



Working Smarter

By Christopher Durso

Take Away

So How About **That iPad?**

Sure, it's the shiny, new gadget of choice. But what does the iPad mean for meetings? Our go-to technology forecaster thinks it just might 'open the door to innovation' in the industry.

On April 2, the world didn't have the iPad. On April 3, it did. And more than 300,000 units of Apple's much-anticipated wireless tablet device were sold in the United States on that first day alone. Slim and lightweight, sleek and shiny as a raindrop, the iPad is the hardware fetishist's dream you'd expect from Apple. But how about its applications and usefulness? Will the iPad change business, or meetings, or the business of meetings?

To find out, we talked to technology forecaster and business strategist Daniel Burrus — a regular *Convene* contributor — the week after the Wi-Fi model iPad was released. Burrus had a Wi-Fi + 3G model on order (it wouldn't come out until April 30), but meanwhile, he'd seen and handled the Wi-Fi version — and was “really impressed with it.” Burrus said the “smartpad” is the latest manifestation of “a gigantic paradigm shift happening in computing right now. Because processing power, storage, and bandwidth are accelerating so fast as the prices drop, the ability to have something that is a tablet like this iPad — that has the capabilities of your computer — [makes for] a very powerful business tool.”

All about the apps. As it's done with the iPhone, Apple has rooted the iPad's functionality in applications that are both built-in and available to download. Burrus is so tuned in to this idea that he's started a company called Visionary Apps that has released three real-estate apps for the iPad. “Apps allow me to personalize my device, more so than I can even do on my computer,” Burrus said. “Apps don't take long to load — you just touch them and they work. They're inexpensive.

And upgrades are easy to get and free.”

Business functions. First and foremost, Burrus thinks the iPad — with its nearly 10-inch, touch-sensitive screen — will kick the e-reader revolution into high gear. “It isn't just a book reader, it's also a multimedia computer,” Burrus said, which means, for example, that “you can catch up with business bestsellers, [and] you can pull things out of them and create documents.” And don't get him

started on magazines. Burrus currently subscribes to 35 of them, but “the iPad is going to allow me to cut my paper ones, finally, down to nil.”

What about meetings?

Virtual-conferencing applications such as GoToMeeting and WebEx stand to benefit tremendously from the iPad, because it's smaller than a laptop but offers a screen that's substantially bigger than an iPhone or BlackBerry. “Now you can attend online meetings wherever you take your iPad,” Burrus said, “and actually have a decent experience.”

For in-person meetings and conferences, Burrus points to the iPad's usefulness for Power

erPoint presentations and handouts, which speakers could beam to attendees on site, at the start of a session. He also sees potential for breakout sessions. “If they had an iPad at each table,” Burrus said, “[session participants] could be working on what [the speaker] wants them to.”

And whatever smartpads are capable of today, they'll be better tomorrow. “Any time you can open the door to innovation in the meetings industry, it's a good thing,” Burrus said. “Whatever you think the current limitations are on the iPad, it will be [fixed] on the next generation.” ■



Our Standard Disclaimer

No, face-to-face meetings aren't going anywhere. But “you've got to ask yourself why you're having a meeting,” Daniel Burrus said, “and if it's just to share information with people, maybe I don't need a physical, tangible meeting. If I'm having a meeting to gain trust or regain trust, that better be an eyeball-to-eyeball meeting.

“My forecast, which I've been giving for years, and which I still think is right on target, is [that] we're going to have an increased need to have both virtual and face-to-face meetings, because the world is changing faster and faster, and business is getting more and more competitive, and there's more and more information available. ... The key to growing face-to-face meetings is to make sure that when people are getting together face-to-face, you're making good use of that time.”

► Christopher Durso is executive editor of *Convene*.

Working Smarter is sponsored by **PSAV Presentation Services**, www.psav.com.

ON THE WEB: Learn more about the iPad at www.apple.com/ipad. For more information about Daniel Burrus, visit www.burrus.com.