

Technology

The Amazing New iPad

Apple's Tablet is More than an Electronic Book Reader, Not Quite a Laptop

BY DAN GIANCATERINO

Steve Jobs recently said that Apple is the largest mobile devices company in the world. It has sold more than 250 million iPods, the device that has become synonymous for MP3 players. The iPhone combines a cell phone with a music player, Web browser and an online store of more than 140,000 downloadable applications that can extend the phone's capabilities. Apple's MacBook line of laptops effectively combines elegant technology with robust, intuitive software.

Jobs went on to say that Apple has wondered for several years whether there was a third category, something between the iPhone and the MacBook, that would allow people to easily surf the Web, read e-mail, view pictures and video, play music and games, and read electronic books. While many people have thought that netbooks could fill this niche, Jobs disagreed, citing their small displays, cheap processors, and outdated software. (I have to agree with him. I began writing this article on my netbook at home, but gave up after a few minutes. It was just too cramped for me to write effectively.)

In January, Jobs unveiled Apple's answer: the iPad, an ultra-thin tablet computer with a touchscreen. Think of it as an iPod Touch on steroids. Here are some technical specs to consider:

- The iPad measures about 9.5 inches by 7.5 inches, is a half-inch thick and

weighs 1.5 pounds. Apple says it's "slightly smaller than a magazine."

- The screen is 9.7 inches measured diagonally and features multi-touch capability, similar to the iPhone.
- Battery life is 10 hours. (That's like five times that of my netbook!)
- Apple custom-designed a new 1 GHz processor for the iPad, called the A4. (No off-the-shelf parts for this baby!)
- 802.11n Wi-Fi is built-in.
- There are three different models: 16GB of memory (\$499), 32GB (\$599) and 64GB (\$699).
- You can add 3G access for an additional \$130 per model, so you can go online in places without a Wi-Fi connection.
- AT&T is the current 3G access provider, with two data-only plans available: \$14.99/month (up to 250MB of data) or \$29.99 (unlimited) and no contract is necessary.
- It will run the same apps from the Apple store that the iPod and iPhone can.
- Standard iPad models go on sale April 3, with 3G models anticipated 30 days later.

For more information, point the Web browser on your computer (which suddenly seems so old and outdated, right?) to www.apple.com/ipad/.

The iPad isn't perfect, however:

- The battery and flash memory cards



aren't removable.

- It doesn't have a camera.
- Adobe Flash doesn't work on the iPad (and on the iPhone and iPod as well.)
- No multitasking, just like the iPhone. Only one app can run at a time.
- The iPad has an on-screen keyboard. I feel that these "soft" keyboards lack the tactile feedback necessary for accurate typing. Even though the iPad's on-screen keyboard will be larger than that of the iPhone, I still believe that it will not be conducive for typing long documents.

So will the iPad kill netbooks? I don't think so. Most people who buy netbooks are price-conscious. They're looking for a cheap laptop for surfing the Web and reading e-mail while travelling, something they don't have to worry about getting lost or stolen. Or they want a simple laptop for the kids, knowing that it might endure some abuse. Small screens, slow processors, and Windows XP simply don't matter to these consumers. Price does. These people aren't Apple's target market.

I do think, however, that the iPad will disrupt the eReader market currently occupied by Amazon's Kindle, the Sony Reader and Barnes & Noble's Nook. I could spend \$489 for a Kindle DX. For \$10 more, however, I can purchase an iPad with four times the memory and a color touch screen. It seems like a no-brainer to me.

Think of Apple's iBooks app as iTunes for electronic books. It will let you customize the reading experience on the iPad, such as zooming to the table of contents, changing the size and style of the book's font, and flipping through pages. Integrated into the iBooks app is an online store, where you can discover and purchase books of interest. Apple will allow publishers to set the price of the titles in the store; as I write this, it is anticipated that most will be in the \$12.99 to \$14.99 range. This is an advantage for Amazon – most of their titles are around \$9.99. Unfortunately, it doesn't look like they will be able to maintain this competitive pricing edge. At the end of January, Amazon admitted that they will eventually have to "capitulate" to Macmillan's demand that they offer Macmillan hard cover and bestseller ebooks at the agency model of \$12.99-\$14.99.

While the iPad may not be a replacement for your current desktop or laptop computer, it is an elegant, powerful and versatile entertainment device that will be at home on your coffee table or nightstand. ■

Dan Giancaterino (dgiancaterino@jenkinslaw.org) is the education services manager at Jenkins Law Library. Though he thinks the iPad is nifty, he still prefers traditional printed books.

Need an Assistant? Ask Siri

Have you ever wondered why your BlackBerry or iPhone couldn't be more like a personal assistant? Well, the answer could be just a few spoken words away.

Siri acts as a go-between for you and the Internet on your mobile device. You just call up the application and speak, in plain language, with your request. Siri's interface eliminates the need to search through Web page after Web page. After a while, Siri will get to know you and with your permission, personalize your results.

Your queries can be as simple as getting a weather forecast or as complicated as getting a reservation at your favorite restaurant.

According to the company's Web site, Siri was born out of SRI's CALO Project, the largest artificial intelligence project in U.S. history. (CALO stands for Cognitive Assistant that Learns and Organizes). Made possible by a \$150 million Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency investment, the CALO Project included 25 research organizations and institutions and spanned five years. Siri brings the benefits of this technology to the public in the first mainstream consumer application of a virtual personal assistant.

The current version of Siri is only available as an iPhone app, and it's free. Versions for other platforms are in the works. ■

Indelible Identity

Technology and pens are two words you generally don't find in the same sentence. But uni-ball's new "super ink" technology makes it worth a mention in this space.

Uni-ball's line of super ink pens (uni-ball 207, the Jetstream, the Jetstream RT and Vision Elite) uses a special ink formula that won't wash out. The ink contains microscopic color pigments that are absorbed and trapped into the fibers of paper. Uni-ball says the technology deters identity thieves and other criminal types who could otherwise



wash away typical ball-point ink and replace it with their own signatures or marks. The ink is also fade- and water-resistant as well as acid-free and archival quality. ■

Most Get News Online



More than 60 percent of Americans get at least a portion of their news online, a new survey by the Pew Internet and American Life Project reports.

More people than ever (75 percent) are sharing links to news stories on social media Web sites like Facebook and Twitter, the survey revealed. The survey also found that 54 percent get their news from a radio news program and 50 percent read a national or local newspaper.

"To a great extent, people's experience of news, especially on the Internet, is becoming a shared social experience," reads the report. "[T]he advent of social media like social networking sites and blogs has helped the news become a social experience in fresh ways for consumers."

Most of the people surveyed use anywhere between two and five news sources online and 65 percent of those surveyed said they don't have a favorite Web site for getting news. The most common news topic sought out online is the weather (81 percent). National news was second at 73 percent, followed by sports news (52 percent) and entertainment/celebrity news (47 percent).

Nearly two-thirds of the study's online news users were younger than 50, and nearly 30 percent were younger than 30. ■

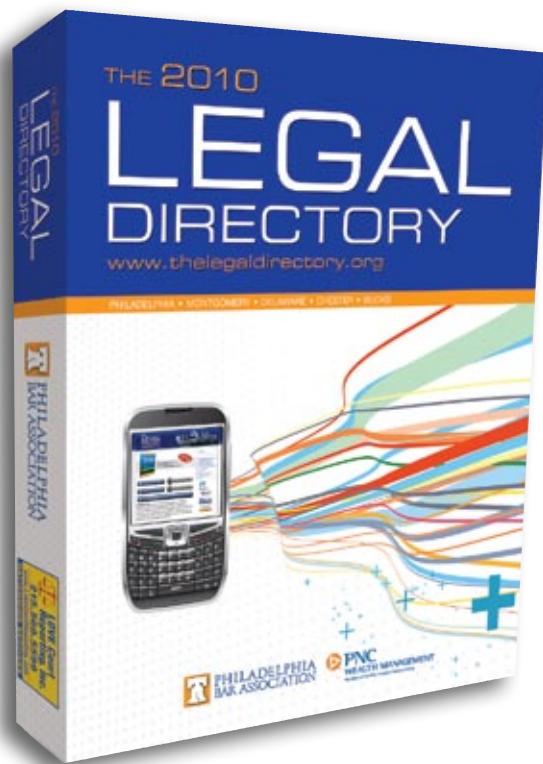


Digital voice recorders are the perfect compliment for the tech-savvy attorney looking to take precise and accurate notes. Digital voice recordings have longer lives than tape recordings. The recordings can be stored right on your computer, which is another advantage since you can't feed a tape into a PC. The recorders hold data in many different formats (mp3, .wav, .wmv) and can record hundreds of hours of material. The size of the file will depend on the recording format and the quality of the recording. They're small, light and just as easy to use as their tape counterparts.

FEATURES	PANASONIC RR-US590	OLYMPUS DM-4
DIMENSIONS	4.13" X 1.56" X 1.06"	4.45" X 1.77" X 0.59"
WEIGHT	2.3 OUNCES	3.46 OUNCES
RECORDING MEDIA	2 GB FLASH MEMORY	BUILT-IN 8 GB FLASH MEMORY
REC/PLAYBACK TIMES	MAXIMUM 576 HOURS	UP TO 140 HOURS IN MP3 MODE
LCD	BLACK-AND-WHITE SCREEN	2.2 INCH COLOR SCREEN
MICROPHONE	BUILT IN STEREO/MONAUROAL	OPTIONAL STEREO MICROPHONE
VOICE ACTIVATION	YES	YES
BATTERY LIFE	2 AAA BATTERIES	LI-50B LITHIUM ION BATTERY
RECORDING FORMAT	MP3	MP3, WMA, WAV
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