

iTablet scavenger hunt raises Apple hackles

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The iPhone 3Gs at an Apple store in 2009 in Tel Aviv, Israel. A Silicon Valley gossip website has evidently triggered Apple's ire by offering rewards for proof that the notoriously secretive company has made a tablet computer.

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Valleywag.com on Wednesday offered 10,000 dollars for "bona fide" pictures of an Apple tablet; 20,000 dollars for video of one in action, and 50,000 dollars if Apple chief executive [Steve Jobs](#) was in the pictures or video.

The reward would jump to 100,000 dollars "if you let us play with it for

an hour," the website promised while announcing what it dubbed the "[Apple Tablet Scavenger Hunt](#)."

By Friday, Valleywag had declared Apple the first winner of its contest due to a letter it said it received from the iconic California company's lawyers.

"We believe you and your company have crossed the line by offering a bounty for the theft of Apple's trade secrets," an Apple lawyer said in a copy of the letter posted online by Gawker-owned Valleywag.

"Apple demands that Gawker Media discontinue this program and retract the offer to pay for photos, video, or samples of Apple's unannounced product."

The Valleywag scavenger hunt was still on Friday, with Gawker warning anyone considering going for the prize not to break the law in the process.

Silicon Valley has been buzzing with rumors that Apple will hold a press event the last week of January to unveil an "iTablet" computer that builds on the popularity of its iPhone and [iPod Touch](#) devices.

True to form, Apple has refused to comment on iTablet talk, letting anticipation and speculation build.

The specter of an iTablet hovered over the international [Consumer Electronics Show](#) in Las Vegas last week, with manufacturers of tablet computers jockeying for head-starts in the marketplace.

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