

iPad – Should I or Shouldn't I?

By Brian Zarzycki, MP Integrated Solutions

The latest Apple consumer and potential business product line has released. The question everyone has – is this just another cool toy from Apple or can a corporate user be able to start carrying less and less for their meetings?

These next statements concluded through the assumption that you are using either Wifi or AT&T 3G. What can the iPad do for me:

1. Access all my different email accounts (which are the same accounts that you can access on your iPhone).
2. It can browse the Internet and does a very good job through Safari. Or if you browse the Internet without the free download of Opera mini. Both run as if you were actually on a Mac or a PC.
3. Organizes your contacts and daily appointments flawlessly.
4. It runs your favorite free social media apps – Facebook, My Space, Twitter, etc.
5. Need access back to your data in the office and have a Citrix server (there's a free app for that). Don't have Citrix – maybe Logmein or VNC will do the trick.
6. Need to create a new document or spreadsheet – purchase Pages and Numbers or for the Microsoft in you purchase Documents to Go.
7. The iPad has over 200,000 apps to choose from.

But you ask what are the flaws. Well here are my top concerns:

1. Using the built-in keyboard of the iPad – I realize the importance of spending an extra \$69 for the keyboard dock or \$29 for iPad dock and connect the iPad to a bluetooth keyboard (typically another \$69). The main problem comes from trying to use the spacebar. Words end being run together and a lot of misspelling. Using the keyboard dock or wireless device is just like working on any other MAC.
2. The keyboard dock or connecting a bluetooth keyboard to your iPad in the iPad dock gives you the inability to turn the iPad to landscape view.
3. Inability to run or switch to different applications (which is suppose to be fixed with the iPad OS 4 release come this fall).
4. Inability to print. Now remember you could purchase a third party application that runs on your Mac or PC by sharing the installed printers, but you cannot print directly to a printer typically without the software running.
5. If you thought that having the AT&T 3G iPad would allow you to stream Netflix movies or watch your favorite ABC show, think again – AT&T has banned these apps from running unless you are connected to a Wifi location. Their network cannot handle the performance requirements needed for streaming the movies. In addition, even YouTube videos have a decreased video quality.

All in all – if you used your iPhone for just about everything, like I do – Word, Excel editing, Internet browsing, Evernote, music and the vast amount of other applications – you will greatly love the iPad.

Is it worth the cost the Apple is selling the different models at? I am not 100% convinced that they are worth that much. I have been able to narrow my baggage down from a 20lb laptop bag to just an ipad carrying case. With the purchase of some excellent software, I am able to run 80% of what i normally did on a Mac and PC.

In closing, remember this is version 1 of the iPad, its little brother the iPhone is now in its third version of hardware (with a potential 4th release this summer) in conjunction with the fourth version of the OS. Imagine what the iPad will be on its fourth version.