, has seen people opting for small tablets which cost less than full-sized models, according to Gartner.

"Continuing on the trend we saw last year, we expect this holiday season to be all about smaller tablets as even the long-term holiday favorite—the smartphone—loses its appeal," said Gartner research vice president Carolina Milanesi.

The iPad remains the largest-selling tablet, according to surveys, but its market share is being eroded by rivals using the Google Android operating system.

Tablet devices market share

Top makers
%, Q2 2013



Graphic charting the market share of major vendors of tablet devices

Apple is also under pressure to adapt to the popularity of premium tablets with high-quality screens in the seven- to eight-inch (18- to 20-centimeter) range where the Mini competes.

This has analysts confident that Apple on Tuesday will show off a Mini with screen quality on par with that of its full-sized iPad.

Emailed invitations to the Apple event revealed little other than the time and place, and bore the message: "We still have a lot to cover."

A graphic in the shape of an iPad showed Apple's iconic logo under a shower of colorful leaves.

Unconfirmed reports are that Apple unveilings will include a full-size iPad that will be thinner than its predecessor and boast improved capabilities.

Scrutiny of Apple's supply chain has industry trackers thinking the new iPad will get "narrower, thinner, and lighter" and possibly be built with processors at least as powerful as those used in the freshly-launched iPhone 5S.

Some analysts will be watching whether new iPad models have 64-bit processors as engines in a significant boost that would enable tablets to handle more heavy weight programs and games.



A child plays with an Apple iPad Mini at an Apple store in Paris on July 6, 2013

And analysts agreed that top-end, full-size iPads may also get the fingerprint recognition security feature that has been a hit in the iPhone 5S.

"It sounds jaded, but tablets are a maturing market," said Forrester analyst Sarah Rotman-Epps.

"We expect few surprises in this category that Apple kickstarted only three years ago," she continued.

"It will be difficult for Apple to move the needle on new [tablet](#) sales, as the strongest growth is coming from emerging markets where customers are more price-sensitive."

Apple was also expected to discuss its latest computer operating system and its Mac Pro desktop work station at the event.

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