



**Nexalogy**  
ENVIRONICS

Case Study: The launch of the Apple iPad as seen through Twitter

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The Apple iPad was launched on January 27

- We thought it might be interesting to see the local reaction immediately after the event
- In 2010, Twitter is the best way to study this reaction

## Methodology

- We captured 1995 tweets during the 24 hours following the announcement of the iPad
- This represents all of the tweets within 25km of Montreal that mention any of the following keywords:
  - ipad
  - Apple-tablet
  - islate
- Timeframe: from 12:00pm, January 27 to 12:00pm, January 28

Six major themes within the twitter data emerged, covering everything from the launch event itself, to device features, to some obvious jokes about the product's name.

Unsurprisingly, overall reaction was mixed.

- Some saw the iPad as an oversized iPod Touch (i.e., duplicating functionality and offering nothing or very little new)
- Some saw it as a less-than-full-featured iPhone (3G data functionality was appreciated, but many wondered about being able to use voice)
- Others felt that this would be a good product for those that would like an Amazon Kindle type device with more functionality
  - Essentially a Kindle and/or netbook alternative
  - On the netbook issue, people were undecided if it was a netbook competitor or an entirely new class of device
- There were very positive reactions related to pricing

The following slide presents a lexical analysis of the data from the entire corpus of Tweets collected

- Using the 75 most important words/concepts in the dataset
- There are 5 main clusters



As expected, this is the largest cluster on the map

- Covered the official launch, with a lot of news and detail oriented tweets here.
- Mashable.com was visible due to their apple-tablet (<http://mashable.com/apple-tablet/>) section
- The word “computer” was used frequently with the apple tablet (e.g., “Apple's new tablet computer”, “iPad tablet computer”, etc.)
- There are also many terms related to the coverage of the launch (as distinct from the event itself)
- Both Gizmodo and Endgadget were doing live coverage of the iPad
- Another popular mentioned were the iPad "Hands on" reviews/preview
  - Business Insider, Computerworld were both frequently tweeted
- Also in this cluster we find mentions of the price of the iPad
- The price point was viewed positively

This cluster regroups tweets about the new apps and app functionality revealed during the launch

Apple is selling each element in the iWork suite at \$9.99

- Reaction to the iWork applications was overwhelmingly positive
- Many saw this as a game changer for the platform

The other big news in this cluster was the iBooks e-book reader

- This generated a lot of activity, most of it very positive
- There was concern about its availability outside of the US
- The strength of Kindle's eInk display was mentioned
- Many saw the iPad as being a kind of “Kindle Killer”, having the ability to read e-books, with the added functionality of a web tablet.

Key themes: people trying to figure out where to “place” the iPad in relation to other Apple products, and also the netbook category.

- While obvious comparisons to the iPhone and iPod Touch were present, users were also unsure about how the product related to Apple's more traditional laptop offerings
- Many felt (perhaps correctly) that it fit somewhere in between the smaller iPhone/ iPod Touch tablets, and the Macbook/ Pro laptops

Another ongoing and very prominent theme was the “is it a netbook?” question

- People were unsure if the iPad was a competing product to a traditional netbook, or something entirely new

Finally, there were a number of users who saw the iPad as a convergence device

- A sort of Kindle + iPod + netbook.

There was a mixture of sentiment about the feature set of the iPad

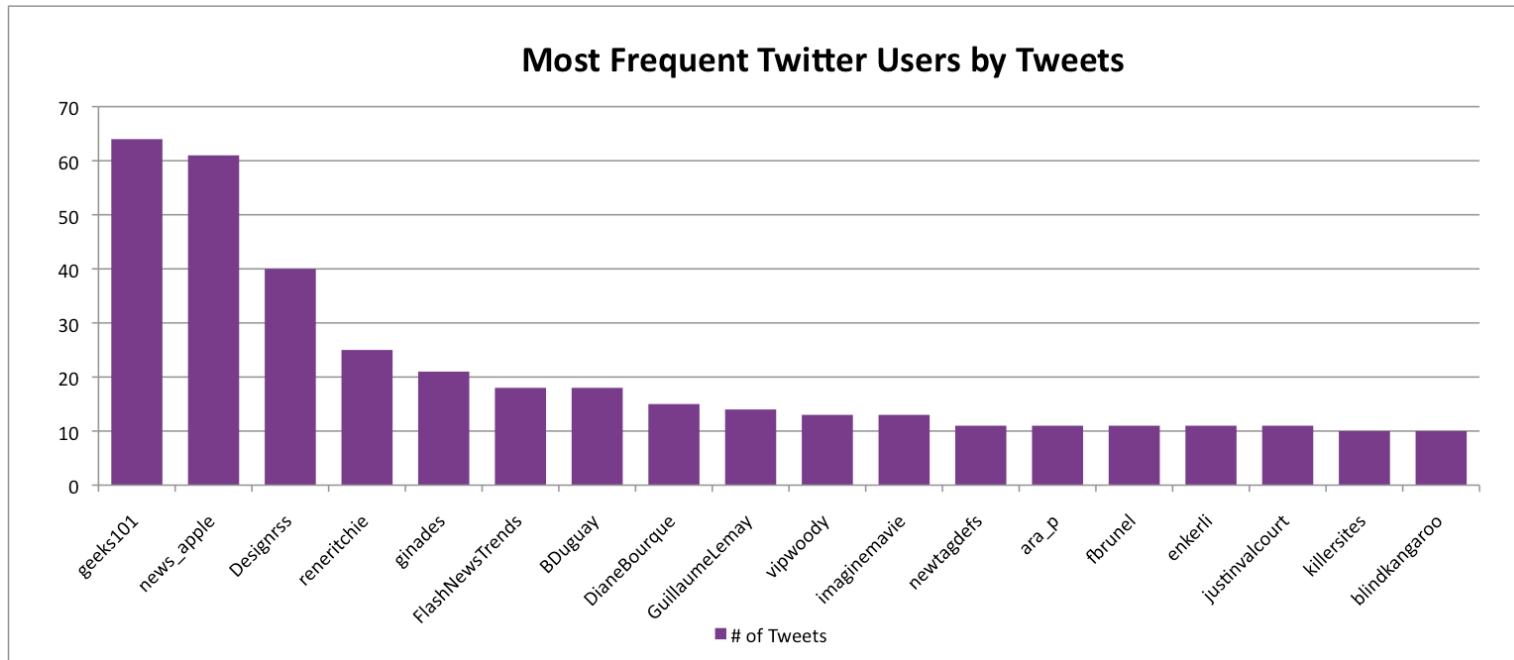
- Positive
  - Enthusiasm about gaming experience one could have on the iPad
  - The demos from Gameloft's Mark Hickey and EA's Travis Boatman were well received
  - People were also very positive about the keyboard dock
  - Also mentioned: iWork's Keynote presentation application with VGA out
- Negative
  - The biggest disappointment was about the lack of multitasking
  - Second was the lack of a camera, primarily in relation to videoconferencing
  - Other missing features mentioned were lack of USB, SD Card slot, and Flash player
  - Lack of Flash was cited by many users as a concern, to the point that some said they would not buy an iPad without it

Twitter is a very common tangent for quick jokes and humorous asides

- We see this a great deal in all kinds of Twitter analyses
- This case was no exception
- There were several (predictable) jokes about the name “iPad”
  - Comparison with feminine hygiene product names
- MadTV's “Hitler responds to the iPad” viral satire video was also quite prominent in the data

In addition to the lexical analysis we can learn a lot about the characteristics of the Twitter users engaged in the discussion

- The most straightforward analysis is a simple histogram of the top Twitter users in the dataset (by number of Tweets published within the timeframe)
- In this graph of the top 18 most-frequent Twitterers over this 24 hour period we can see who is the most engaged in this discussion



As Albert-László Barabási wrote in *Linked*, however...

- The distribution of influence on the Internet usually follows an 80/20 rule (aka a power law distribution)
- In this Twitter dataset we see a deviation from this
  - The top 20% of users contributed just under 54% of the content
- This suggests an important methodological issue related to Twitter analysis and perhaps other social media analysis as well

If you're not analyzing the content down the long tail of participants, the analysis is partial at best

