



The 3 biggest tech blunders destined to happen in 2012

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We're going to see a lot more cool stuff in the tech world in 2012, from quad-core phones to tablets that can talk to slick cloud apps built on HTML5. Startups will show us things we never knew we needed and tech giants will seize opportunities to give us the tools we're begging for. No matter what size they are, the smart companies will take risks, be bold, and buck conventional wisdom.

The flip side of that is the inertia and inaction that happens at big tech companies because they're afraid of messing up a good thing. This leads to a lot of mistakes, including some that end up dooming the company. Just ask RIM and take a look at what's happening to BlackBerry. Look out, because we're about to see some important blunders in 2012. Here are the three biggest.

Google will fail to standardise Android

Android is a runaway hit. At the end of 2011, phones running Android crossed over 50% of all new smartphone sales. A big reason for Android's success is that hardware makers and cellular carriers can do whatever they want with it and they have. That includes loading Android phones with uninstalleable apps that drain

CPU and battery life, layering the Android interface with useless software customizations, and changing the look and placement of Android's primary function keys. But, the biggest problem is that all of these customizations have made it impossible for



Google to roll out timely updates to Android, because every update now has to be vetted and tested with all of the hardware makers and cell carriers to make sure they don't break or conflict with their customizations. The situation is a mess. It's going to be very difficult for Google to reel its partners back in, and although Google has made some half-hearted attempts at standardization, it's clear that Google is much more

interested in getting Android devices in the hands of as many people as possible as quickly as possible. The experience of the user once they've already bought the device is a secondary concern.



Microsoft will miss PC-mobile convergence

After being early to the game in smartphones and tablets with Windows Mobile and Tablet PC, Microsoft took its eye off the ball and is scrambling to find its place in a market now dominated by

Apple and Android. Microsoft's biggest opportunity in mobile was PC-mobile convergence where smartphones will eventually be able to replace a desktop computer by wirelessly docking into a keyboard, mouse, and monitor. Bill Gates envisioned this over a decade ago, but Microsoft is unlikely to seize this opportunity out of fear that it would cannibalize sales of Windows and the company wouldn't make as big of a profit on each sale. Also, don't confuse this concept with Microsoft trying to shove Windows 8 on to tablet computers. That's a losing proposition. Microsoft would be better off renaming Windows Phone 7 to Xphone, scaling it up and launching an Xtablet, and making them both capable of wirelessly docking with desktop hardware to replace a PC for light computing (which is adequate for vast majority of users).

Apple won't extend Siri across its product line

When I was visiting with family and friends over the holidays, the biggest tech buzz came when I demonstrated Siri, Apple's voice control software on the iPhone 4S. We texted people. We looked up the stock price of companies. We checked how many calories there are in a kiwi and a slice of

pecan pie. And it was all done with a few quick voice commands. Everyone was wowed by it and excited about the future possibilities. It reminded me of the reaction when I showed the internet for the first time or first demonstrated how you could read and send emails from a smartphone. With Siri, Apple clearly has the makings of something big. It could take this experiment to the next level tomorrow by rolling out Siri to the iPhone 4, the iPad 2, and all Macs running OS X 10.7 Lion. Those systems have the capability to run Siri and adding them to the mix would help Apple refine and develop Siri. But, instead of getting Siri in the hands of more users, Apple will most likely keep Siri limited to the iPhone 4S, the forthcoming iPad 3, and then the eventual iPhone 5. Instead of using this tool to push the technology world forward, Apple will treat it like a cheap gimmick for selling more phones and tablets.

All of these blunders look like a done deal to me. But, the best case scenario here is that the companies read this and prove me wrong. I doubt it will happen, but if it did it would be a good thing for technology users in all three scenarios.

SOURCE: TECH REPUBLIC

Chinese maker defends Steve Jobs action doll

AFP, Shanghai

The company behind a made-in-China Steve Jobs action figure insisted Wednesday it was not a toy, but a realistic depiction of the Apple founder designed for fans of his iconic products.

The 30.4-centimetre (one foot) tall dolls, which will go on sale next month with a price tag of \$99, are being manufactured for Hong Kong-based DiD Corp.

"We are making the figures for Apple fans who really admire Steve Jobs and feel pity over his death," a company official, who declined to be named, told AFP by telephone.

"That's our aim, to make it a real collectible -- not a toy -- so we put much care into every single detail in design and manufacturing."

DiD Corp is producing and distributing the figures while another company, In Icons, helped design them and will sell the product worldwide.

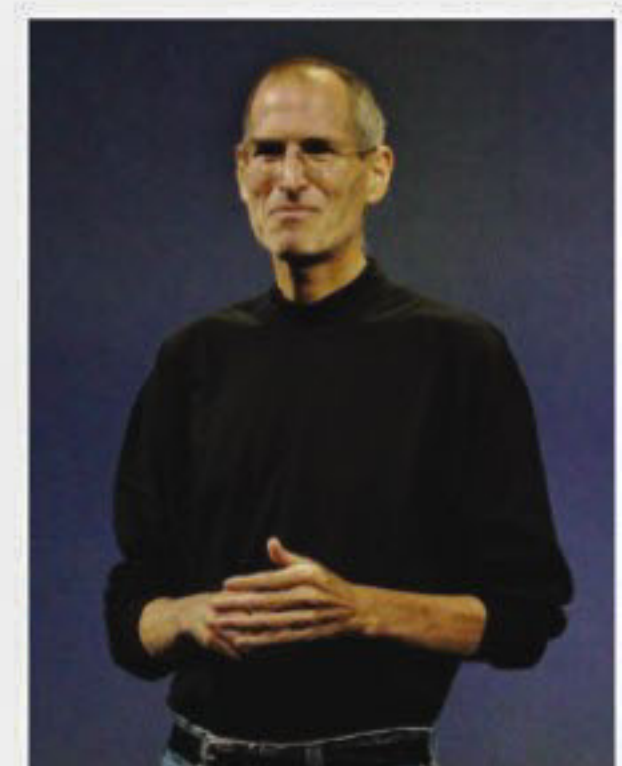
The In Icons website features images of the jointed figure accompanied by quotes including "The ones who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do."

Jobs died on October at the age of 56 after a years-

long battle with cancer.

Apple -- maker of iPhones, iPads, iPods and Macintosh computers -- has previously blocked the sale of unauthorised Steve Jobs dolls, and the official said legal advice was sought before going ahead with the project.

"We didn't put anything related to the Apple brand or Apple products, nor did



we smear the image of Jobs," the DiD Corp official said. "We are making this for Apple fans."

The figures will be produced at factories in China's southern province of Guangdong, a major manufacturing centre.

DiD Corp also offers military action figures and one of US President Barack Obama, according to its website.

Kindle sales on fire: Amazon

AFP, New York

Amazon said that it sold more than one million Kindles a week in December with the new Kindle Fire tablet computer its top-selling item.

This year saw "the best holiday ever for the Kindle family as customers purchased millions of Kindle Fires and millions of Kindle e-readers," the Seattle-based online retail giant said in a statement.

Amazon said the Kindle Fire has been the "number one best-selling, most gifted and most wished for product" on Amazon.com since it went on sale 13 weeks ago.

Besides the Kindle Fire, Amazon offers a range of Kindle electronic book readers.

Amazon said it sold "well over" one million Kindle devices per week in December with the Kindle Touch and basic Kindle taking the top two spots after the Fire.

Amazon said the Kindle is its best-selling item in Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Spain in addition to the United States.

The company said "gifting" of Kindle books between November 25 and Christmas Day rose 175 percent compared to the holiday period last

year with Christmas Day the biggest day ever for Kindle book downloads.

Despite the rosy sales numbers for the gadgets, Goldman Sachs said in a research note that the online titan may fall short of fourth-quarter earnings expectations.

Industry tracker comScore found that US online spending for the first 56 days of the November-December holiday season rose 15 percent over the same period last year to \$35.3 billion.

"On average, Amazon's year-over-year sales growth in the fourth quarter has outpaced holiday season eCommerce by 23 points," Goldman Sachs said.

"As such, the comScore data released today would imply top line growth of 38 percent year-over-year to \$17.87 billion, slightly below current consensus of \$18.19 billion, up 40 percent year-over-year."

Amazon shares meanwhile lost 0.02 percent on Wall Street to close at \$173.86.

The Kindle Fire costs \$199, less than half the price of the cheapest iPad from tablet market leader Apple.



It has a seven-inch (17.78-centimeter) screen, smaller than the iPad's 9.7 inches (24.6 centimeters), connects to the Web using Wi-Fi and is powered by Google's Android software.

It does not have a camera or the 3G connectivity featured on other tablets but gives buyers easy access to Amazon's online store, which sells books, music, movies, television shows, games and other content.

Microsoft Imagine Cup begins

IT & TELECOM DESK

Like every year, Microsoft Imagine is going to take place this year too. In 2003, software giant Microsoft started a software innovation competition called Microsoft Imagine Cup, aimed at inspiring some of the most intelligent students around the world to solve world's toughest problems, says a press release.

For the tenth times Microsoft Imagine Cup World Wide Final will take place in July this year in Sydney, Australia.

As a part of the world wide campaign, Microsoft Bangladesh for the second time is organising a software competition. Only students above 16 years of age and living in Bangladesh can participate in the contest with a team of one to four.

The winning team will take part in the international grand finale in Sydney. Microsoft Bangladesh will bear all the expenses of the participating team there. And the winning team of the finale will be awarded with US \$25000.

To learn more about the contest you can visit imaginecup.com.bd.

Last year, Rapture, a 3-member team from Bangladesh's American International University of Bangladesh, won the Microsoft Imagine Cup People's Choice Award in New York on July 13.

Nokia launches two new phones

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Nokia has rolled out Nokia C2-05 and Nokia X2-05, the latest entry-level sets from the mobile phone giant, in the local market, says a press release.

Nokia C2-05 is available in a range of vibrant colours. It offers quick access to Facebook, Twitter and the web to make it easy to stay in touch with friends and families. Thousands of apps, tunes or games are also instantly available to be downloaded through the Nokia Store.

The phone also features the Nokia Browser for fast access to favorite content and websites. It can also be personalised to individual's style and taste.

The phone comes with a VGA camera with a digital zoom and full screen viewfinder, and a media player for MP3 and MP4 playback as well as an FM radio that allows recording songs from the radio. The Nokia C2-05 supports up to 32GB of external memory. The phone has a price tag of Tk 5,500.

The Nokia X2-05 is phone that offers a great value and reliable mobile phone experience, along with one-click access to the Nokia Store for a wide range of content and applications.

With a loaded media player allowing MP3 and MP4 playback, FM tuning with radio recording, and a 106 phone speaker, the Nokia X2-05 makes it easy to enjoy favourite tunes with family and friends, with a good audio quality for any music taste. It supports up to 32GB micro SD mobile memory.

The Nokia X2-05 brings a complete range of entertainment with music, social networking, gaming or just browsing the web in a large screen. The device has a price tag of Tk 5700.



TECHPHOTO

Online Braille library

A visually challenged student uses an image magnifier at an exhibition on the sidelines of a function to launch India's first online Braille library on the occasion of World Braille Day to commemorate the 203rd birth anniversary of Braille system inventor Frenchman Louis Braille, in Mumbai. The online Braille library provides access to 12,000 books in 10 different languages, covering subjects ranging from Information Technology to Literature.

PHOTO: AFP

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