AV
SPECIALIST
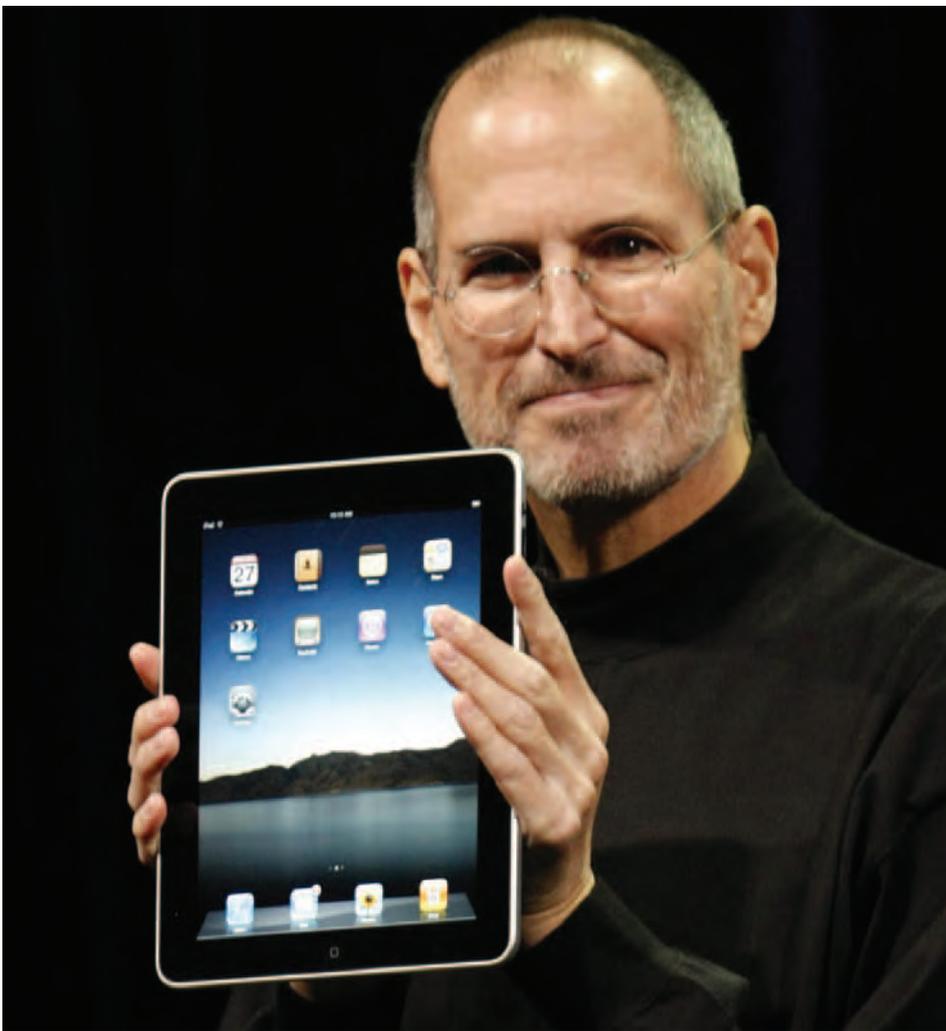### MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

All the action from FIFA2010

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Sound Devices travel to Afghanistan

iPad magic or wanna-have gadget?

NAB action from the show floor

Confidence returns to media market

iPad: Magical Device
or Clutter Agent?

Love it or hate it, the iPad defines a new device category, the tablet. Not PC, nor smart phone, it has burst onto the world stage bringing a little fun and magic in its wake. It's affecting digital consumer patterns, but is it a game-changer, or just more hardware and clutter in our lives?

There are significant reasons why NOT to buy an iPad. First, it's redundant with your iPhone and laptop, according to UK's *Daily Telegraph*. It doesn't play Flash video, has no camera or USB port, and it doesn't print! The list goes on. But to iPad enthusiasts "it is the most amazing piece of consumer IT technology ever." According to one email I received: "The implications are astounding - high definition video on demand will replace TV; eBooks which will kill the printing industry; Skype access that will kill a regular phone service. The list is endless and frightening. THIS IS THE FUTURE. I bought her the 64 GB iPad and she reckons it's so intuitive that her 80-year old father has mastered it."

So who's right?

The truth is, the iPad is new – a tablet form factor that has only been on the market since April. It is destined to be adopted globally and put to use in some creative and probably unexpected ways.

At home and in the office

For entertainment, the iPad's unique interface lends itself to watching a favorite video, browsing the web, or playing games. Its display is a visual step up from the iPhone. Video games, like *IronMan 2*, have more visually compelling heroes as well as more detailed environments. "The difference between, say, *Times Square* in the iPhone game versus the iPad edition is considerable" says News Corporation's

IGN online gaming website. It's fast becoming a destination device and EA (Electronic Arts) Mobile has already released five iPad games.

Mobile applications have steadily moved into the mainstream over the last year or so and the iPad is speeding up this evolution. Due to reasonably-priced smart phones and data plans along with high-speed mobile data network availability, mobile applications rapidly creating a mass channel for the distribution of digital entertainment, informational content and advertising according to UK analyst, Generator Research

Magazines are migrating to the iPad, like first movers *Wired* and *Popular Mechanics*. Seamlessly embedded video, and linked articles with auto-updated content are creating a new digital magazine experience.

Interactive display

The iPad is all about the touch in its interactive display. A whole generation may soon be less tethered to a keyboard, and the business world will use touch to log corporate data, take inventory, and generate sales proposals. In that regard, iPad comes with Microsoft Exchange support and it's not unlikely that companies like Oracle, Genentech, and Kraft that made large-scale corporate iPhone purchases, will do the same with iPads for wide internal use.

"This element of touch and the software built around it is going to change a lot of the way we think about enterprise software," says Mitchell Kertzman, partner at Silicon Valley Venture Capital firm Hummer Windblad. Kertzman, and former CEO of Sybase Software. "Unless you've experienced touch interface," Kertzman emailed me after our meeting, "you may not fully realize the greater sense of engagement you feel with the software."

Strong industry position is in a strong industry position as it continues on track toward becoming a $75 billion company. Having just reached a 222B$ market cap, they now surpass technology gorilla Microsoft. Though Microsoft's CEO, Steven A. Ballmer, has snapped back that "no technology company on the planet is more profitable than we are", Apple is gaining momentum. They are expected to ship 4,3 million iPad's worldwide in 2010 alone, increasing to 37,5 million units by 2014. By that time Apple will dominate of the worldwide Media Tablet market and be earning $17.3 billion annually on iPad sales, up from this year's $ 2.6 billion.

iPad in the Middle East and Africa

Last month, the iPad launched in nine new countries outside the US including Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, and Japan, and will be available in another nine by the end of July. Though there has been no announcement when it will be available in the Middle East, surveys indicate pent up market demand. Fifty-eight percent of respondents from the region claim they would likely buy the device, compared to only 17% in Germany, 13% in the USA and 7% in Denmark and the UK.

In Africa, the iPad is expected to come with a high price tag and attract mainly higher income Africans. Like the iPhone before it, "the Apple 3GS costs about 100,000 Kshs in Kenya" writes blog commentator John Karanja, "and about 24,000 Kshs on contract in the US." Hurdles to adoption include Apple's limited Pan-African distribution capability, cost – perhaps double or triple of what US consumers pay -- and weak quality wireless access needed to fuel iPad content and functionality. On the other hand, the Middle East and Africa are expected to be one of the fastest growing IP traffic regions with a six-fold increase by 2014.

Specs and Apps

For many, the allure of the iPad starts with its slick, compact size and shape. It claims to be thinner (0.5") and lighter (1.5 pounds) than any other laptop or netbook, with its 9.7", 1024x768 Multi-Touch screen display. With 10 hours of battery life, the first release did not feature GPS, but the newer 3G version does. iPad supports the main audio formats—MP3, AAC, WAV, and AIFF—and H.264 video up to 720p, 30 frames per second. It does not support Adobe's Flash, a point of contention between the two technology giants "Flash was created during the PC era" says Apple CEO, Steve Jobs. "But the mobile era is about low power devices, touch interfaces and open web standards – all areas where Flash falls short." Nonetheless, 95% of all Internet browsers today support Flash, and the advantage of Flash's "build once, run everywhere" platform independence cannot be underestimated. The big iPad and iPhone differentiators are the thousands of applications (apps) they are fueled by. With over 200,000 apps in apps store today, 5 thousand are now unique to the iPad platform, and 20 thousand new iPad-specific apps are reportedly in development. According to Dr. Michael Hoch, founder of Sodascope and former

Director of Engineering at Yahoo, apps can be developed using Apple's Xcode software or in HTML. The ingredients needed include a software developer with good Objective-C programming skills, perhaps C and C++ abilities as well, an interaction graphics designer, and an Apple device to build and test the app.

Build your iPad app

The cost in programming time ("man months") to produce a working iPad app varies. An optimistic estimate is one to three months minimum depending on developer skills and content development costs according to Hoch. There are also toolkits like Phonegap, a web application framework that supports HTML / JavaScript integration or the Unity 3D Game Engine with scripting logic and integrated 3D / Photoshop editing. Another online service, Yapper gives non-techie publishing customers (bloggers, newspapers, magazines, etc.) a WYSYWG browser-based solution for RSS feeds. Customers enter their order using a Web template. Yapper then hand

builds the app in XCode, submits it on their behalf to the app store, and even manages the approvals.

According to Hoch, only the top one to five percent of app developers actually make money which favors those apps that manage to become featured in the App store. Ad supported apps can pull in $400 to $5,000 per day, like earners "5800+ Drink and Cocktail Recipes" ($1500 / day) and Sound Grenade (over $3000 / day). App click-through rates are reportedly eight times greater than Facebook or Myspace.

Your own iPad?

The iPad has only been on the market since April. Its impact on mobile computing will not be apparent until later in the year. Decried by nay-sayers ("What? Another device to complicate my life?)" and hailed by enthusiasts ("The best new problem solving form factor ever!"), this is a polarizing product. Hoch, who has owned one since it first came on the market, summarizes the appeal as this: "Do I want one? Yes! ... Do I need one? Not really. We survived without a tablet before they came along and they are not as essential as, say, the mobile phone has come to be, yet it does have some magic to it that draws us in." As iPad uptake in the work place, on the home front, and in the mobile space continues, usage patterns, benefits, and limitations will become more evident. What we know now, is that it embodies the tablet, an inevitable next step in the evolution of computing. "The transformation of the PC to new form factors like the tablet" says Apple CEO Steve Jobs, "is going to make some people uneasy because the PC has taken us a long ways. The PC is brilliant…and we like to talk about the post-PC era, but it's uncomfortable."

About the Author

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columnist, and co-author of IPTV & Internet Video (Focal Press, 2nd Edition, 2009). He is principal of Go Associates, a leading consultancy that develops and implements high-tech product marketing and global business development strategies. Howard has held senior management and consulting positions with Sun Microsystems, Informix Software, British Telecom, Apple Computer, and other world technology leaders. He is the creator and former manager of Sun's first Media Lab and is now a frequent contributor to industry publications. Howard completed his graduate studies at Stanford University.