

The iPad Versus Lovers of Traditional Print

Gary Schnitz

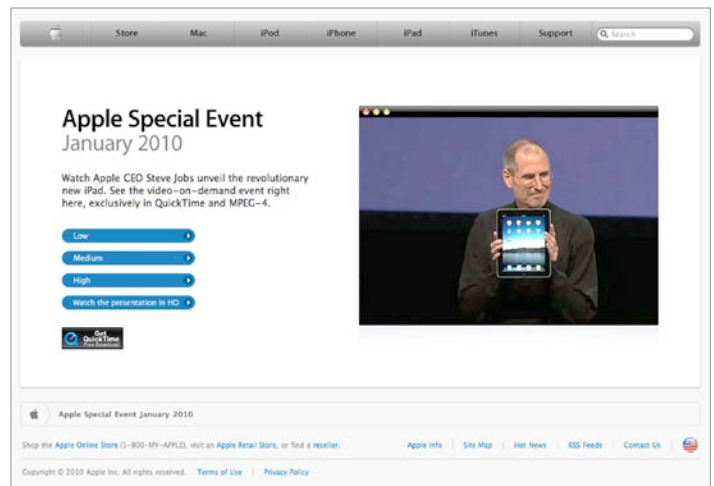
iPad Introduced

Recently, I spent some time on Apple, Inc.'s website watching a QuickTime video of Steve Jobs as he introduced Apple's iPad to the world (Figure 1). This keynote presentation had been recorded from the iPad unveiling event on January 27, 2010, which was held at the Moscone Center in San Francisco. The streaming video of the address is 1 hour and 32 minutes in length, and is still featured on Apple's website.¹ An edited version of the Keynote Address is also available in two parts on YouTube.² I had similarly watched Mr. Jobs in 2007, when he introduced the now ubiquitous iPhone.

The iPad, no doubt, will build on the successes and favorable experiences that users have had with the iPhone and iPod Touch. Both of these innovative Apple products are pretty amazing pieces of hardware, and they already have begun to revolutionize the way we read or view content (or at least they will do so soon). Apple has a way of developing and marketing its cool, niche products to the consumer, often before the consumer even knows about the niche (OK, mea culpa). Apple also has developed a remarkable content ecosystem that supports what users want most: downloadable applications, music, books, newspapers, videos, maps, games, GPS, etc. As third-party developers dream up even more refined applications, the appreciation for the iPad will only grow.

Apple's Tablet Rivals

I have been very impressed with the iPad with its color touch-screen interface, its interactivity, and its WiFi and 3G capabilities (Figure 2). To a much lesser extent I have also been impressed with a few other iPad competitors, including Amazon's not-so-full-featured Kindle (and the newer, but expensive Kindle DX), the Dell Streak, Sony's eBook Reader, the yet-to-launch Microsoft Courier, the Linux-based JooJoo, Barnes & Noble's Nook, the Windows 7-based HP Slate, the Android-based ICD Vega, and lastly the Kindle-looking I-River Story with its small QWERTY keyboard. In my opinion, these are all fair-to-good products. However, I think that the iPad will eventually become the clear leader in this tablet PC market as schools, universities,



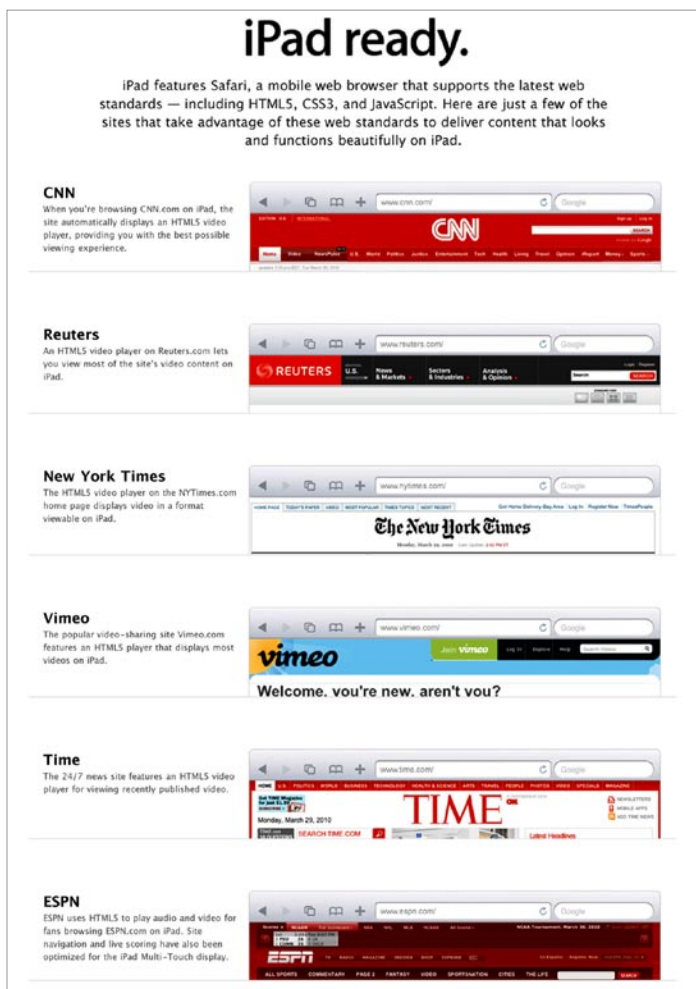
1. Apple's corporate web page featuring Steve Jobs at the iPad unveiling event. (Used with the kind permission of Apple, Inc.)



2. iPad featuring a recent web page from AMI's Online Member Community.

1. <http://www.apple.com/quicktime/qtv/specialevent0110/>

2. http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=steve+jobs+ipad&aq=f



3. Many online news organizations now support non-Flash® video encoding for viewing motion media on the iPad. (Used with the kind permission of Apple, Inc.)

warehouses, restaurants, hospitals, physicians, and even us biocommunicators begin to embrace the iPad as the content delivery and retrieval device of choice. The iPad's business model is also impressive, as major newspaper and book publishers have now signed-on to offer their media electronically. I think the iPad will soon become the gold standard by which other e-readers or tablets are measured.

Apple Omits a Camera, Keyboard, and Flash® Functionality

Now for what the iPad doesn't do. The iPad tablet doesn't include a web cam. Perhaps the engineers felt that a constantly moving, rotating tablet would not be a very good fit for a camera. Stay tuned for iPad version two, perhaps with an HD web cam and some image stabilization functionality to go with it.

3. <http://www.apple.com/ipad/ready-for-ipad/>

Secondly, there is no physical keyboard built into the iPad, only a virtual one. However, in the horizontal format the virtual keyboard is large and the keys are well positioned. This virtual keyboard simply pops up when needed in the email “Reply” mode, and it works flawlessly.

Thirdly, the iPad lacks the ability to watch Adobe Flash® video despite Flash's wide popularity. Apple and Adobe are at an impasse about the inclusion of Flash® Player technology on the iPad. You also might recall that Flash® is similarly not available on the iPad's little cousins, the iPhone and iPod. However, remembering how Apple's deliberate omissions later become the accepted norm (think floppy disk drives), I doubt very much that Apple will “give in” and include Flash® support. As an indicator of the early success of the iPad, major newspapers, magazines, video, and sports websites have agreed to create alternate, non-Flash® websites using more universal video encoding to support their own full motion media (Figure 3). Reuters, CNN, NPR, *Time*, *The New York Times*, and many other news organizations are doing just that, and have recently prepared alternate sites specifically for the iPad using HTML5 encoding instead of Flash®.³

Now We Have Options

Illustrators, photographers, videographers, and writers all create media to communicate ideas, thoughts, or feelings, and we all use a variety of methods in which to accomplish this. So, by having more electronic media options for showcasing our content, our animations, our medical and biological images, illustrations, and even patient information, our clients and institutions will now have just that... more options. Just imagine electronic medical journals scrambling to include short medical animations on their e-journal covers and using motion media to introduce individual articles.

The Struggle Between Electronic and Traditional Formats

So what's up with the JBC Viewpoint title, and where's the actual conflict here? As a true lover of both electronic media and traditional print (especially early morning newspapers), I am still torn between these two content format options – traditional print and electronic. It's a dilemma that will be around for another few years I think, but perhaps not much longer than that.

JBC's Segue From Traditional Print to Digital

As far as the JBC is concerned, we really had no choice 19 electronic issues ago. Going electronic-only was not just about reducing our carbon footprint. We desperately needed to streamline development, we had to reduce JBC production times,

and we needed to lower *Journal* distribution costs to get our peer-reviewed product to our readers. So this was a “no brainer” to transition to electronic only; we can now use as much color as we want, and we gained the capability to include motion media at the same time. So far, so good!

But, did the *JBC* lose anything in the process? While some readers will still lament not having a *JBC* physically delivered to them in an envelope, the majority of them have embraced the electronic version of the *JBC*. No more postage, no more damaged or missing issues, no excessive delays, or high printing costs to worry about. While the *JBC* Editors and staff strive to make each newly launched issue error free, electronic publishing provides us the luxury to make corrections after the fact. Now we have color PDFs that are emailable and printable. All association members are able to read any past electronic *Journal* articles or even look at the past winners from a BCA BioImages Exhibition or an AMI Salon from five years ago. So, if we did lose something transitioning to the electronic format, I think it was a very minor something. We have gained so much more in the process. We’ve come of age. However gradually it may occur, electronic media is changing... well at least affecting us all. Not only is the *JBC* on board with these changes, but our *JBC* member associations are on board as well. I applaud the overall acceptance of the *JBC* as the professional *Journal* of our respective associations.

Rupert Murdoch Envisions the Future

As a final note, I have read with great interest a marvelous speech that Mr. Rupert Murdoch presented in London in 2006 about the future of the newspaper industry. Mr. Murdoch is the well-known, senior newspaper-publishing tycoon and Chairman of the News Corporation, the world’s second largest media conglomerate. His media holdings include film, television, cable, magazines, newspapers, numerous magazine titles, and book publishing companies. His 2006 speech forecasted the many changes in store for the entire publishing industry. The following are excerpts from Murdoch’s 2006 address:⁴

“As that great American scientist, Freeman Dyson, has said, the technological revolution is like an explosion, which is tearing apart the static world of our ancestors and replacing it with a new world that spins 1000 times faster.”

“Societies or companies that expect a glorious past to shield them from the forces of change driven by advancing technology will fail and fall.”

“This new media audience - and we are talking here of tens of millions of young people around the world - is ALREADY using technology, especially the web, to inform, entertain and above all to educate themselves.”

“This knowledge revolution empowers the reader, the student, the cancer patient, the victim of injustice, or anyone with a vital need for the right information. It is part of wider changes that reach far beyond the media industry.”

“From the wheel to the web, from the printing press to fiber optic cable, it has always been technology that has driven history. Those in the driving seat have always been those who fully understood and used that technology.”

“The challenge for us in the traditional media is how to engage with this new audience. There is only one way. That is by using our skills to create and distribute dynamic, exciting content. King Content, the “Economist” called it recently. But - and this is a very big BUT - newspapers will have to adapt as their readers demand news and sport on a variety of platforms: websites, iPods, mobile phones or laptops.”

“Great content always has been, and I think always will be, king of the media castle.”

Rupert Murdoch was 75 years old at the time he made this address, and still was (is) able to see the future pretty clearly. Even with his extensive, old school background in traditional print media, he completely understood. It was simple for him. He envisioned the future. He knew what was coming, and he embraced it.

Publishing, without question, is going to see vast changes under the new electronic paradigm. Let’s create some great and innovative content for the new publishing landscape, and when you do, be sure to copyright it.

Author

Gary Schnitz is a Board Certified Medical Illustrator, and currently is the Director of Medical Illustration at the Indiana Hand to Shoulder Center in Indianapolis, Indiana. He also serves as Chair of Journal Management Board for the *Journal of Biocommunication (JBC)*. He is a Past President of the Association of Medical Illustrators (AMI), Past President of the Vesalius Trust, Past Chair of the Board of Governors for the AMI, and is a Founding Member of the Illustrators’ Partnership of America. Mr. Schnitz is a Fellow of the AMI, and was the first non-physician member of the American Society for Reconstructive Microsurgery.
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4. http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/industry_sectors/media/article740587.ece
(Mr. Murdoch’s quotations are used with the kind permission of News Corporation, New York.)