

Apple: watching for new directions

September 7 2014, by Glenn Chapman



Apple CEO Tim Cook walks off stage after speaking during the Apple Worldwide Developers Conference at the Moscone West center on June 2, 2014 in San Francisco, California

Apple's mystery unveiling on Tuesday is expected to be a watershed moment for the California giant—and the entire tech industry. Here are key things to watch for:

Can Tim Cook step up?

Chief executive Tim Cook will seek to vanquish the notion that Apple lost its magic when its famed co-founder Steve Jobs died.

Cook could help Apple establish its dominance in a new category with an "iWatch" at the event set in the very location where Jobs introduced the Macintosh computer 30 years ago.

Since Jobs died in late 2011, pressure has been on his successor Cook to show the world that Apple can shine just as brightly without the iconic pitchman known for perfection in design and mastery in marketing.

Apple lovers have been eager for the company to seize a new gadget category the way it dominated smartphones, tablets, and MP3 players with the iPhone, iPad, and iPod respectively.

"I don't believe this project is a knee-jerk reaction to other smartwatches," said Creative Strategies president Tim Bjarin.

"While the roots go back to Steve Jobs, this product is Tim Cook and Jony Ive."

The genesis of what is being referred to in the media as "iWatch" stemmed from Jobs and his frustration with health care matters while battling illness that took his life, according to the analyst.

Bjarin spoke of sources telling him the Apple wearable computer has been in the works for seven years.

Cook would fittingly be putting his stamp on the first "next big thing" launched by Apple without Jobs. While an iWatch will wirelessly tap into capabilities of iPhones or iPads, managing health is expected to be a strong theme.

Bolstering that likelihood is Cook's reputation as a fitness fanatic who was among the early users of Nike Fuel activity tracking wristbands.



A visitor tests the Sony SmartWatch 2 during the 2014 Mobile World Congress in Barcelona on February 25, 2014

Can Apple shake off security fears?

Another thing to watch for will be how Apple addresses the elephant in the room—security of photos, videos and other data stored on devices or online in servers at iCloud or iTunes.

Cook told The Wall Street Journal this week that Apple is stepping up its iCloud security by sending people alerts when attempts are made to change passwords, restore iCloud data to new devices, or when someone logs in from a new gadget.

His comments came after Apple took a bruising over a "targeted attack" that led to the release of nude photos of celebrities including Oscar winner Jennifer Lawrence.

Apple has insisted there was no breach of its cloud storage system and that the celebrities had their accounts hacked by using easy-to-guess passwords, or by giving up their personal data to clever cybercriminals.

Security could play into the off-chance that Apple will announce iPad enhancements such as adding fingerprint scanning, in a break from its practice of keeping smartphone and tablet events separate.

How big will the iPhone go?

While the unveiling of new-generation iPhones with larger screens is considered a sure bet, people will be watching to see how big Apple will go and when models will make it to market.

Apple has remained consistently tight-lipped, but analysts are expecting the iPhone screen to be boosted to at least 4.7 inches, and a 5.5-inch screen is also likely, allowing Apple to compete in the new "phablet" segment.

A payments company?

Watch also to see how aggressively Apple moves into mobile money with near-field-communication chips built into iPhone 6 models letting them be used as Internet age wallets.

There are reported to be 800 million accounts at Apple's online iTunes shop, where people's [credit card data](#) could be easily synched to mobile wallets, quickly creating a vast sea of users.

With this, Apple could jump-start the effort to use mobile devices for payments.

What else is coming?

Some reports speculate that Apple may also unveil an upgrade to its iPad Air, which would be a departure from its tradition of a separate announcement for tablets.

The new mobile platform iOS 8 will have capabilities that go beyond health and payments, say some analysts. This could involve smart-home technology or other systems that put Apple at the center of the ecosystem.

"Ultimately, we believe the pivot toward software and services and the rise of a more comprehensive enterprise strategy could help Apple become much more than just a hardware company," said Barclays analyst Ben Reitzes.

© 2014 AFP

Citation: Apple: watching for new directions (2014, September 7) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-09-apple.html>

<p>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.</p>
--