

Apple courts developers vital to its popularity

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Former Apple CEO Steve Jobs delivers the keynote address at the 2011 Apple World Wide Developers Conference at the Moscone Center in San Francisco, California. Apple will spotlight next-generation software for its coveted gadgets as it kicks off its annual gathering of developers whose applications are vital to the company's success.

Apple on Monday will spotlight next-generation software for its coveted gadgets as it kicks off its annual gathering of developers whose applications are vital to the company's success.

The Internet buzzed with rumors about what the notoriously secretive maker of [iPads](#), iPhones, [iPods](#), and Macintosh computers will unveil at a keynote event marking the start of the five-day Worldwide Developers Conference (WWDC).

Analysts did not expect [Apple](#) to unveil any new devices, believing it will opt instead to focus on improvements to [operating software](#) and

opportunities for developers to make even better "apps."

"What keeps people allegiant to and excited about their iPhones and iPads are all the new apps that are available," said Forrester analyst Charles Golvin.

"Appealing to the developers and continuing to enrich the set of tools and capabilities they have to build great new apps or enhance existing apps is absolutely critical."

WWDC comes less than two weeks before Google's annual developers conference, which will be held in the same downtown San Francisco conference center.

"It is a back and forth between Apple and Google in a battle for hearts and minds of developers; to be their priority," Golvin said.

"What Apple wants is for them to only develop for iOS," he continued. "That is not realistic, but they can try to make sure all the exciting new things come to iPad and [iPhone](#) first and maybe get to the Android, and Google wants the opposite."

Google-backed Android software for mobile devices is the world's leading smartphone platform and seen as the only formidable adversary for Apple.

Banners for iOS 6, the next generation operating system for Apple [mobile gadgets](#), were on display in the conference venue during the weekend.

Analysts suspected iOS upgrades to include improving and maybe even extending Siri virtual assistant capabilities that were a hit after being introduced in the iPhone 4S.

Apple is expected to introduce its own mapping program to replace Google Maps software that had been pre-installed on iPhones.

In apparent anticipation of the move, Google last week unveiled a revamped maps program that allows mobile users to use the service without an Internet connection.

The service, which will be available soon on [Android](#) devices, allows users to select an area and save a local map which can be viewed when a user does not have a data connection.



Attendees mingle during the 2011 Apple World Wide Developers Conference at the Moscone Center in San Francisco, California. Apple will spotlight next-generation software for its coveted gadgets as it kicks off its annual gathering of developers whose applications are vital to the company's success.

Google Maps could still be downloaded and used on iPhones.

Apple would in theory be able to tie its mapping service to the Siri voice-directed personal assistant, which could supplant Google in searching for businesses.

"If Apple does a great job (on its maps program) then we will see some substitution and may impact Google search on the iPhone," said Opus Research analyst Greg Sterling.

Apple will also give developers the latest news about the new Mountain Lion operating system for [Macintosh computers](#). Apple is expected to show off revamped MacBook laptop computers power by Intel Ivy Bridge chips.

"My opinion is that we will definitely hear an update on Mountain lion and we almost certainly will hear about iOS 6 with whizzy new mapping technology that is going to replace [Google Maps](#)," Golvin said.

"And the Macbook line hasn't been refreshed for a while," he continued. "The big question is are we going to hear anything about Apple TV."

Apple chief executive Tim Cook said recently that the company was putting a lot of energy into its Apple TV boxes for streaming Internet content to television screens.

Apple long played the product off as "a hobby" but is believed to be trying to duplicate its success in tablet and smartphone markets in living rooms.

"If they are going to push Apple TV from a hobby to something with full-force Apple marketing, I think they will do that in a separate event dedicated entirely to that," Golvin said.

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