

# TOOLS of the TRADE



On two consecutive days in October, Google and Apple had major launches of phones, tablets, computers, television players, and operating systems, all timed for holiday delivery.

## Google Releases

The **Nexus 9** is Google's latest Android tablet. Made by HTC, the 8.9" screen has the identical resolution of the new iPad Air 2 (2,048 × 1,536 pixels) with a

slightly higher pixel density at 281 pixels per inch. It contains the Tegra K1, a 2.3-GHz, quad-core processor running on the new Android 5.0 Lollipop operating system. The Nexus 9 has 2GB of RAM and is available with 16GB or 32GB of internal storage. The rear camera is eight megapixels, the same as the iPad Air 2, and the front-facing camera is 1.6 megapixels—just slightly more than the 1.2 of the Air.

Google's new **Nexus 6**, built by Motorola, is a larger phone with a 6" Quad HD multi-touch display with 1,440 × 2,560 pixels and dual front-facing stereo

speakers. The primary camera is 13 megapixels with autofocus, image stabilization, dual-LED (ring) flash, touch focus, face detection, panorama, and 2,160-megapixel video capabilities. The secondary camera is two megapixels. The Qualcomm Snapdragon 805 chip has a quad-core 2.7GHz processor. Battery life provides up to 330 hours of stand-by and up to 24 hours of talk time.

The **Nexus Player** is Google's first Android TV platform player. It streams movies, music, and videos. It features a voice-activated remote control. The media includes offerings from the Google Play catalog, Netflix, HuluPlus, and Google's movie and TV rental service. The CPU is a 1.8GHz quad-core Intel Atom processor, and the player runs on Wi-Fi (802.11ac 2 × 2 (MIMO), providing HDMI output.

For complete specs on the new Android 5.0 Lollipop operating system and all of Google's releases, visit [www.google.com/nexus](http://www.google.com/nexus).

## Apple Releases

The **iPad Air 2** is the thinnest (0.24") and the lightest (0.96 pound) of all the full-size tablets. Like its predecessor, it features desktop-class 64-bit architecture and a 9.7" Retina display. What's new with the Air 2? It includes fingerprint Touch ID technology, a new A8X chip, and two new cameras. The front-facing FaceTime HD camera provides 1.2-megapixel photos and 720-pixel video calling over Wi-Fi or cellular. The camera also has face detection and backside illumination. The eight-megapixel iSight camera has a five-element lens, hybrid IR filter, and an f/2.4 aperture. It also has panorama or burst modes, and the 1,080-pixel HD video recording function now has time-lapse and slow-motion features. The iPad Air 2 is available in 16GB, 64GB, and 128GB models.

What's new with the **iPad Mini 3**? It includes three features also new to the iPad Air 2: fingerprint Touch ID, the new iOS 8, and the choice of a gold metallic back. The 7.9" Retina multi-touch display still has a brilliant resolution of 2,048 × 1,536 pixels at 326 pixels per



# TECH FORUM

## The Daily Newspaper: From Cradle to Grave?

By Michael Castelluccio, Editor

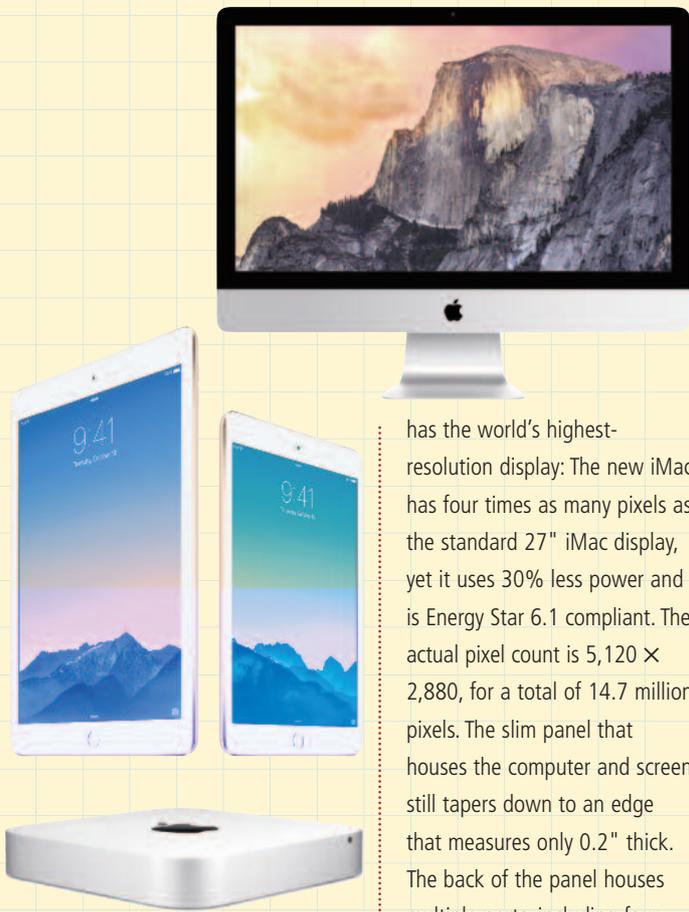
*The New York Times* entered the world of daily publications quietly as a penny broadsheet in New York City. The September 18, 1851, edition had this editorial note on the front page: “We publish today the first number of the *New York Daily Times*, and we intend to issue it every morning for an indefinite number of years to come.” That indefinite number reached 163 years this September for the “Gray Lady.”

In 1851, several economic realities were conceded by the publisher. “We understand perfectly that great capital, great industry, great patience are indispensable to its success, and that even with all these, failure is not impossible. But we know also that within the last five years the reading population of this city has nearly doubled, while the number of daily newspapers is no greater now than it was then...and [we recognize] that no newspaper, which was really fit to live, ever-yet expired for lack of readers.”

As strange as it is to consider literacy as a determining factor in the success of a newspaper, the second part of the comment is even more unusual. If a newspaper is “fit to live,” as you might assume with a publication like *The New York Times*, and it has potential literate customers numbering in the millions, why has there been such an upheaval caused by digital editions of those papers?

The business model for the *Daily Times* wasn't very different from the current one. The 19th Century publisher explained, “We have fixed the price of *The Times* at one cent each copy, or six and a quarter cents a week, delivered to subscribers. Carriers, of course, make their profit upon this; so that the amount which we receive barely covers the cost of the paper upon which it is printed, the deficiency being made up by advertisements.” And there's the problem in a nutshell, built right into the genetic makeup of that first issue. It isn't the number of those who can read or the quality of the news coverage that's important. What's ultimately crucial is the

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inch. Portability is enhanced with a 0.29" profile and a 0.73-pound pocket weight. The A7 processor provides 64-bit architecture. The FaceTime camera takes 1.2-megapixel photos and 720-pixel HD video, and the iSight camera takes five-megapixel photos and 1,080-pixel HD video. The cameras feature face detection and backside illumination, and the iSight also has panorama mode, video stabilization, time-lapse video, and a three-time zoom function. Both new iPad tablets will provide enough battery power for up to 10 hours of Web surfing on Wi-Fi or video streaming.

In just a few words, Apple explains why the new 27" **iMac 5K**

has the world's highest-resolution display: The new iMac has four times as many pixels as the standard 27" iMac display, yet it uses 30% less power and is Energy Star 6.1 compliant. The actual pixel count is 5,120 × 2,880, for a total of 14.7 million pixels. The slim panel that houses the computer and screen still tapers down to an edge that measures only 0.2" thick. The back of the panel houses multiple ports, including four USB 3.0, two Thunderbolt 2.0, a Gigabit Ethernet, headphones, and an SDXC card slot.

The **Mac mini** is a desktop computer that occupies little more than the footprint taken up by your coffee mug and its coaster—7.7" × 7.7" × 1.4". Yet it runs the latest OS X Yosemite operating system on its 1.4GHz dual-core Intel Core i5 processor. Also available are 2.66GHz, 2.8GHz, and 3.0GHz Intel processors. Ports include two Thunderbolt 2.0, four USB 3.0, SDXC card slot, Gigabit Ethernet, audio-in, headphones, and IR receiver.

For complete specs on the new OS X Yosemite operating system and all the Apple releases, visit [www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com).

economic engine for the medium: advertising.

### DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

In an article titled “Last Call: The end of the printed newspaper,” author Clay Shirky describes the current travails of his hometown newspaper, the *Roanoke Times*—a publication that has been published since the 1880s.

Shirky points to the drying revenue streams as newspapers shift to online digital editions. “Print ad revenues have fallen 65% in a decade,” he writes, “2013 saw the lowest ever recorded, and 2014 will be worse.” As he breaks down the categories of newspaper advertising, he holds out little hope for a future in print. “Classifieds have imploded, local display ads are down, and black newsroom humor long ago re-labeled the Obituary column ‘Subscriber Countdown.’”

In discussing the future of the profession of journalism, he warns, “Contrary to the contrived ignorance of media reporters, the future of the daily newspaper is one of the few certainties in the current landscape: Most of them are going away, in this decade.”

On the West Coast, a similar dismal prediction for print was issued the year before. In an article detailing a 2012 study, “Is America at a Digital Turning Point?” the director of the Center for the Digital Future at the USC Annenberg School, Jeffrey I. Cole, observed that after 10 years of studies it appears “the consequences of technology are more profound than ever.”

Cole said the circulation of print newspapers would continue to plummet, noting, “It’s likely that only four major daily newspapers with global reach will continue in print: *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. At the other extreme, local weekly newspapers may still survive, as well as the Sunday print editions of metropolitan newspapers that otherwise may exist only in online editions.”

### A PHOENIX RISING

There’s a way for those publications to struggle out of the quicksand, but it isn’t without its challenges. The Annenberg researchers wonder, “Will media organizations survive and thrive when they move exclusively to online availability? How will the changing delivery of content affect the quality and depth of journalism?”

A more recent Pew Research Journalism Project, “State of the News Media 2014,” offers some answers. Author Amy Mitchell writes, “The activities this year have created a new sense of optimism—or perhaps hope—for the future of

American journalism.”

There are three healthy signs in the report. Purely digital offshoots have become reliable news sources. BuzzFeed now has a news staff of 170; Mashable has 70 and has poached the former *New York Times* assistant managing editor Jim Roberts to become its chief content officer. High-profile journalist Ezra Klein left *The Washington Post* to become the editor-in-chief of Vox.com, and there are numerous other similar conversions. In its first-ever accounting, the Journalism Project “found roughly 5,000 full-time professional jobs at nearly 500 digital news outlets, most of which were created in the past half dozen years.”

The report also “brought more evidence than ever that news is a part of the explosion of social media and mobile devices, and in a way that could offer opportunity to reach more people with news than ever before.”

Another hopeful sign came when The New York Times Company reported its 2014 first-quarter results. “Total revenues increased 2.6% in the first quarter of 2014, with advertising revenues up 3.4% and circulation revenues up 2.1%.” This includes the number of paid digital-only subscribers, which had increased by 39,000 since the first quarter of 2013 for a total of 799,000. CEO Mark Thompson said, “For the first time in several years, we saw quarterly growth in both print and digital advertising revenues.” The painful transition might be finally seated on the tracks.

Nobel-Prize-winning poet Tomas Tranströmer described the newspaper as: “that big dirty butterfly.” The metaphor is apt. Think of how clumsy unfolding a broadsheet like *The New York Times* can be—so cumbersome that commuters everywhere resort to a kind of newsprint origami in order not to elbow their neighbors on the bus or train. Newspapers also provide a highly indexed reading experience that doesn’t neatly track from one page to the next—it jumps all over. The formatting freedom built into online pages can solve both of these problems within a much more manageable medium than paper broadsheets.

*The New York Times* has evolved to an intelligent simplicity online. The mobile version has only three tool icons at the top of the page, and the text and photos on the opening screen begin with the top stories of the day. Tap a headline, and you get the full text. You can scroll down from the top stories to view section after section, with the order of prominence decided by you. Compare this to the sea of print on the front page of the 1851 *Times*, and you’ll see why newspapers will likely survive the transition to digital. **SF**