

**ENC 4260, Advanced Technical Writing / Instructor Note:** Read and analyze this article in terms of qualities that are especially important in technical communications aimed at readers with varying levels of interest, education, and experience. Does the author cover a controversial topic with respect for technical accuracy and neutrality? (In answering that question, you must exercise care in maintaining your own neutrality.) Analyze also the language found in the comments at the end of the article -- can you spot signs of strength or weakness in their writing quality?

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## APPLE CALLS ANDROID TABLETS 'VAPOR' - AND IT ISN'T JUST HOT AIR

By: Tim Gideon, 01.20.2011 55 Comments

<http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2376002,00.asp>

Even as a journalist, it's hard to ignore the palpable excitement in the air at an Apple launch event. Steve Jobs is a showman, true, but I think the real electricity comes from the fact that Apple announces products people buy by the millions—and when the show is over, the press actually gets to look at, play with, film and photograph actual working devices that were, just an hour earlier, not yet officially announced. It's a nice trick—and one Google and Android manufacturing partners are having trouble mimicking.

Regardless of your opinion of the Android platform for mobile devices, there's no arguing the point Tim Cook, acting CEO of Apple, made during [the company's earning's call](#) earlier this week: "The next generation of Android tablets, which is what you discussed primarily at CES—there's nothing shipping yet...Generally they lack performance specs, they lack prices, they lack timing, and so today they're vapor."

Yes, we saw an endless supply of Android tablets from manufacturers at CES, but only one of them was running Honeycomb, Google's tablet-focused, latest update to Android. I use the word "running" liberally when I shouldn't: the [Motorola Xoom](#) merely played a video demo. The interface and touch screen weren't ready. Every other tablet, save for the RIM BlackBerry [PlayBook](#) (which actually was completely functional, running the BlackBerry Tablet OS, during hands-ons with the press), was running either Android 2.1 or 2.2, neither of which is designed to work on tablet screens.

It may sound like I am being impatient. Has Apple spoiled us with product launches that include actual, functional products to show off? Call me crazy, but that's what I *expect*: an actual product.

Let's look at the case of the Samsung Galaxy S phones. They were introduced as Android phones that would run 2.2—this was in March 2010. As we approach February 2011, there are no FroYo updates for Galaxy S owners in the U.S., although most other countries' Galaxy S models have been updated. Samsung's response to the rumor that the company would charge carriers for issuing a 2.2 update on their phones came earlier this week, when a Samsung rep wrote Phone Scoop to assure it that the rumor was false, and that they "hope to have more detail on status shortly."

In other words, this is what the evolution of a high-profile Android product might often look like: an announcement one year, and lack of delivery on a promise nearly a year later...and words like "hope." When my landlord "hopes" that he can fix problem with my apartment "shortly," I know it's time to head to the hardware store and fix it myself or accept that "shortly" means either "never" or "someday."

The Motorola Xoom, I have no doubt, will not be vaporous forever—but why do we know about it before it's ready? Why have I held it? An announcement of a product without the actual functioning, ready-to-use product seems premature; a long delay on a promised-and-hyped operating system update seems fishy.

I have been to enough CES press conferences to know not to hold my breath for a product's arrival—many appear only in press releases. But I hold Google (and manufacturers like Motorola and Samsung that get first cracks—with Google's assistance—at making new Android devices) to a higher set of expectations than a start-up. So why are billion-dollar operations fumbling product launches like rookies? The Xoom is not ready. Honeycomb appears not to be ready yet. Motorola's tablet may not be ready before the iPad 2—or whatever Apple chooses to name it.

I review tablets for PCMag, and it's my job to be impartial. I am excited to play with a Honeycomb tablet because the demo looked like a fantastic experience. But the increasing delays for Android devices—be it no 2.2 update for the Galaxy S phones or a non-functional demo unit being displayed at the world's biggest electronics show—is starting to give me pause.

As a Redskins fan living in New York, I have little to fire back with when a Giants or Jets fan mocks my team—after all, those teams are winning, and mine rarely does these days. When Tim Cook fires a "vapor" zinger at the various Android tablets currently—or not yet—out there, Google, Samsung, and Motorola must feel the same way: they have no response that changes the fact that Android tablets have been rolled out in a slow, confusing manner thus far. With February approaching and no working Xoom to show off yet, I can't be the only one who sees potential trouble on the horizon.

Bottom line: if Google wants the Android platform to compete with the iPad and other iOS devices, Google and its manufacturing partners are going to have to start delivering products on time and with the same air of excitement that Apple manages to build consistently at least three times a year. Here's hoping they succeed.

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## Comments

Showing 10 of 56 comments

**jabberwolf** 2 hours ago

Funny that's what people think of Apple... they have a good start.. then wind up being the lesser of products in the end. Thus usually apple is vaporware. [Flag](#) moew and 3 more liked this Like Reply

**vaporland** 1 hour ago in reply to jabberwolf

yeah, that's why apple is on the verge of bankruptcy, all that vaporware. no wonder the iPod is such a failure, and the iPhone and the iPad - you never see them anywhere - all vaporware... [Flag](#) Lovegoodtech and 16 more liked this Like Reply

**Personal Robot** 1 hour ago in reply to jabberwolf

You don't actually know what "vaporware" is, do you? It means it doesn't exist. Apple only shows what they actually have, unlike every other company out there. As for the rest of your comment, that's pretty ridiculous. Apple creates what everyone strives to be, then they go and overdo it, cheapen theirs with junk parts and junk software, and everyone still wants the Apple products but they've gotten used to the junk prices of the junk. I know very few people who don't at least want Apple products, but it's the price that holds them back. Quality costs money, period. [Flag](#) Lovegoodtech and 6 more liked this Like Reply

**gabekuzman** 1 hour ago in reply to Personal Robot

I sure don't want any Apple product. Over priced, incompatible and proprietary and getting worse. No thank you.

To think of a business model where any time you want to do anything with the Apple you have to go to the Apple store on line of stand in line at their physical stores for hours is a joke. LOL

If you have the extra time to wait in lines and dream of better products to come out soon good for you.

Why this vaporware discussion is even under way in the first place is because the competing manufactures are designing better and products to blow the Apple crap away. Apple may have gotten to market first but they will end up in last place as they always do as price points lower.

The iPod is nice, don't get me wrong, but I will wait for a multi process device that has a camera and can interface with other external devices. One that you don't have to jail break so you can use it how you want to. I refuse to finance a skewed and egotistical vision all to create a business model to trap people in a product line that always fails to impress. They are pretty products sure but functional I fear not.

Lets talk about no flash support. Of all the Apple centered stupid ideas this is at the top of the list. Claiming security problems and battery life problems. LOL

Enjoy your crappy Apple products and OSX. What would you do without help from your Windows and Linux friends to help you do what you wish you cold do on your Apple?

[Flag](#) Bob Jones and 5 more liked this Like Reply

**ManiacMcLaughton** 35 minutes ago in reply to gabekuzman

Look, lets analyze some of your statements a bit.

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Why this vaporware discussion is even under way in the first place is because the competing manufactures are designing better and products to blow the Apple crap away. Apple may have gotten to market first but they will end up in last place as they always do as price points lower.

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Really? Apple made the first tablet? Funny... I have an HP tablet device that has a detachable keyboard, and was designed to run WINDOWS XP. It is a little over 7 years old now. SEVEN YEARS. Apple is NEVER the first. They just take others peoples junk that doesn't work, and that everyone screams at, and they simplify it so any ape can pick it up and make it go. This, combined with their very secretive nature, and the way they always have something for you to touch and play with when they announce it makes them very good at what they do. So you dont' like proprietary... well guess what, thats why it has fewer failures. They spec everything out to run on just that hardware. Why are there thousands of people complaining of "bricked" Android phones? Because Andriod OS has to cover 100+ phone boards, and it has to be compatible with everything else in the world you MIGHT plug into it. Like it or not, that makes it clunky.

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Um... if they were not functional for 90% of the populace, they wouldn't sell. Now, those of us more high tech people sit and wait for features that we want, but lets face it... we are not Apple's market. Apple does attempt to cater to us to some degree, but they also don't release something that might muck up their track record. The "death grip" muddied their reputation a bit, and i promise you they didn't like it one bit.

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Ok... lets do this logically. Take your device... be it laptop or other. Use it on a GOOD flash site for 15 minutes, and see how much battery you loose. Now, lets repeat that test for HTML 5. It has been proven OVER AND OVER that Flash causes strain where it shouldn't, hence dropping battery life.

Also, Apple has BEGGED for a flash player that works on their IOS without causing crashes and instability. Go look back at press release after press release of "we will have flash when it works like its supposed to". I applaud them for standing up and saying "this is crap, we aren't adding it to our device".

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Enjoy your crappy Apple products and OSX. What would you do without help from your Windows and Linux friends to help you do what you wish you cold do on your Apple?

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As a CPTe, CEH, MCSE, and RHCE certificate holder, I user OSX. Why? It never dies, and it does everything I need it to do. I can attach to \*inx machines, I can share files with Windows... in fact I can't think of a SINGLE thing a windows machine can do that I can't. Not one. Of course you can get into the "well it won't run this software" argument, but there are always alternatives, and software available for a platform doesn't always indicate the validity of the platform. Look at Android... there is 1/10th the software available for the android (if even that much) than there is for the Iphone... but you still toute it as superior.

-----Bottom Line-----

Your OPINION, while yours, isn't very clearly considered outside of your own little circle of life. Think about your family and friends who can't hit the on/off switch without shaking. They can pick up ANY apple product and be perfectly comfortable. I'm sorry you don't like them, and to a degree I do understand why... however... if you don't like how something functions, vote with your wallet instead of running your mouth and spewing a bunch of useless crap on a PCmag comment board. No one cares that you don't keep up with current events and that you are blinded to a product because its popular, and it doesn't have 100% of the

features YOU want.

/rant off

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**Riznstar** 0 minutes ago in reply to ManiacMcLaughton

As an MCSE /CCNA That has been in the business long before pc-dos I heartily agree with gabekuzman. As a consumer I spent the better part of the last two months trying to find a "Pad"

that would do what I needed. What I found was Apple (That worked, was documented, and software supported.) and a mad scattering of Android stuff. The process of just data mining to find out what was in the cardboard box was mind numbing. I had to buy a few just to find out what level "Android"

they were! I returned them all as "Not as advertised". Then I showed the store Exactly what did NOT work as advertised. Most had a good hardware platform, But what you find is that in order to

really make them work right, you need to Jailbreak the device and move into a Forum subculture for replacement OS and software upgrades. I decided to wait 3 months for a working Apple Ipad2.

[Flag](#) Like Reply

**Austin Lazanowski** 1 hour ago in reply to Personal Robot

apple does not use "quality" parts. There is always someone breaking open an ipad/iphone to show you what its truly made of. Beyond his awesome ability to market and to make everyone want to touch it, there is honestly nothing unique about the hardware itself. Still, Kudos for apple making certain technologies gain significantly more track for the consumer world. Now if they could only focus on real business use cases of their products, then they'd have a shot of killing microsoft. [Flag](#) Like Reply

**ManiacMcLaughton** 17 minutes ago in reply to Austin Lazanowski

Austin,

Apple has the lowest RMA percentage of any manufacturer of any products they produce. There is a ton of market research on it. I have an APPLE IIE (for those of you that don't know, this is a computer that only works off of a floppy, because hard drives didn't exist yet) that still functions exactly as it did in 1982. In fact, my daughter uses it to play Number Munchers and Oregon Trail almost daily.

Do they have a lot of failures? Of COURSE, but its because everything outside of their personal computers completely dominates the market. As a PERCENTAGE, they are miles ahead of everyone.

Seriously... while i'm all for a good Fanboi bashing session, lets at least not look like complete retards by using personal opinions in place of actual facts. [Flag](#) 1 person liked this. Like Reply

**howlett** 1 hour ago in reply to jabberwolf

Every product ends up being "lesser" in the end. It's called progress. Thus, by your definition, all products end up as vaporware. [Flag](#) Lovegoodtech liked this Like Reply

**stevenN** 1 hour ago in reply to jabberwolf

Just like the MP3 players. Opps. Well, like laptops then. Opps. Just like profit share in Mobile. Opps.

Darn, you are wrong on all those accounts. Guess you don't know about the technology industry. [Flag](#) Kevin Chavez and 2 more liked this Like Reply