COMPUTER
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iPad for iGen

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Intro: Each day we seem to awaken to a world of new technology. We live in such an amazing electronic age - as this column has documented often, we can do more genealogy research in a week at the computer than our ancestors of only a few decades ago could do in years. Now, is the iPad one of these electronic devices that can serve you well in your genealogical research? This column has previously explored new innovations, and this issue looks at the Apple iPad.

When I went to Colorado last October and visited a friend who is a former Marine, he had an Apple iPad that he allowed me to play with - and I was hooked! I had to get my own!

I know, I know, this column is usually for PCs, however - this Apple iPad is really fun! I think almost anyone would derive considerable enjoyment from it, as it provides another type of interface to the Internet, plus a platform for reading, playing games, doing research. What practical applications are there for the genealogist? We explore the question, and provide an overview of what an iPad is and what one can expect from it or similar devices.

Each day we seem to awaken to a world of new technology. We live in such an amazing electronic age - as this column has documented often, we can do more genealogy research in a week at the computer than our ancestors of only a few decades ago could do in years. Now, is the iPad one of these electronic devices that can serve you well in your genealogical research? This column has previously explored new innovations, and this issue looks at the Apple iPad.

The iPad is a tablet computer designed and developed by Apple. It is particularly marketed as a platform for audio and visual media such as books, periodicals, movies, music, and games, as well as web content. At about 1.5 pounds, its size and weight are between those of most contemporary smart-phones and laptop computers.

Apple released the iPad in April 2010, and sold 3 million of the devices in 80 days after the product was launched in the United States. To put this in perspective, it took Apple 270 days to sell an equivalent number of iPhones and 2.5 years to sell that many iPods. Clearly Apple has a

winner on its hands. What makes the iPad so special? Perhaps because it is so intuitive to use and easy to view.

I figured if a Marine can learn how to use an iPad, anyone can - but ... in some aspects I have struggled. For the faithful readers of this column, I was hoping to be able to provide you with a list of Lessons Learned - however some of my list is closer to "What I Can't Figure Out Yet."   I'll indicate below a few things I have learned to date. I expect to learn more as time goes on and folks let me know what they have discovered. What if you were to purchase an iPad, how would you start using it? (there is no User Manual included - directly). Here are some steps I would recommend (much of which the Apple Store did for me, or at least told me about).

1. Unpack the iPad and put on the case: It makes sense to purchase a case for your iPad, at about $50. The Apple-manufactured case fits snugly ("like a girdle" as my specialist Tom at the Apple Store indicated), and when you have it on correctly, the 'glass' will show through the open side, and each of the plugs will be accessible through the openings 'cut' into the side of the case. The iPad is very solid, it looks and feels like a giant iPhone or iPod Touch. Like the iPhone and iPod Touch, the front surface is completely flat and just has the Home button. It does not flex, creak or crack. The display is glass with a fingerprint-resistant oleophobic coating. "Oleophobic" (from the Greek (oleo) "oil") refers to the physical property of a molecule that is repelled from oil. The most common oleophobic substance is water. Don't let that geeky feature fool you though, the screen still attracts smudges and prints. After only one day, my screen was very smudged.

[note: Extra smudges or not, some users will want a screen protector added by a 'professional.'

My Marine friend had the "protection film" added to his iPad for another $30 or so - however, Tom said the iPad screen is glass, 'like helicopter cockpit glass' (how he came up with that, I don't know), and needs no protective film. "You can't scratch it." So I didn't get any 'shield' for my iPad.]

2. Start up the iPad and connect to Wi-Fi: You will find several icons on the screen when the iPad is launched. One of these is a black and white Settings icon. This is as close as you get to an iPad user manual, at least on the iPad. One way to begin is to touch Settings, and then in the left-hand column, touch Wi-Fi. The iPad will search for networks in the area, and then you connect as you would with a laptop. Like a laptop, it will remember the preferred network the next time you are in the area. Expand a document or a screen by "expanding your fingers" on the screen. Fun!

3. Play with a few apps: There are thousands of apps ("applications") for the iPad, many of which are free, and none of which are very expensive. So: Next, click on the App Store icon. You will need to provide an account (with a credit card) to use the App Store - even in 'purchasing' a free app. I added a free dinosaur hunting game next. (Many of the free apps are teasers, hoping you will buy the full game or full app if you like the sample.) There is, for example, a free illustrated (yes, in color) book of Winnie The Pooh under the iBooks icon. This will allow you to experience how much fun it is to 'flip pages' (move your finger across the page to change the page) while using the iPad as an ebook reader.

4. Add your e- mail: This is something you definitely want to do, even if you don't want to answer e-mail from your iPad. The iPad format for reading incoming email is intuitive, inviting,

and intriguing for me. If you employ a standard 'free' email service such as Yahoo! mail or gmail account, the iPad is set up to easily add such standard accounts. To do this, click on Settings, then on Mail, Contacts, Calendars, then (in right side), Add Account ...

5. Sync with iTunes: This is the area in which I continue to struggle. ITunes is the "aircraft carrier" for all items on the iPad; that is, everything is moved back and forth from iPad to iTunes. You download the latest version of iTunes onto your desktop or laptop for free from itunes.com. Then you plug in your iPad to your computer using the white USB cord provided, and iTunes should recognize it. Then it will attempt to sync. Works very smoothly with Windows 7, and with XP. This is how you can move music and pictures to your iPad, as well as load new operating systems (yes, the iOS changes from time to time.)

What I Would Suggest: The user manual is not included in the iPad packaging. Instead, Apple hosts it on its support site. The iPad User Guide (pdf) provides an in-depth review, and anyone can download it. This 154-page long guide covers all the basics for using the iPad and understanding how it works. If you'd like to convert this PDF- formatted guide into a format (called "ePub") that you can use to read on your iPad, there's a handy website called epub2go that will handle the conversion for you. After transforming the file to epub, just drop it onto your iTunes library and sync it to your iPad. You'll be able to read the book using Apple's free iBooks application. Another approach: From Amazon.com, obtain one of the inexpensive manuals such as iPad Survival Guide ($2.99 to download to the iPhone or iPad, or $0.95 for Kindle - and yes, there is a free Kindle app for the iPad that is a better Kindle than the Kindle - it has color, pictures, and a much better designed page turning capability.).

How can a Genealogist make use of an iPad? The simple answer is that you would use your iPad the same way you might use a laptop - expect this is a little lighter, a little more convenient to take into a library. Some would say not as easy to type notes into, and so far, no flash drive (USB port) availability for the iPad, but that is rumored to be a feature on the iPad2.

The website/blog http://www.genealogyintime.com has reviewed the iPad for the genealogist, and here are some of their positive and negative comments:

What Is Likable About the iPad

• The look and design of the iPad is truly amazing and it is a real pleasure to use.

• The user interface is simply stunning and easy to navigate even for someone with limited computing skills.

• The color screen is bold and crisp and can be viewed in either horizontal or vertical orientations (the screen image will switch depending on how the device is held).

• Many genealogy websites show up very well on an iPad screen.

• There are already many applications for the iPad (most iPhone applications are being ported over to the iPad). These applications must be purchased exclusively through the Apple online store.

• The battery lasts for a good 10+ hours, and only takes a few hours to fully charge.

The 'cheapest' iPad has 16GB of storage built in, and this is really all you need. You could keep over 200 apps on your iPad, plus hundreds more back on your desktop computer, stored in iTunes. Libraries and cities have so many wireless spots, the 3G network version is not really needed - unless you want to work the Internet 'on the road,' i.e., while driving.

What are some Negatives of the iPad

• The iPad is designed more for consumption than computation. It is very efficient at delivering words, images, videos and sounds. Sending emails (or anything else that requires typing) can be a challenge because there is no tactile keyboard (however, I like the on-screen keyboard which disappears when you want it to). Also, uploading photos or videos is a bit tricky because the iPad lacks a USB port or SD card reader.

• The iPad is too big to be a pocket-sized device, making it less portable than a phone. It is also much heavier than most other dedicated ebook readers. You will not want to hold an iPad for more than a minute or two before resting it on a table or on a pillow on your lap. This is an important consideration if you plan to use the iPad for reading several hours at a time.

• The price of an iPad (it comes in several models depending on the amount of internal memory and type of wireless connectivity) is similar to the price of a netbook or a small laptop. If your primary interest is to use the device as an ebook reader, then you should know that several dedicated ebook readers on the market are now about half the price of an iPad (although, so far, none have a good color screen).

• The iPad screen can be hard to read outdoors in bright sunlight and the glossy surface easily picks up fingerprints.

• Be prepared to pay about a 10% premium to buy ebooks through the online Apple store versus other ebook readers. There is, however, a simple work around. Barnes & Noble and Amazon both provide apps for the iPad that allow readers to use their ebooks as well. Amazon Kindle currently has the largest collection of ebooks, [see The Quarterly Computer Corner article of August 2008 regarding the Kindle].

Genealogy Applications

There are a couple of decent genealogy applications (e.g., Ancestry.com app) already available for the iPad and more are coming all the time. The most compelling iPad genealogy applications tend to be Mac software programs that have an iPad application that serves as a mobile input device. It is worth noting that many people who are touch typists find it slow and annoying to type on a screen rather than using a dedicated tactile keyboard. If you have ever entered information on a touch-screen computer at a bank or airport kiosk then you are familiar with the experience. You can buy a separate keyboard for the iPad, but then having to carrying around an additional accessory makes the iPad even less mobile.

Some of the most popular genealogy applications for the Apple iPad are not apps per se but on-line genealogy search engines. As you know, many websites allow you to search historic records across hundreds of databases on the Internet. One could sit in a cafe or library using the iPad and do free searches for your ancestors.

Standby for iPad2 - an updated version is expected to be released in April of this year, so be

alert! It is supposed to have a built-in camera and video chatting - not much of a need for those features in Genealogy, however once can hope that the iPad2 will drive down the cost of the standard iPad.

Hardware Specifications

Processor: 1GHz Apple A4 custom-designed, high-performance, low-power system-on-a- chip

Capacity: 16GB, 32GB, or 64GB flash drive

Display: 9.7- inch (diagonal) 1024×768, 132 ppi LED

Battery: Built-in 25-watt-hour rechargeable lithium-polymer battery, Up to 10 hours of surfing the web on Wi-Fi, watching video, or listening to music, Up to 9 hours of surfing the web using 3G data network (3G model), Charging via power adapter or USB to computer system

Size: 9.56 x 7.47 x0.5 inches (242.8 x 189.7 x 13.4 mm)

Weight: 1.5 pounds (0.68 kg) Wi-Fi model, 1.6 pounds (0.73 kg) Wi-Fi + 3G model

Cost: $499, $599, $699 depending on the memory, model. Go for $499! The iPad was released with three options for internal storage size: a 16, 32, or 64 GB flash drive. All data is stored on the flash drive and there is no option to expand storage. Apple sells a camera connection kit with an SD card reader, but it can only be used to transfer photos and videos.

Summary: iPad for the Genealogist

The iPad is expensive. It is also an amazing device that will change the way we read. It is the first device that successfully bridges between a netbook and an ebook reader and it does both very well.

• Buy the iPad if you are an early adopter or you plan to use it for more than just reading ebooks.

• Consider investing instead in a netbook or small laptop if you need a portable device for typing emails or data input, which is the case for most genealogy software.

• All applications for the iPad must be purchased through the online Apple store. It is not an open platform. Some PC users do not like this.

• Soon there will be several other competing products on the market like the iPad that may offer more features and better value. Apple is also likely to come out with an iPad version 2.0 sometime in 2011 (the rumor is that it will have improved features and come in smaller, more portable sizes).

Apple.com has posted marketing videos that introduce many of the iPad's new features, including Safari, Mail, Photos. These videos can work to introduce the iPad to you. If you don't have an iPad or a friend with an iPad, it may be worth your while to go down to the Apple Store (in ABQ Uptown) and try playing with an iPad. Tell the specialist at the door that's what you'd like to do. Have fun!