



Hands on with iPad

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Apple's latest offering, the iPad has been long-awaited. Now that it is out in many parts of the world, it has been described by many as the link that was missing between the iPhone and the MacBook. In a nutshell, it is a device for reading eBooks, browsing the web, checking and replying to emails, showing off photos, watching videos and TV Shows, playing games and navigating. Unlike many older tablets, it uses fingertips for input instead of a stylus.

Apple had begun taking pre-orders for the iPad from U.S. customers since March 12, 2010. Reviews of the product, however, have been mixed. While some customers have criticized it, some have also predicted that the iPads will eventually take over and replace Laptops altogether. Having personally tested the product myself, I truly doubt it. As I see it, the iPad would have to go through a number of generations before it can do that. I have my reasons for having made such a statement.

The first look at its display screen is quite impressive. The sleek looking 7.8 x 5.8" flat screen touchpad is quite a good looker. The fact that you can use your own fingers to browse, instead of always having to carry a stylus around, is reassuring besides being a lot of fun. But do not forget to wash your hands every time you attempt to use it, lest you fill the whole screen with your beautiful fingerprints.

The interface is simple, with a very few items, limited functions and less clutter.

Once you start getting around to using it, you start identifying that you can watch videos, listen to music, read books, play games, browse the internet and navigate. But that's it. That's all it can do. No, you cannot play flash content, no you cannot multitask, oh and if you're thinking of using it for business purposes, forget the prospect of composing your mail with ease or word processing. Did I mention that the iPad doesn't come with a keyboard? The keyboard is a virtual one not hardware, but software. So you



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON
SPECIAL THANKS TO DR KHALEQUE FOR HIS CONTRIBUTION

We got our hands on an iPad recently and tried it out

have to touch the keys on your screen to type, and believe you me, it can be quite a bother. Besides the slower reaction to your typing speed and higher prospects of typing errors, you will realize that your skills in touch typing with both hands have now become obsolete.

Now that you have painstakingly composed your email, what if you want to keep a hard copy? Well, what do you know? No printer port or USB. Yes,

you can connect it via a separate wire to a USB port of a laptop, and then do whatever you need to do, but who needs all that hassle?

In fact hardware-wise, the capability of the iPad is quite limited. There is no CD drive, no phone ports, and virtually no way of being able to connect peripherals like scanners, cameras, etc. Want to take instant pictures and send it to a friend? Oops! No webcam. All data are stored in its internal

storage, with no options for expansion. Finally, come to think of it, if I needed a gadget that would only allow me to carry out these few functions, I would like to at least be able to carry it around in my pocket. Why would I want to carry around a 700g device, when I would also need to carry my laptop and iPhone along with it? Think about it.

To conclude, it is suggested that

instead of giving in to all the hype created by the media, readers use their own discretion to judge whether the iPad truly is worth their buy. In my opinion, it can be purchased to be used as a hobby by the tech-hungry, but if you are looking for long-term uses, you can wait around for the second generation. Otherwise, there are plenty other products in the market.

Microsoft updates Office, vies online with Google

REUTERS, New York

Microsoft Corp launches an updated version of its Office software on Wednesday, aiming to keep its grip on the hugely profitable business application market while countering the challenge of free online alternatives from Google Inc.

The world's largest software company is upgrading its popular Word, Excel, Outlook and PowerPoint applications, and rolling out its own online versions to keep up with the new class of mobile, web-connected users that have emerged since the last upgrade in 2006.

Most are expecting the Office franchise -- which Microsoft says has 500 million users -- to retain its dominance in the business world. But Office could be facing the beginning of an erosion of its "must-have" status.

"Every time Microsoft releases a new version of Office, they get a bump up in revenue," said Toan Tran, an analyst at Morningstar. "But how big of an upgrade is this? They might have a harder time getting people to update."

Microsoft is expected to trumpet a list of improvements on Wednesday, such as editing photos in Word, using video in PowerPoint, collaborating on documents and managing e-mail conversations in new ways.

But the most interesting facet is Microsoft's move into the "cloud" -- allowing users to manipulate documents stored on remote servers from anywhere -- where Google has been setting the pace.

"They're coming into our playing field," said Dave Girouard, the Google executive leading the company's charge into business applications. "They (Microsoft) have conceded that this is the future and now we think our products and services will get a lot more consideration."

Google Docs -- stripped down versions of Microsoft's core programs -- are available over the Internet with no need to download software. They are free for personal users and \$50-per-user per year for companies. Google says it has picked up 25 million users since launching almost four years ago.



Stephen Elop, President, Microsoft Business Division, launches Office 2010

Care for some light music? LEDs make it possible

AP, New York

Light-emitting diodes, or LEDs, are starting to become cost-effective alternatives to standard light bulbs and fluorescent tubes. That opens up some interesting possibilities, such as the combination LED light and speaker Osram Sylvania is announcing Wednesday.

The MusicLite, due out this fall, has a standard screw-in socket and fits in regular cans for so-called recessed lighting, common in offices and newer homes. The 10-watt cluster of LEDs puts out light equivalent to a 65-watt reflector bulb, and backs it up with a 25-watt speaker.

The characteristics of LEDs make the combo possible. Standard incandescent bulbs generate too much heat for a speaker in the same can, and compact fluorescent tubes take up too much space.

The MusicLites will be sold in pairs with a wireless audio transmitter that reaches about 90 feet. Osram hasn't announced a price. Osram is aiming it at homeowners who want an easily installed audio system and small businesses like restaurants.

Osram Sylvania is one of the world's largest makers of light bulbs and part of German industrial conglomerate Siemens AG.

Also this week, Lighting Science Group Corp. pushed LEDs another step toward the mainstream by starting to sell LED "bulbs" with standard screw sockets. The 9-watt bulbs are designed to replace 40-watt incandescent

bulbs, but they're light is more directional, so they may not be a good fit for all lamps. They're expected to last 50,000 hours, or about 22 years of average use.



Avatar's Cameron urges producers to embrace 3D TV



REUTERS, Seoul

Director James Cameron, whose blockbuster "Avatar" set off a 3D frenzy in the movie industry, on Thursday told television producers to

put aside their worries about higher filming costs and embrace the technology.

Manufacturers hope the technology will be as big a boost for the industry as the transition to color television from black and white, but growth is being restrained by high costs for content makers, leading to a dearth of programming.

Consumers who just paid major sums for new flat screen sets may not be ready for another major payment for 3D TVs when there is little to see in the format that requires special glasses for viewing, analysts said.

"(Big entertainment companies) can't be afraid to shoot in 3D because tens of thousands of people all over the world are shooting in 3D every day," Cameron said.

"We're going to have 3D TVs all around us ... and we're going to need thousands of hours of sports, comedy and music and all kinds of entertainment," he said at a technology forum in Seoul.

"Avatar", the highest-grossing film of all time, taking in more than \$2 billion, was also reportedly one of the most expensive movies to make with a budget of at least \$300 million due in part to its 3D filming.

Cameron said it would prove cost

effective over the long run for TV producers to learn how to shoot in 3D instead of trying to convert existing 2D content to the format.

"There's not going to be the time or the money to convert that. It's going to have to be shot live. We're going to learn how to do live shooting. The cost will come down on live 3D production," Cameron said.

South Korea's leading TV brands Samsung Electronics and LG Electronics released 3D televisions earlier this year and anticipate positive sales for 2010.

Japan's Sony Corp will enter the 3D battle this summer, increasing the need for content.

Global demand for 3D TVs will probably reach 15.6 million units in 2013 from an estimated 1.2 million this year, according to research firm DisplaySearch.

Numbers could hit 64 million in 2018, when the research firm expects total sales revenues to reach \$17 billion.

"You've got the channel, you've got the sets," Cameron said. "The missing piece is content. You've got to get the content."

Asus Designo MS Series monitors hit the market

IT TELECOM DESK

Asus, a leading computer hardware manufacturer has introduced Designo MS228H - its latest MS Series monitor - in the local market, says a press release.

With 16.5mm thin 21.5" LED and Ergo-Fit design, the monitor enables comfortable viewing with easy angle adjustments via a single finger push.

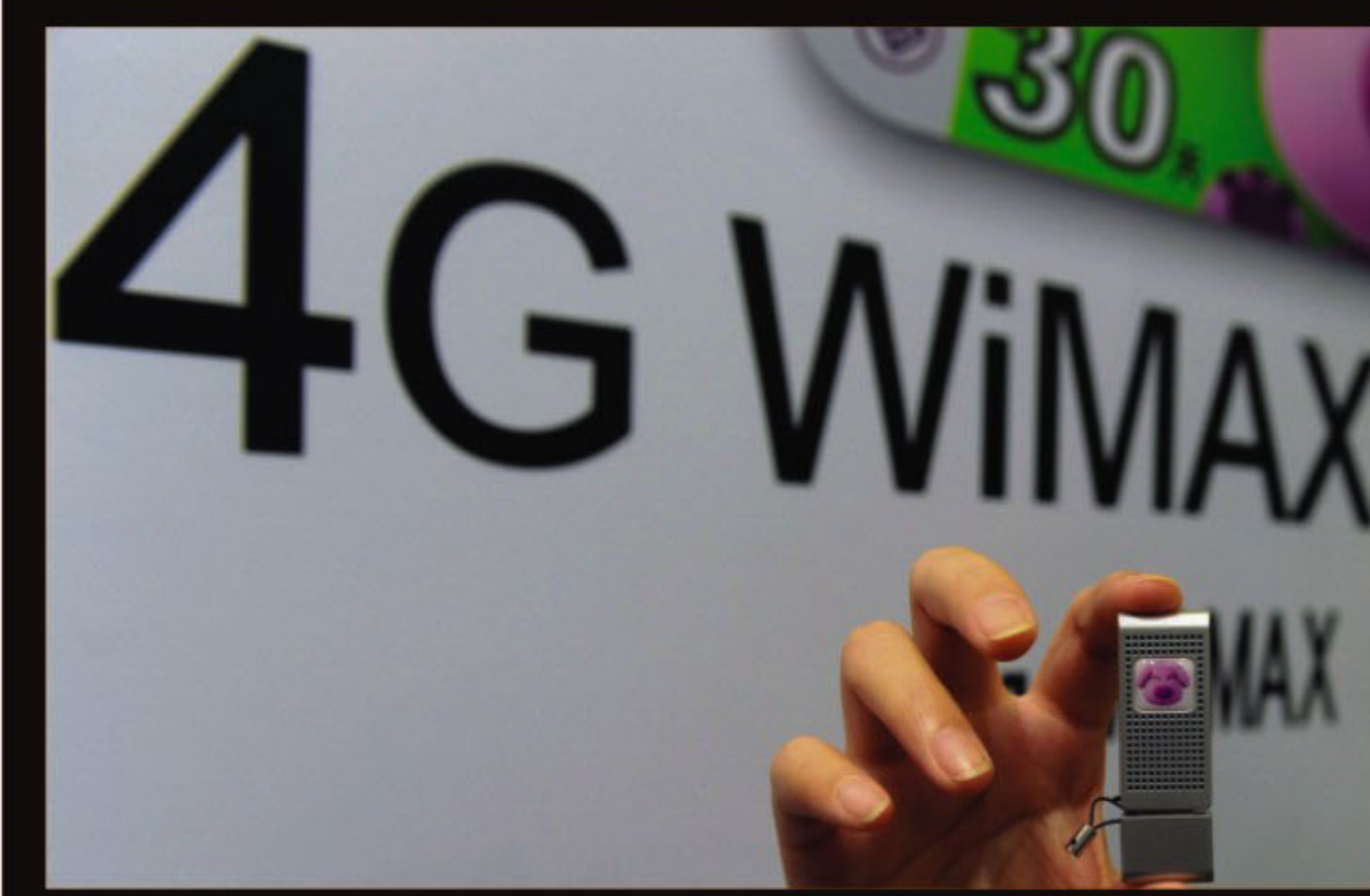
It also features Asus Smart Contrast Ratio (ASCR) Technology to deliver a contrast ratio of 10,000,000:1 for ultra-sharp and vivid visual presentations.



It supports full 1080 HD image resolution, 2ms (Gray-to-Gray) quick response time and color optimisation by Asus Splendid Video Intelligence Technology. And for green computing it has been designed to achieve 45% higher power savings and 30% lower CO2 emissions.

The Designo MS Series is available with a high gloss piano-black front fascia and a striking rear bezel in Sapphire Blue, Golden Brown or Apple Green.

The product has a price tag of Tk 15,500.



TECH:PHOTO

WiMAX 4G

A woman displays a fourth-generation WiMAX device during an exhibition at a convention centre in Taipei on May 7. WiMAX 4G technology is designed to provide high-speed broadband wireless services, sharply improving high-quality image and data services, and potentially allowing for such features as multi-channel high-definition TV broadcasting.

PHOTO: AFP

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