

TOOLS of the TRADE



Windows 7 Smartphone

In mid-October, Microsoft had the official launch for its Windows 7 phone. Units will go on sale during this year's holiday season, and the supply will be ramped up going into 2011. The phones will be manufactured by others, and the mobile phone operating system will be based on the Windows CE 6 kernel. Current featured models are the HTC Surround, the LG Quantum, Samsung's Focus, and the Dell Venue Pro. The basic compatibilities will include Microsoft's Mobile Office products, Outlook, Windows Live and Bing, Zune, and Xbox LIVE. There will be a dedicated search button, Zune will let you play music by sync-

ing wirelessly from your PC, and you'll be able to stream and download from Windows Marketplace. Windows Live will help manage pictures, and Windows Live Calendar and Office OneNote Mobile round out the Windows portfolio of applications. The general hardware requirements for the different manufacturers include five hardware buttons, including start, back, search, camera button, and power. The large screens will be multitouch capacitive with a built-in accelerometer for shifting between portrait and landscape mode, and each will have Wi-Fi, assisted GPS navigation, an FM radio, and a high-resolution camera. Along with e-mail, calendar, SMS (text messaging) and MMS (multimedia messaging), Internet Explorer, and Bing Search and Maps, there are a number of "hubs" (centralized services) that include a people hub for a variety of communications, photos hub, games hub that integrates with Xbox LIVE, music and video hub that functions like a Zune HD, marketplace hub, and an Office hub. www.microsoft.com/windowsphone.

Pogoplug Biz

Pogoplug from Cloud Engines, Inc., functions like a mini server back home that delivers files to you through your browser connection on the Internet. The company calls its device your own personal cloud because it delivers services like those from sites like DropBox—with one major exception. When you've reached your limit of free storage space on DropBox, you start paying monthly storage rates. With Pogoplug, the space is at home on your own device, so there's no additional cost to build up space to terabyte levels. Here's how it works. You plug the Pogoplug into your home router and configure it in a minute or two so your system sees it and accepts its rules for access outside and inside your home. There are a number of USB ports on the device, and

you can plug in up to four storage devices (thumb drives, hard drives), and each will be visible from home and away via Safari, Firefox 3, IE 8, and Chrome browsers. There's also an iPhone app that offers access to the storage devices from your iPhone and iPad. There are three kinds of Pogoplugs—Pogoplug, Pogoplug Pro (includes Wi-Fi support), and Pogoplug Biz. The Biz version has usage statistics and auditing so you can see how many times a file or folder has been viewed, streamed, or downloaded. It also allows you to customize the look and feel of the Pogoplug interface, including the color, logo, domain name, and background image. It can be set to view-only sharing, and it lets you set aside space on the storage for coworkers and clients to store their information. www.pogoplug.com.



Casio CG10 PRIZM

Coming in January, Casio will release the PRIZM™ next-generation calculator with its unique Picture Plot function that allows users to graph over real-life images on a high-resolution color LCD. The Picture Plot func-

The Tablet at Work

By Michael Castelluccio, Editor

When it was first released back on April 3, not many guessed that Apple would sell three million copies of its new iPad tablet in 80 days. Since then, the experts have been upgrading their estimates to 3.3 million in the first three months and more than an additional five million in the following quarter. Bernstein Research guessed at “8.5 million units by year’s end,” declaring the iPad “a runaway success of unprecedented proportion.” Gartner upped the ante in a recent article in *eWeek* titled “Apple iPad Tablet Sales Will Hit 19.4 Million Units in 2010.”

Also changing over the months have been some of the criticisms squeaking at the edges of the roar created by the sales. Early on, a few skeptics characterized the tablet as a symbolic elite-geek purchase intended to impress, and others made lists of functions that were missing—no USB ports, no Flash support, no camera, approved software only. They were looking at the tablet from the perspective of where computers have gone so far.

But then the early adopters were joined by ordinary folks, and the number of outlets began to grow. Now customers could buy the iPad at the Apple Store or Best Buy, and then Target and Amazon were added. Most recently, Apple began shipping limited numbers to Walmart. Now, it’s not certain whether Marc Andreessen-types shop at the blue-light discount centers for their latest tech, but clearly the spectrum of availability was widening well beyond the horizons of the “tech elite.”

Easily the gadget of the century (so far, at least), the iPad was being unboxed by Apple freaks, the tech-obsessed, grandparents, and even IT managers.

MAGIC BOOK TO BUSINESS TOOL

At the Apple unveiling in April, Steve Jobs exclaimed, “We’re excited for customers to get their hands on this magical and revolutionary product.” He insisted that the

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tion lets you plot graphs over curves and other familiar shapes, such as parabolic architectural structures and natural phenomena. The color LCD has the highest resolution and widest color reproduction of any calculator, enabling equations and text to be as readable as they would be on paper. Low power consumption allows color display with an estimated 140 hours on a set of four AAA alkaline batteries. The calculator comes with 55 types of color pictures for creating graphs. Colors can be added to graphing objects such as lines, circles, and bars, as well as labels of coordinate axes, and the Color Link function links the colors used in graphs to the designated values in the spreadsheet screen. www.CasioEducation.com.

Skooba Checkthrough Laptop Bag

The Checkthrough® Executive Brief complies with TSA standards, so it can be sent through airport screening with the laptop left inside. The two sizes are

small, for typical 15-inch laptops or smaller, and large, for laptops up to 17 inches. The Executive Brief has about two dozen pockets and compartments, including a Doc Pocket™ ticket-passport organizer, divided file section, keyring, USB thumb-drive caddy, and more. The checkthrough function works with a hinge set that opens the case in the middle. On one side is the laptop, clearly visible through a transparent window. On the other side of the opened case are the other storage areas. Without removing the laptop, the screen has the same view of the computer as if it had been removed from the case and put in a bin. You can carry the bag with its contents intact and secure, unzipped and ready to open for inspection. Once through screening, you zip the bag closed and move on to your gate. www.skoobadesign.com.





device was something very different.

Walt Mossberg of *The Wall Street Journal* got one of the advanced copies, and his reaction created some notice. He wrote, “After spending hours and hours with it, I believe this beautiful new touch-screen device from Apple has the potential to change portable computing profoundly, and to challenge the primacy of the laptop. It could even help, eventually, to propel the finger-driven, multi-touch user interface ahead of the mouse-driven interface that has prevailed for decades.”

If you keep your iPad in a modest case like the black folder Apple sells, the computer does feel much more like a book than a computer. But it’s a book unlike any other—a heavy, single page of glass and metal that can focus the entire history of computing in one system.

In the beginning, many of the reviewers fixated on the iPad’s dexterity with almost any kind of input: e-mail, video, music, e-books, games, digital musical instruments, the common computer files (docs, PDFs, image files). It’s a magic book that will play almost anything.

And anyone who thinks the approved-only software plan is a problem has forgotten that the iPad runs on an iPhone operating system, which means you can jail-break the system to allow other software. But even for the less adventurous, do you think an average of 600-1,000 new applications added to the list at the Apps Store per day would be enough to keep you busy for a while? Average cost for these programs is about \$2.99, and many are free.

In the first month or two, as everyone was watching how Facebook, Twitter, and the blogs were handling the dueling access apps that were multiplying at the Apps Store, something else was going on far from the social networks. A bank and an international business software giant were planning their own rollouts.

The San Francisco-based Wells Fargo bank got its first shipment of 15 iPads in April, and one month after the debut it took them to an investor conference in May to demonstrate financial products and services. In the first week of September, a tweet sent out by SAP CIO Oliver Bussmann revealed the software giant had already rolled out 1,000 iPads to employees. These weren’t just to be used as replacements for laptops, handling e-mail and presentations. In March 2010, one month before the iPad debut, the company issued the following press release: “SAP AG and Sybase Inc. today announced two new solutions for mobile workers to carry out key business and customer relationship management (CRM) processes via iPhone and Windows Mobile. Built on the industry-leading Sybase Unwired Platform, the mobile solutions extend the capabilities of SAP Business Suite applications, including SAP Customer Relationship Management (SAP CRM), and also can be customized to tap into a variety of back-end data sources, including databases, Web services, files and any enterprise application that leverages service-oriented architecture (SOA).” The next SAP order for iPads mentioned in the press counted 17,000 units by next September. That would equip 35% of SAP’s global workforce, and, coincidentally, would match the number of BlackBerry devices currently deployed throughout the company.

Widespread use of the iPad tablets in business now has rendered the reporting as kind of pedestrian, but unusual deployments still capture readers’ attention. When a restaurant replaces its menus with iPads, the story will be picked up, and when the president of a company like SAP says he has replaced his laptop with an iPad when he’s on the road, that also will be reported.

In the first eight months of the iPad, there has been a lot of looking around by those waiting for the next shoe to drop. CNET asked its online readers to put their two cents in, and the readers provided the following list in order of the most likely to least likely next tablet: HTC (39%), other (20%), LG (19%), Motorola (16%), Nokia (4%), and Sanyo and Sharp (both at 1%).

Research in Motion (RIM) has already announced its tablet offering called the BlackBerry PlayBook (image above). The seven-inch-screen tablet has a dual core processor, is linked to your BlackBerry smartphone, and all over the marketing is an emphasis on “enterprise ready.”

The BlackBerry tablet was announced in the last week of September (2010), but it won’t be available until April (2011). That gives the iPad a full year’s head start. Is that too late, is the PlayBook too small, and will it be competing with iPad II? **SF**