

# Does Tablet Computing Really Matter?



By Russ McGuire - [russ.mcguire@gmail.com](mailto:russ.mcguire@gmail.com)

**T**his month I'm shifting my focus from sharing lessons we've learned launching Hschooler.net to discussing the impact that tablet computing is likely to have on our lives as Christians

## Tablet Computing?

The iPad is one of the most disruptive product launches in the history of computing. Analysts believe that the success of the iPad is impacting the entire industry.

The first victim was Netbooks. Netbooks were the hot new category in 2008 and 2009, with monthly year over year growth figures ranging from 179% to 641% throughout the second half of 2009. The iPad was announced in January and launched in April of 2010. [By April, Netbook growth had fallen to 5%](#) and has since gone negative. Given Netbook limitations, many people considering buying a Netbook realized that the iPad could do everything they wanted from a Netbook, in a more convenient package, with a simpler user interface, and, to be honest, a "cooler" image.

The next victim was Notebooks. Many people who were considering buying a Notebook were less convinced that the iPad could be a credible replacement. But, as iPads reached the market and users gained experience ("technology lust" took hold), many of those Notebook customers decided that the iPad was the choice for them. For the second half of

2009, Notebook growth had mostly hovered in the 30% range. Between the iPad announcement and its launch, Notebook growth stayed in the 20-35% range, but in April, [Notebook growth was cut almost in half](#), and by August it had gone negative.

Interestingly, unlike the iPhone, competitors have been quick to launch very credible alternatives to the iPad. Apple sold a million iPads in the first month of availability. Samsung announced and launched the Android-based Galaxy S Tab in September. It took Samsung about two months to reach the 1 million sales mark. RIM, the maker of the popular BlackBerry smartphone line announced their PlayBook tablet in September, but the product has not yet launched to market. Early reviewers, however, are comparing it very favorably to the iPad, and given the loyalty of BlackBerry users, I would expect sales to be brisk following launch.

Despite the sudden success of tablet computers, this is not a new concept.

I bought my first Tablet computer early in 2006. Since I wasn't convinced that a pen-based interface (state of the art for tablet computers at the time) was going to meet my needs, I went with a convertible

model – the [Toshiba Portege M405](#). By flipping the screen around, it could either be used as a tablet or a fairly standard notebook computer. This compromise made it pretty big, bulky, and heavy to use as an actual tablet, and the Windows XP Tablet edition operating system wasn't overly effective either. I used it almost exclusively in Laptop mode.

Microsoft took another shot at a more effective tablet form factor and operating system with the [“Origami” concept](#), which became the UMPC (Ultra Mobile Personal Computer) upon official launch (also in 2006). Unfortunately, the concept never really translated into meaningful sales. I summarized the challenges in a [blog post](#) at the end of 2006, which I summarized with this plea: “Will anyone be able to bring a UMPC product to market in the \$500 range, with long battery life, the power of ‘real’ Windows (XP or Vista), usability, portability, ubiquitous network connectivity, and contextual relevance? I sure hope so!”

Well, it may have taken Apple 4 years, and of course they didn't deliver a Windows-based system, but I think the iPad delivered on these criteria – finally resulting in market success for tablet computers.

### Jumping In

In August of 2010, I joined the crowds and bought my second tablet computer – this one an iPad.

This device (obviously) is a winner. I'm often asked what devices I've been able to replace with my iPad.

For starters, I've replaced my iPod with the iPad. You can't stick the iPad in your pocket, but I'm not the type to go running with an iPod anyway. I mostly used my iPod in my office at work and when traveling (on the plane and in the hotel room). The iPad works perfectly




## Church Management Made Easy

For over 20 years, PowerChurch Software has been making powerful, affordable, and user friendly church management software.

Membership • Contributions • Accounting  
Event Scheduling • And more in one complete package!

# POWERCHURCH PLUS

800-486-1800 • [www.powerchurch.com](http://www.powerchurch.com)



*↳ This is Jim.*

## Studies show that if he gets connected, he is 5x more likely to become a member and stay.

Create Connections and Close the Back Door with IgniteCRM, a web-based Church Relationship Management system that allows you to:

- Setup Individual Personalized Ministry Dashboards
- Customize Forms and Reports
- Maintain a Private Integrated Social Network
- Track Contributions, Attendance & Connection Points
- Plus Much More!

## Call 877.703.2484 for a free 30 Day Trial Demo.



powered by **faithHighway**

[www.ignitecrm.org/ThisIsJim](http://www.ignitecrm.org/ThisIsJim)



# It's COMING... Are you prepared?

Keep your congregation safe and secure with One Call Now.

**Voice • Email • SMS Text Messaging**



## One Call **Now**

**877.698.3262** [onecallnow.com/ccm](http://onecallnow.com/ccm)

America's Largest Message Notification Provider

Find us on



Available on the iPhone

**App Store**

Call Phil Elmore at 877.698.3262 x2304 and ask how you can keep your congregation informed, safe and secure with One Call Now!

well for those locations. The iPad has all the capability of the iPod interface, but with the feature richness of desktop iTunes.

I've also replaced the Kindle with the iPad. The Kindle App for the iPad makes all of my Kindle books available and even synchronizes where I am in each book between my Kindle and my iPad. Since I'm already taking my iPad with me, there's no longer a need to take the Kindle as well.

For e-mail connectivity when traveling, the iPad has replaced my laptop. While I often would travel with just my smartphone, the e-mail experience on a phone is still a bit limited compared to the laptop. The iPad mail application is a beautiful thing, making it easy to connect to all of my e-mail accounts and to have confidence I'm seeing all of my messages in all their formatted glory. Composing and replying to messages is a step up from most smartphones, but I'm still not a total fan of on-screen virtual keyboards. I've had my eye on the upcoming iPad cases that have a built in Bluetooth keyboard to overcome this limitation, but I'm not sure yet whether that's going to make the combination bulky enough to be a problem.

The calendar on the iPad is also a beautiful thing, with reliable connectivity to my Exchange calendar for work and Google calendar for personal use.

The iPad has also replaced my notebook – the paper kind. I now take the iPad into meetings where I previously would always take an ink and paper notebook. I use the Notes application and thumb type notes from the meeting. I then can e-mail the notes to myself and others on my team, as appropriate.

The iPad has also replaced my Bible for group Bible studies. I'll write more about this in a future article, but suffice it to say that the wealth of resources that are available is a huge blessing as we gather to share insights from God's Word.

### What's Not to Like?

So, is the iPad a perfect replacement for notebook computers?

No, it's not. I've already mentioned the lack of a physical keyboard, but probably the biggest

## The Safe Online Social Network for Christian Families



All Within  
Parent-Defined  
Boundaries

Join for Free at  
[www.hschooler.net](http://www.hschooler.net)

Communicate with Friends

Read and Share Favorite  
Bible Passages

Post Photos for Trusted  
Friends to See

Share Prayer Requests

Interact with Others About  
Books, Movies, and Music

**Hschooler.net**

challenge for me is the kludginess of doing simple cut-and-paste on the iPad. Yes, you can do it, but the process is much more difficult than it is using the trusty mouse and keyboard shortcuts. This one limitation keeps me from using the iPad for many of my everyday tasks, including serious writing (like this article – written on my laptop), keeping up to date on blogs I read, and updating my own blog (which relies heavily on cutting and pasting headlines and links from other blogs).

The tablet is clearly changing the face of computing, but it's not yet a perfect replacement. Expect more next month as we continue to explore this exciting area of computing.

*Russ McGuire is an executive for a Fortune 100 company and the founder/co-founder of three technology start-ups. His latest entrepreneurial venture is Hschooler.net (<http://hschooler.net>), a social network for Christian families (especially homeschoolers) which is being built and run by four homeschooled students under Russ' direction.*