

Apple sends event invites amid rumors of iPad update

October 15 2013



Fourth generation Apple iPads are seen on display at an Apple store on February 5, 2013 in San Francisco, California

Apple sent out invitations on Tuesday to a special event on October 22 in San Francisco, revealing little about what is expected to be a day devoted to iPad updates.

Emailed invitations bore few details other than time and place, and bore

the message: "We still have a lot to cover."

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

The invitations came about a week after unconfirmed reports that Apple will show off a new version of its popular iPad tablet computer that will be thinner than its predecessor and boast improved camera capabilities.

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

An upgraded version of the iPad mini with an improved screen is also expected.

Baker will be watching for 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.

"It has the potential to make tablets much more compelling devices in terms of content creation; making devices more sophisticated with more horsepower-hungry applications," the analyst said.

"It will increase the likelihood that tablets will displace PCs (personal computers)."

Building more powerful computing engines in iPads would also ramp up gaming capabilities, Baker said, while adding: "Not that it needs a lot of help."

He also suggested that top-end full-size iPads could get a fingerprint

recognition security feature that has proven a hit in the iPhone 5S.

Such upgrades would promise to entice buyers to pay a bit more for full-size tablets from Apple instead of choosing lower-priced Mini models, boding well for the company's bottom line, according to the analyst.

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.

Apple was also expected to discuss its computer operating system and its MacBook laptop line at the event, timed for the start of the year-end holiday shopping season.

Apple is coming off a wildly successful launch of two new iPhone models last month. The California firm said it sold a record nine million iPhones in the three days after launching two new versions of the smartphone.

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