

Apple iPad Pros and Cons: *Is It Fit for Business Owners?*

The Apple iPad has hit the market. Apple describes the iPad as “The best way to experience the web, email, photos, and video. Hands down.” The reviews on the iPad are numerous, and the real question becomes, What can this device do for me, and do I need one? More than 300,000 people thought they needed one on the first day of availability. Here is a summary of our review.

Best suited for:

If you want a really cool, sleek and powerful consumer device, this is for you. It is fun and easy to use, which creates a playful experience. The display is bright and sharp. The core applications, such as photos, web browsing, movies and mail, are designed specifically for the iPad.

Coolest feature:

The iBooks application is definitely cool. It’s like the real thing; you can actually turn the page with your finger and watch it curl and flip to the next page. It would have been even cooler if Apple had used these same gestures in the contacts and calendar applications, which follow the same book-style interface.

Best business application:

We see this first-generation iPad as a consumer device. It’s an enjoyable experience, but we struggle to see a compelling business application at this point. Mark Henman, principal consultant at TDK Technologies, says: “If you already have a laptop and a smart phone, you probably don’t need an iPad to lug around too. If you only have a desktop computer, the iPad would be a great extension to it.” Sales representatives, real estate companies, architecture firms and design companies may find the device useful for presenting documents, pictures, drawings and proofs to customers in a unique and fun way.

Shortcomings:

Like any new product, the iPad has shortcomings. There are also things we would like that were never the intent of the product. As business users, we kept finding ourselves wanting to use this device in the same way we use our laptops. But the iPad is not a laptop.

However, we must admit that the inability to switch between

documents and applications is a big shortcoming. The iPad is a single-tasking device, which means only one application can be open at any time. Apple has announced that OS 4.0 will support multitasking for the iPad in the fall.

We also found shortcomings with the Wi-Fi connection being unstable at times. Videos can be choppy if they were not converted to the iPad by iTunes. Images that have been downloaded to the iPad through iTunes look great, but the resolution degrades significantly during zooming.

Cost:

The price starts at \$499 for the Wi-Fi-only model with 16 gigabytes of memory – the model we reviewed. The prices go up with additional memory and the models with 3G capability. The 3G models allow you to purchase monthly data plans through AT&T without a contract, a nice feature if you are outside a Wi-Fi hot spot.

Summary:

If you want a cool, fun consumer device to easily browse the web, email, photos, books and videos, then go for it. If you want compelling business applicability, we would wait and let the applications and iPad evolve. ■

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