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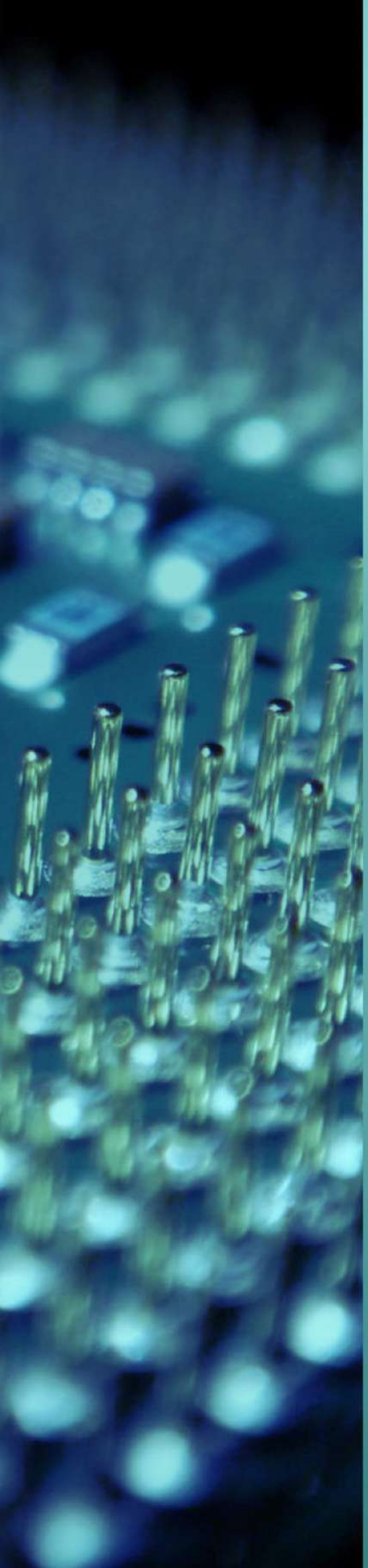




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amazon
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amazon



AMAZON DANGLES $50 TABLET COMPUTER TO HOOK MORE CONSUMERS

Amazon is dangling a $50 tablet computer in its latest attempt to lure consumers who can't afford or don't want the more expensive Internet-connected devices made by Apple and other rivals.

The 7-inch Fire tablet unveiled Thursday marks Amazon's most aggressive attempt yet to undercut Apple, which has been the market leader since its first iPad went on sale five years ago. The least expensive iPad Mini, which has an 8-inch screen, currently sells for $270.

Amazon.com Inc. isn't trying to persuade anyone that its cheap tablet matches the quality of its own sleeker, higher-priced Fire HD alternatives, let alone the top-selling iPad line.

But the Seattle company is counting on the new tablet's low price to encourage more people to buy a device that will hook them on watching video, reading books, playing games and shopping on a computer that's easy to carry wherever they go.

In the process, Amazon is hoping consumers will buy more digital goods and merchandise from its store while also subscribing to its $100-per-year Prime service that offers a mix of videos, music and free shipping.

“Our tablet focus is in and around content consumption,” said David Limp, Amazon’s senior vice president of devices.

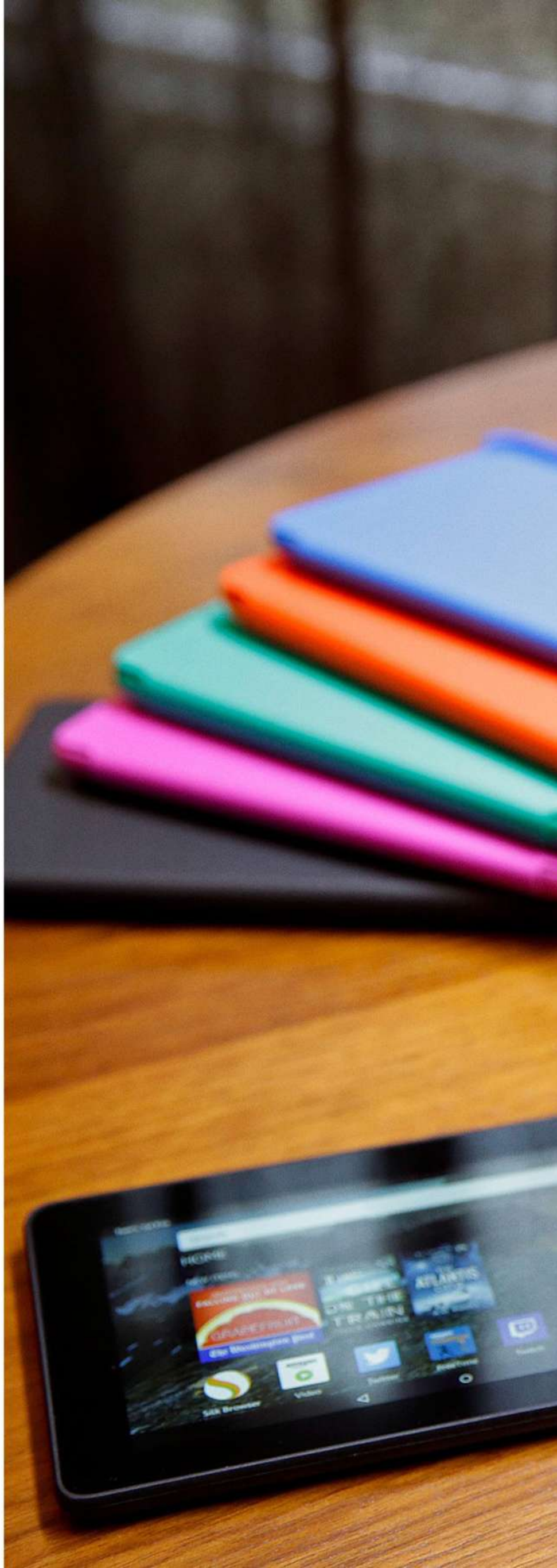
As with its previous low-priced tablets, the new Fire device will show ads on its screen saver. Avoiding the ads will cost an additional $15.

The discount tablet will debut amid a slump in the sale of the devices. The downturn suggests consumers who already own a tablet see little need to upgrade and those that don’t have one either aren’t interesting in the devices or can’t afford one.

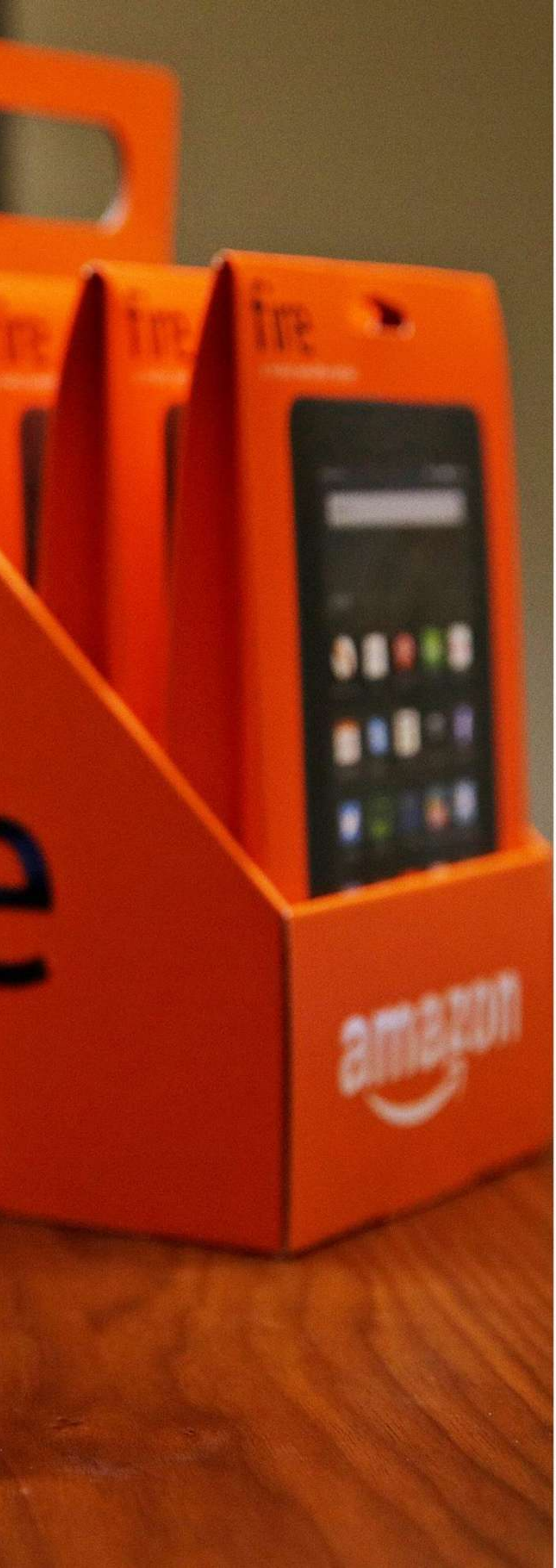
Apple’s iPad sales have been declining since 2013, spurring the company to take aim at selling more of its tablets to corporate customers and government agencies. Industrywide, worldwide sales of tablets are expected to fall 8 percent this year, according to the research firm International Data Corp.

Amazon is hoping that the low price of the new tablet will be so appealing that people will stock up on the devices and have them scattered around the house. As a prod, it plans to sell a six-pack of the 7-inch Fire tablets for the price of five, or $250.

Although the new tablet is cheap, Limp boasted it is far superior to other discount tablets that are “something you wouldn’t want to give your worst enemy, let alone a family member or a kid.”




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Amazon is promising the discount tablet will have decent processing power, good color saturation and seven hours of battery life. A more durable version designed for kids will come with a blue or pink bumper and a 2-year replacement warranty if it's broken for any reason. It will sell for $100.

Pre-orders for the tablet will begin Thursday, with shipments expected in two weeks.

Amazon also unveiled updates to larger, more expensive tablets and its devices for streaming Internet video to television sets as it gears up to battle Apple and other gadget makers for the flurry of electronics sales that typically accompanies the holiday shopping season.

Apple got the jump on Amazon last week when it showed off its latest iPhone, an iPad with a 12-inch screen and a long-delayed update of its TV-streaming box for Internet video and music.

Amazon tried to counter the iPhone's popularity with its own smartphone last year, but it never caught on. The company no longer sells its Fire phone, though it's still available in other online stores.

Despite that the phone's flop, Limp insisted "there's a lot of good things happening across (Amazon's) device business."

The company's holiday line-up includes a more durable 8-inch Fire HD tablet with faster processing speeds than last year's model that will sell at prices beginning at $150. An upgraded 10-inch Fire HD tablet will sell for $230, or 42 percent less than the least expensive $400 iPad with a comparable display size.


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Amazon is adding a remote control with a voice-activated search option to its Fire stick for Internet video streaming. The streaming stick will sell for $50, up from $40 for last year's version without voice-recognition technology.

Amazon's Fire TV box will now be able stream ultra HD video with technology that is also supposed to deliver a better picture to screens with standard HD, too. It will sell for $100 compared with $150 for the new Apple TV box scheduled to go on sale at the end of next month.

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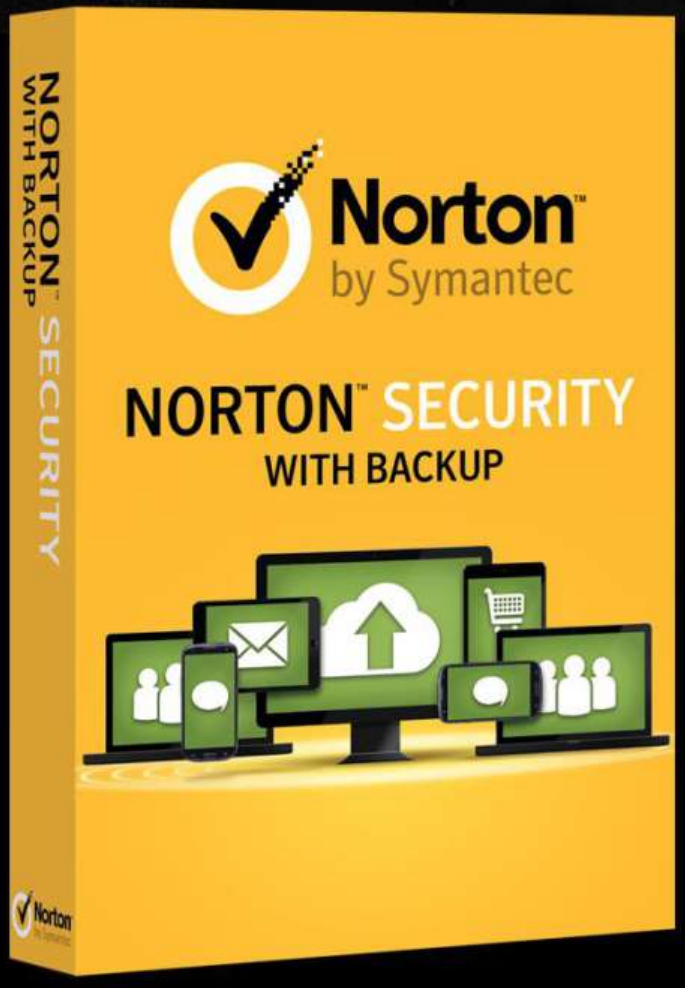
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Q&A: A LOOK AT VOLKSWAGEN'S EMISSIONS CRISIS

German automaker Volkswagen AG admits that it rigged U.S. emissions tests so it would appear that its diesel-powered cars were emitting fewer nitrogen oxides, which can contribute to ozone buildup and respiratory illness.

The crisis widened on Tuesday as the company made the stunning admission that 11 million of its diesel vehicles worldwide were fitted with same cheating software.

Here are some questions and answers about the ongoing crisis:

WHICH VEHICLES DOES THIS AFFECT?

Vehicles worldwide with Type EA 189 diesel engines. In the U.S., VW installed software in roughly 482,000 diesel passenger cars sold in the U.S. since 2008, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. The software turned on the cars' full emissions control systems when the cars were being tested by the government, and then turned off those systems during normal driving. The Jetta, Beetle, Audi A3 and Golf from the 2009-2015 model years, as well as the Passat from the 2014-2015 model years. All have with 2-Liter, four-cylinder diesel engines. Volkswagen has halted the sale of 2015 models and is prohibited from selling 2016 models until they are fixed.

WHAT DOES VOLKSWAGEN SAY?

Volkswagen Group CEO Martin Winterkorn issued a statement Sunday saying that the company will fully cooperate with government investigations and has ordered an internal probe. Winterkorn said, "I personally am deeply sorry that we have broken the trust of our customers and the public." The company said Tuesday it would set aside around 6.5 billion euros ($7.3 billion) to cover the cost from the scandal.

WHY WOULD VOLKSWAGEN CHEAT ON EMISSIONS TESTS?

Experts think VW may have wanted to avoid the cost of additional hardware to meet tough U.S. emissions standards, so it came up with a cheaper software fix. The software also would have helped the cars' fuel economy numbers, since they get better gas mileage when the emissions control system is turned off.

WHAT SHOULD CUSTOMERS DO?

Volkswagen will fix the cars for free as soon as it develops a remedy. Owners will be notified when there's a fix. In the meantime, the cars are safe to drive. Car buying site Edmunds.com cautions owners against selling the cars right now if they don't have to, since they can expect a lower trade-in value.

DOES THIS AFFECT OTHER DIESEL VEHICLES IN THE U.S.?

Not so far. Thirteen brands currently offer diesels in the U.S., including Ram, Chevrolet, Mercedes-Benz and BMW. West Virginia University, which conducted the tests that led to the discovery of Volkswagen's software, said the BMW it tested passed.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The U.S. government could fine Volkswagen $37,500 per vehicle for the violations, a total of more than $18 billion. The U.S. Justice Department, the California Air Resources Board and German authorities are also investigating. Winterkorn could also face scrutiny from Volkswagen's board, which will meet as early as Wednesday. Investors have spoken. During the past two days, VW stock price has fallen more than 35 percent.

COURT BLOCKS US SALES OF OLD SAMSUNG PHONES IN APPLE BATTLE

A federal appeals court is blocking Samsung Electronics from selling some of its older smartphones in the U.S. in the latest twist to a long-running legal battle over how much of the devices' technology was copied from Apple's iPhone.

The ruling issued Thursday by the U.S. Federal Circuit Court of Appeals in Washington vindicates Apple, but might not hurt Samsung too much. That's because it applies to phones that are no longer popular.

The most recent phone affected by the injunction, the Galaxy S3, was released in 2012 - long enough ago to be eclipsed by slicker smartphones in the rapidly evolving market for mobile technology. Samsung recently began




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selling the Galaxy S6, which was unaffected by Thursday's decision.

Samsung could also revise the features covered by the injunction, something that the company has previously indicated it might do if prodded by the courts.

Apple Inc. and Samsung Electronics Co. have been locked in a bitter feud for years over the patents covering a variety of features commonly used in many smartphones.

The acrimony dates back to the reign of Apple's late CEO Steve Jobs, who contended that Google had ripped off the iPhone's innovations to use in Android, a free mobile operating system that Samsung uses in its smartphones. Samsung emerged as Apple's biggest rival in the smartphone market, making it the target of a legal onslaught that has continued long after Jobs' death nearly four years ago.

Juries in two separate federal court trials in San Jose, California, decided some of the features in Samsung's phones and tablets infringed on Apple's patents covering iPhone innovations. Apple has been awarded more than $600 million in damages so far, but Samsung is still pursuing appeals that could reduce the amount owed.

In a 2-1 vote, the appeals court issuing Thursday's injunction concluded Apple was being harmed by Samsung's infringement on patents for iPhone's slide-to-lock screen and auto-correct feature. The court also concluded that protecting Apple's intellectual rights wouldn't harm the public welfare.

"Apple does not seek to enjoin the sale of lifesaving drugs, but to prevent Samsung from profiting from the unauthorized use of infringing features in its cellphones and tablets," wrote U.S. Federal Circuit Judge Kimberly Moore in the majority opinion.


SAMSUNG

NEW YORK REGULATOR ISSUES FIRST BITCOIN LICENSE TO COMPANY

State regulators have approved their first license to a company dealing in virtual currency such as bitcoin.

Circle Internet Financial has outlined security, capitalization, controls against money laundering and other measures intended to protect consumers and root out illicit transactions, the Department of Financial Services said Tuesday.

State regulators are reviewing applications from 24 other companies under final rules adopted in June, department spokesman Matt Anderson said. The licenses are now required for companies that want to do business with New Yorkers, he said.

"Issuing the first BitLicense is an important milestone in the long-term development of the virtual currency industry," department Superintendent Anthony Albanese said. "Putting in place rules of the road ... is vital to building trust in this new financial technology."

Bitcoin, a virtual currency created by computers that run complex algorithms, can be used to buy and sell some goods and services without government-issued money. It has been gaining the backing of investors and mainstream businesses, including major online retailers.

In May, New York regulators granted their first charter under the state's banking law for a commercial exchange for virtual currency to itBit Trust Company LLC in New York City.

Boston-based Circle Internet Financial, with offices in San Francisco, New York, Dublin and London, has 65 employees and customers in more than 100 countries, spokeswoman Sarah Mitchell said. The company won't disclose exact transaction and volume data, but they are seeing "significant consumer demand" globally for its product, which currently enables transactions in U.S. dollars and in bitcoin, she said.

"Our goal is to make sending and receiving money instant, secure and free for people around the world, including New Yorkers," said Sean Neville, co-founder and president.

Mitchell described Circle Internet Financial as a consumer payments company. Its primary use is for sending and receiving U.S. dollars. They plan to add the euro and pound sterling next, followed by other currencies such as the Chinese yuan in the future, she said.

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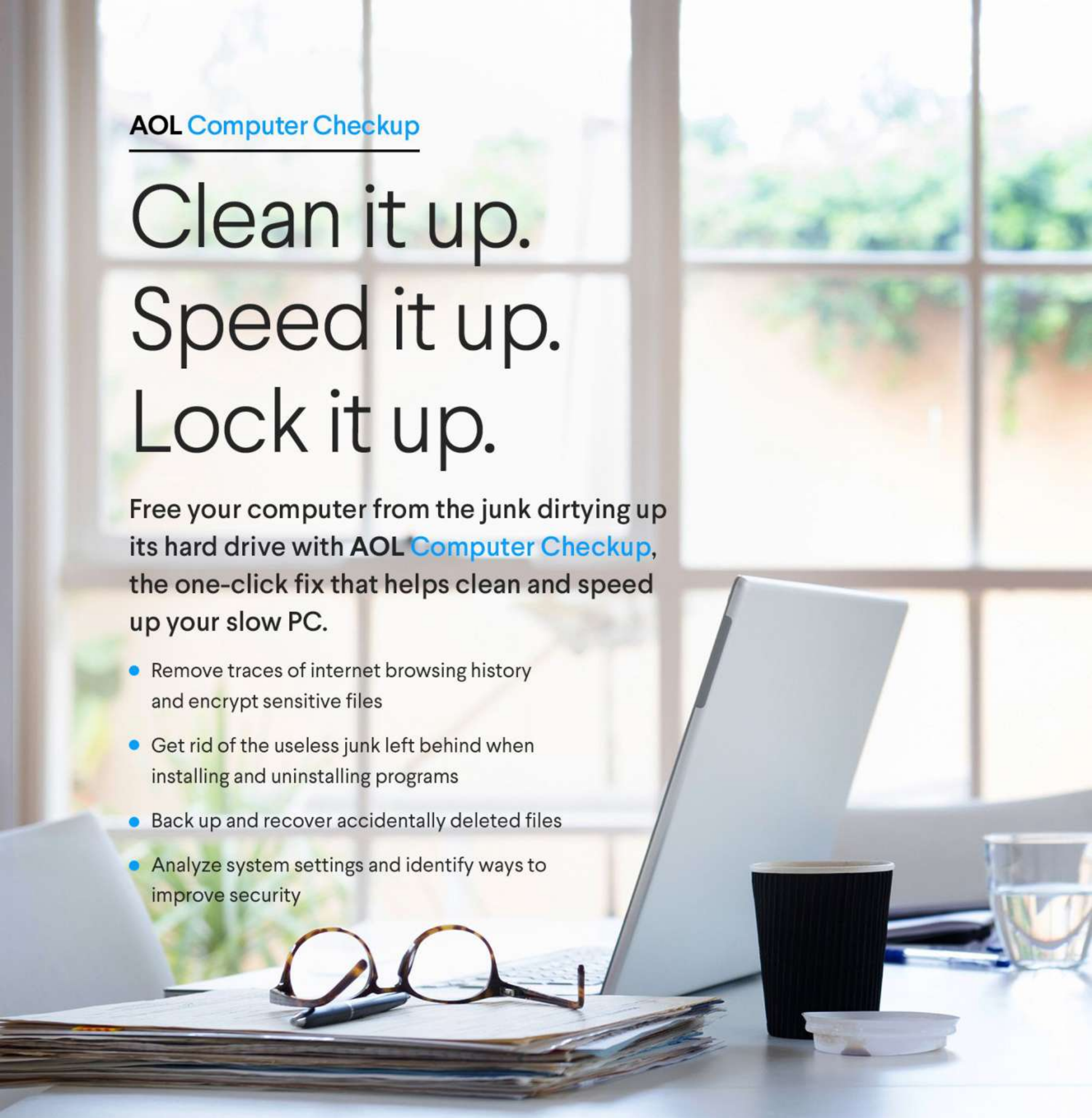
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WHY EUROPE ISN'T CREATING ANY GOOGLES OR FACEBOOKS

Micha Benoliel grew up in France and launched his first technology startup there, but he never forgot the atmosphere of adventure and optimism in San Francisco, where he studied in the early 1990s.

So when he came up with an idea for a smartphone app that could send messages without Internet or cellular connections, he went back to California in 2011 to pursue his dream.

"I knew the only way to change the world was from here," says Benoliel, the CEO of Open Garden, the maker of the FireChat messaging app.

As technology upends industries and lifestyles at breakneck pace, the Old Continent is not producing any of the online giants like Google, eBay or Facebook. Its best and brightest prefer to emigrate to Silicon Valley, or sell their ideas on to U.S. firms before they have a chance to establish themselves.

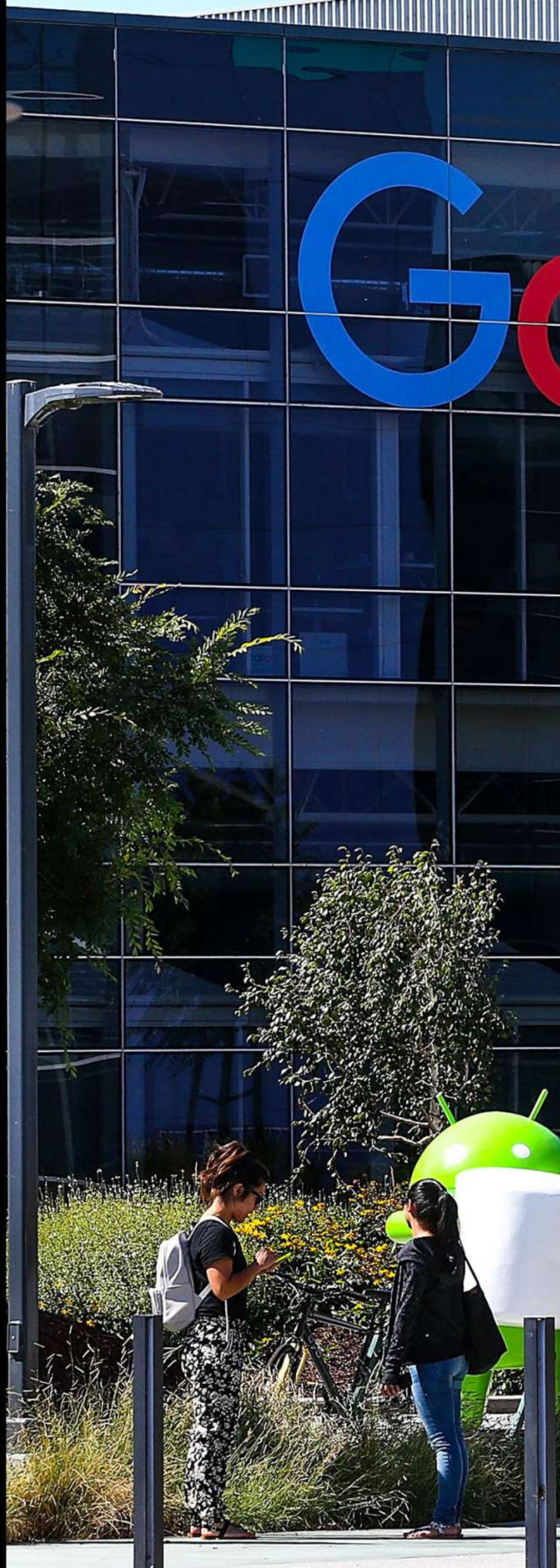
The European Union's top executives in Brussels are trying to rectify that with a long-term plan of reforms and incentives but face an uphill battle. The 28-nation bloc is, above all, lacking in the risk-taking culture and financial networks needed to grow Internet startups into globally dominant companies.

"In the U.S., especially in Silicon Valley, they are up for any crazy idea," said Benoliel, 43. "Successful businesses often come from crazy ideas."

Europe's relatively cautious attitude to investment stands out as one of the biggest hurdles - and among the most difficult to change.

Investors in Europe want to see that a young company can generate revenue from the start. Europe's many high-technology companies are focused on manufactured goods that can be sold right away to generate revenue - industrial equipment, energy turbines, high-speed trains, medical devices, and nuclear energy.

By contrast, Internet companies often have little to no revenue at the beginning. Twitter and Facebook, for example, first focused on building up their user numbers. Only once they were established as global forces did they put more attention to making money, through advertising and other strategies.





This difference in mentality stands out as one of the key reasons that Europe has fewer venture capital firms and less investment in startups than the U.S. or Asia.

Over the past five years, U.S. venture capitalists spent $167 billion on new business ideas compared with some $20 billion by their European counterparts, according to the National Venture Capital Association.

Last year alone, U.S. investment in startup companies was $50 billion, with nearly half of that amount in Silicon Valley. The European equivalent paled at $4 billion.

Asia, which has seen the rise of Internet retailer Alibaba in recent years, also outshone Europe, with venture capital totaling $22.5 billion in 2014, according to Preqin, a data analysis company. That figure is set to surge further this year, with $23 billion invested already by the end of August.

Early investment is crucial for startups to be able to get their products to market quickly. With technology, several competitors often work on the same idea and race to get out their product first and make it stand out.

"These are very fast-moving, winner-take-all industries, so if you are slow on the uptake then you will be done from the beginning," said Anand Sanwal, CEO of CB Insights, a New York research firm that tracks Internet startups.

Part of Europe's struggle to compete in online technology is not specific to itself, but a reflection of how Silicon Valley has been able to create a community of tech specialists and venture capitalists who can



meet easily, exchange ideas and strike up new collaborations.

"It's really a venture capital oligopoly where a few people who have tons of cash agree among themselves to invest in something and that can't be done in places where investors don't meet in the same way," said Anssi Vanjoki, a professor at Finland's Lappeenranta University of Technology who was chief of mobile phones at Nokia when the company was the world's top handset maker.

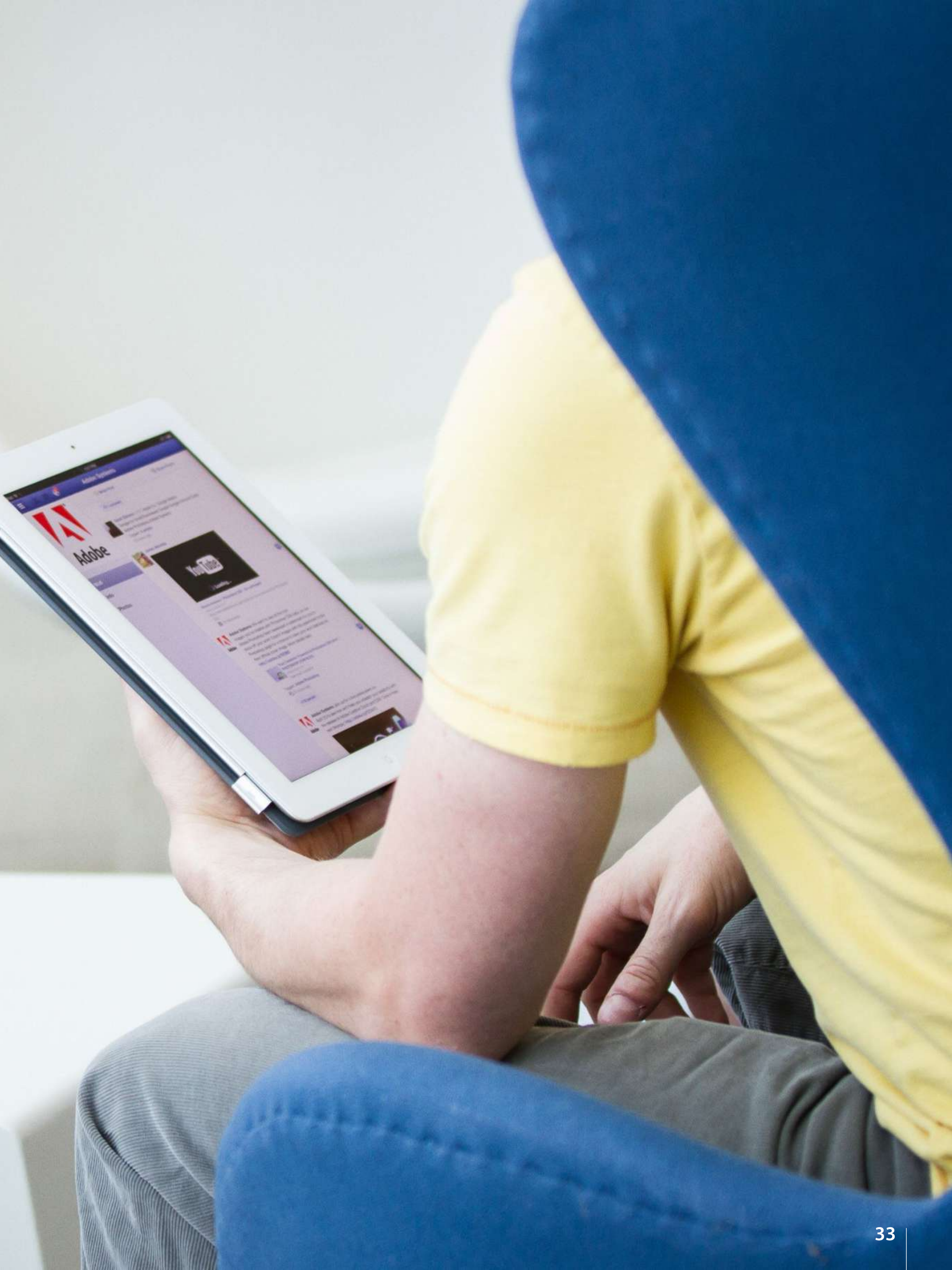
It takes time to foster such communities. Even within the U.S., other cities and regions have tried and failed to replicate Silicon Valley's success, with the exception perhaps of Seattle, Washington, where Amazon and Microsoft are based.

Europe's startup culture has been further hindered by the fact that in many EU countries it often takes more paperwork, time and money to do business than in the U.S. For example, the stronger social safety nets make it harder to fire a worker, which in turn makes it a riskier proposition to expand staff for a startup.

The markets of Europe also remain fragmented. Expanding operations across the continent is made more difficult because business laws and languages are different from one country to the next. By contrast, starting off in the U.S. gives a company a single English-speaking market of 320 million people within which to grow.

Some European companies have made the extra push and reached global proportions, though none has hit the rarefied levels of Google and Facebook.

Local success stories include online calling service Skype, which started as a Swedish-


Adobe



Estonian venture, and the Swedish commercial music streaming service Spotify, which has over 60 million users worldwide. Two years after Skype started, it was sold to eBay for $2.6 billion and eventually Microsoft acquired it in 2011 for $8.5 billion.

Meanwhile, the Finnish are cornering the market for mobile gaming. After Nokia's cellphone demise, a startup culture flourished in Finland, helping to create a booming mobile game industry with companies like Rovio and Supercell, which created the hugely popular Angry Birds and Clash of Clans games.

In 2013, Supercell sold a 51 percent stake to Japan's SoftBank and GungHo for 1.5 billion euros.

Niklas Zennstrom, the Swedish co-founder of Skype and now CEO of Atomico, a technology investment firm based in London, says things are improving. "Since I started Skype in 2002, the market has changed tremendously for the better," he said recently at a European venture capital conference in Geneva.

The EU's executive Commission in Brussels has a long-term plan to speed things up and help European startups become the next big Internet company.

It aims on the one hand to make a more unified EU market by reducing red tape and differences in business laws. On the other, it is taking a tougher stance on dominant Internet companies, particularly Google, to foster competition.

Experts say that while the policies might help, they are unlikely to be enough in themselves.

"Legislation will always create a context for growth, whether that's through taxation or incentives, but the real value comes from connections between people and a focus and real desire on solving real human problems," says Duncan Lamb, who was a software designer at Nokia and is now the new design director at TransferWise.com, a financial services online company based in London and Tallinn, Estonia.

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MICROSOFT OFFICE UPDATE EMPHASIZES COLLABORATION

Microsoft has released a major update for Office, one of its most successful software products, with new features that reflect the company's effort to adapt to shifts in how people use computers and software.

The updated versions of Microsoft's popular word-processing, spreadsheet and email programs are heavy on collaboration tools that let people share information and work together online. Multiple people will be able to edit the same document simultaneously. As you start typing on a Word document, for instance, the letters immediately appear on your collaborator's screen with a flag showing you as the author.

Competitors including Google have offered this feature in their online editing software, and Microsoft has had a version in the Web version of Office. Microsoft executive Jared Spataro said it's the first time it's available in the more powerful stand-alone product.

The new Office also integrates with Microsoft's Skype conferencing service and its Bing search engine.

Microsoft is also nudging customers to buy the new Office 2016 as part of an online subscription service, known as Office 365, as the traditional practice of selling one-time updates seems threatened. Office 365, which starts at $70 a year, also includes online storage and other services that let users access their files on any Internet-connected device. Microsoft plans to release feature updates monthly to subscribers only.

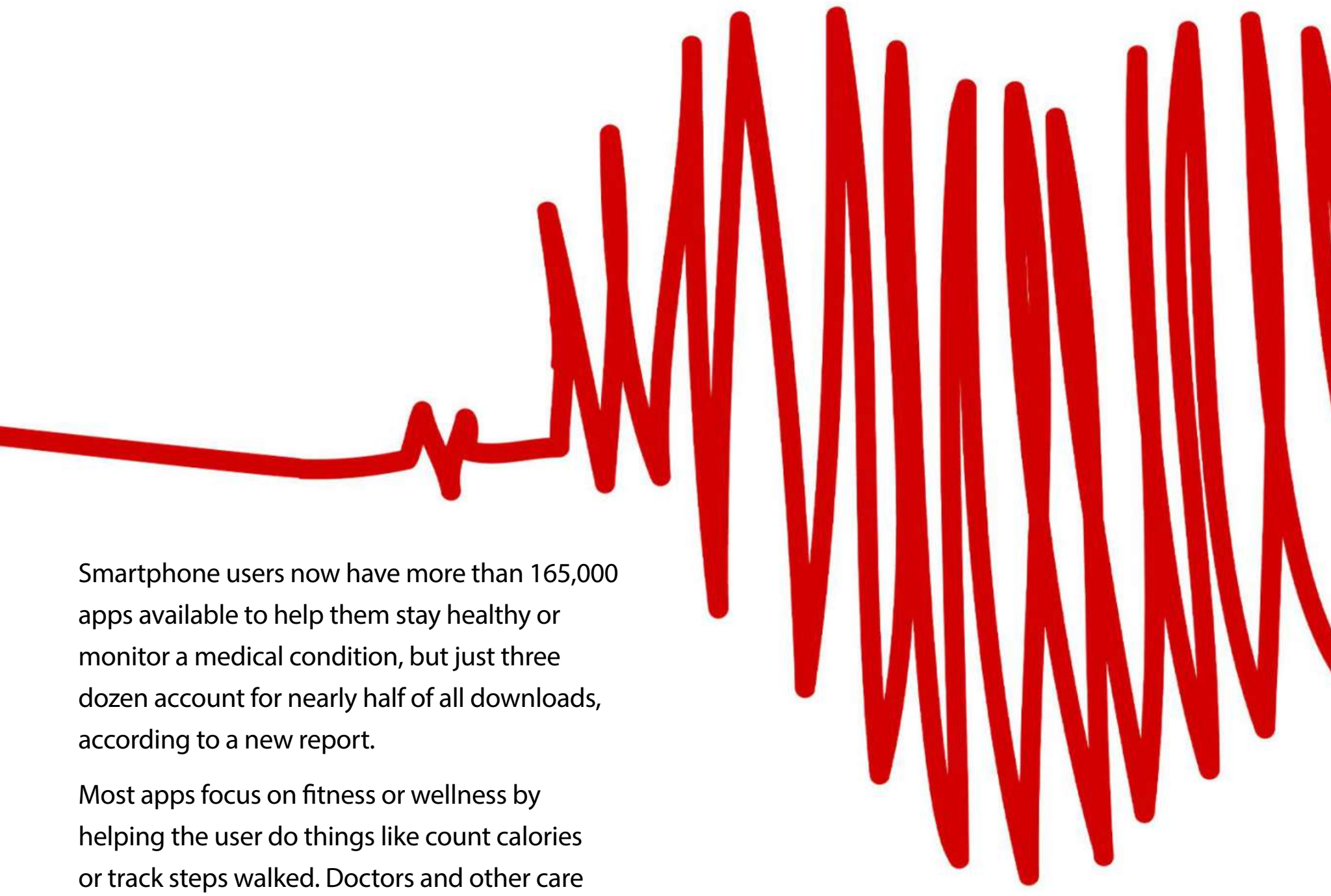
Subscription sales may also be a good way for Microsoft to build a stronger revenue stream. Many people today are buying PCs less often and also slowing their purchases of new software, Bernstein Research analyst Mark Moerdler said in a recent report. He noted that Office is an important product for Microsoft, providing as much as a quarter of the company's revenue last year.

Office 2016 is the first major Office update for Windows computers since 2013. In recent months, Microsoft has released a series of new Office apps for iPhones, iPads and Android devices, as well as Mac computers.

Executives say the company recognizes that many people use a variety of devices during the day, and not all of them are based on Microsoft's Windows operating system. They say the new Office 2016 for Windows is designed to be consistent and familiar, although not identical, to the Office apps that work on other systems. Microsoft says the new collaboration tools will eventually appear on the Mac.

Even as Microsoft pushes its Office 365 subscription, it will offer Office 2016 for Windows and Mac computers as a one-time purchase, starting at $150. The one-time purchase won't include the monthly feature updates, even for customers who buy it a year from now. Casual users can also get Office for free on Windows, but it's a touch-optimized version with limited features, including a restriction that only one document can be opened at once.

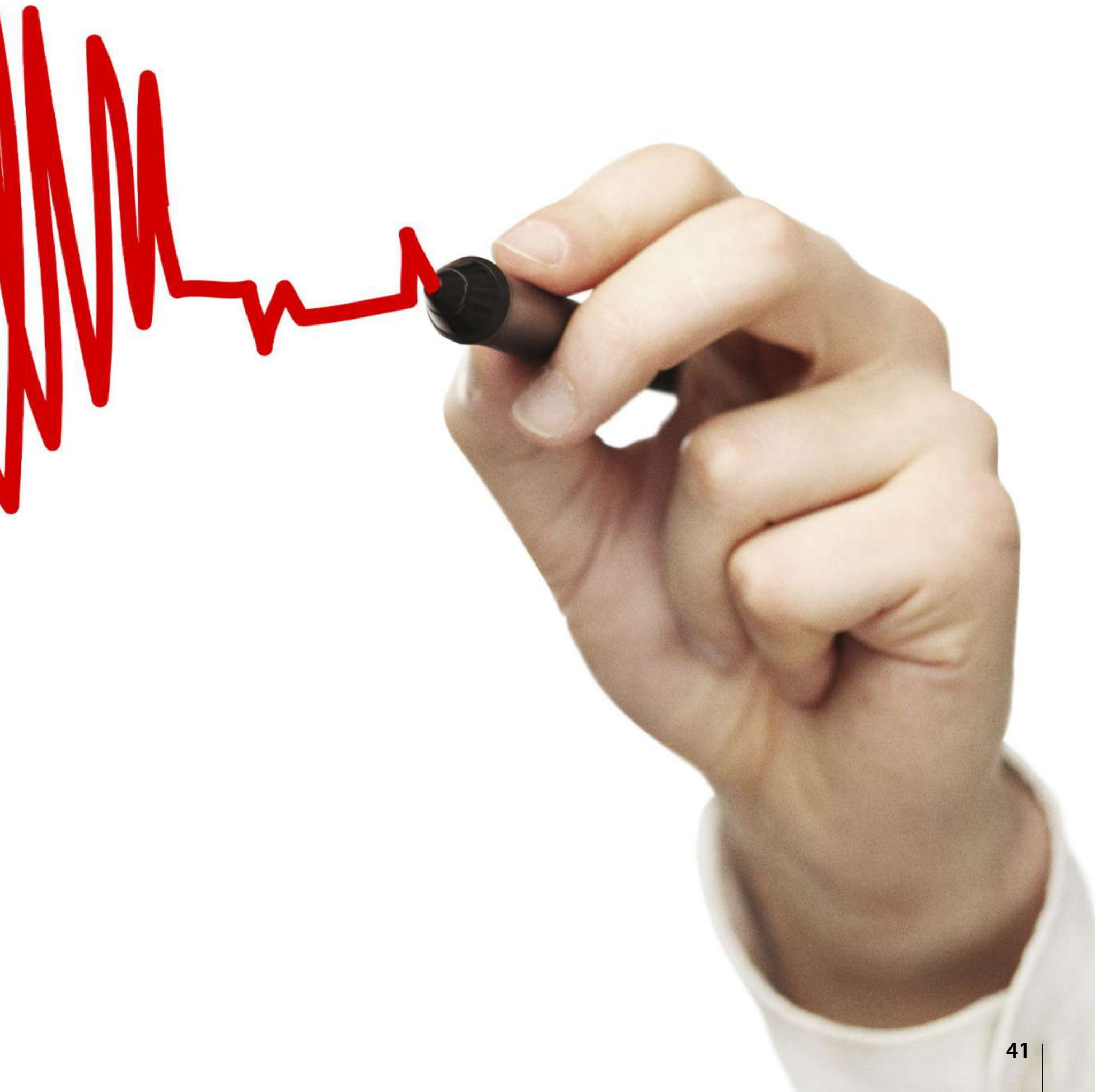
REPORT HEALTH CARE APPS AVAILABLE IN US TOP 165,000



Smartphone users now have more than 165,000 apps available to help them stay healthy or monitor a medical condition, but just three dozen account for nearly half of all downloads, according to a new report.

Most apps focus on fitness or wellness by helping the user do things like count calories or track steps walked. Doctors and other care providers also are taking a growing interest in using apps to help patients, but concerns about a lack of research and data protection are limiting wider use of the technology, the IMS Institute for Healthcare Informatics said.

Even so, health app use is shifting from being a novelty to more of a core part of care for many people, said Murray Aitken, the institute's executive director.



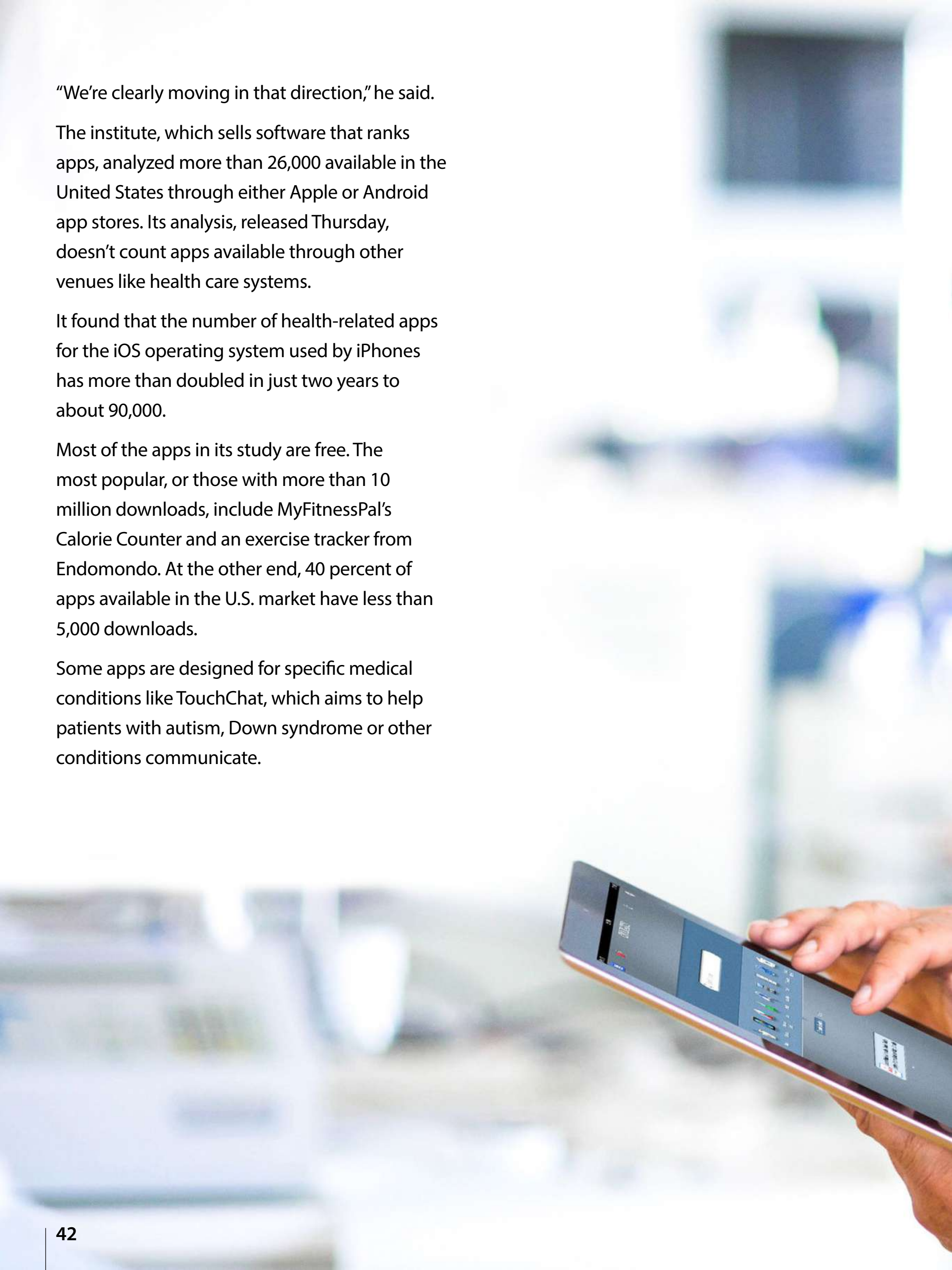
"We're clearly moving in that direction," he said.

The institute, which sells software that ranks apps, analyzed more than 26,000 available in the United States through either Apple or Android app stores. Its analysis, released Thursday, doesn't count apps available through other venues like health care systems.

It found that the number of health-related apps for the iOS operating system used by iPhones has more than doubled in just two years to about 90,000.

Most of the apps in its study are free. The most popular, or those with more than 10 million downloads, include MyFitnessPal's Calorie Counter and an exercise tracker from Endomondo. At the other end, 40 percent of apps available in the U.S. market have less than 5,000 downloads.

Some apps are designed for specific medical conditions like TouchChat, which aims to help patients with autism, Down syndrome or other conditions communicate.





Calorie Counter also is among those most frequently recommended by doctors, along with the weight-loss app Lose It.

Dr. Mike Sevilla said he started recommending apps to patients a few years ago after they began asking for advice about them. He frequently recommends apps to help patients track their exercise or diet. The Salem, Ohio, family doctor also said the Mayo Clinic offers good apps to help people learn about conditions like diabetes.

Dr. Robert Wergin doesn't recommend apps to patients yet, but he uses one he heard about at a conference to help profile cardiovascular risk.

The Milford, Nebraska-based president of the American Academy of Family Physicians said he's still getting familiar with the use of apps, and he'd like to see more evidence-based research that shows whether they can improve health before he starts recommending them.

"But I think there's great potential," he said.



APPLE WITHDRAWS SOME CHINA APPS AFTER MALWARE FOUND



Apple Inc. has removed some applications from its App Store after developers in China were tricked into using software tools that added malicious code in an unusual security breach.

Apple gave no details of which companies were affected. But Tencent Ltd. said its popular WeChat app was affected and the company released a new version after spotting the malicious code. Chinese news reports said others affected included banks, an airline and a popular music service.

The malicious code spread through a counterfeit version of Apple's Xcode tools used to create apps for its iPhones and iPads, according to the company. It said the counterfeit tools spread when developers obtained them from "untrusted sources" rather than directly from the company.




14:10
Saturday 4 October
slide to unlock



The malicious software collects information from infected devices and uploads it to outside servers, according to Palo Alto Networks, a U.S.-based security firm, which investigated the malware. It was first publicized last week by researchers at Alibaba Group, the e-commerce giant, who dubbed it XcodeGhost.

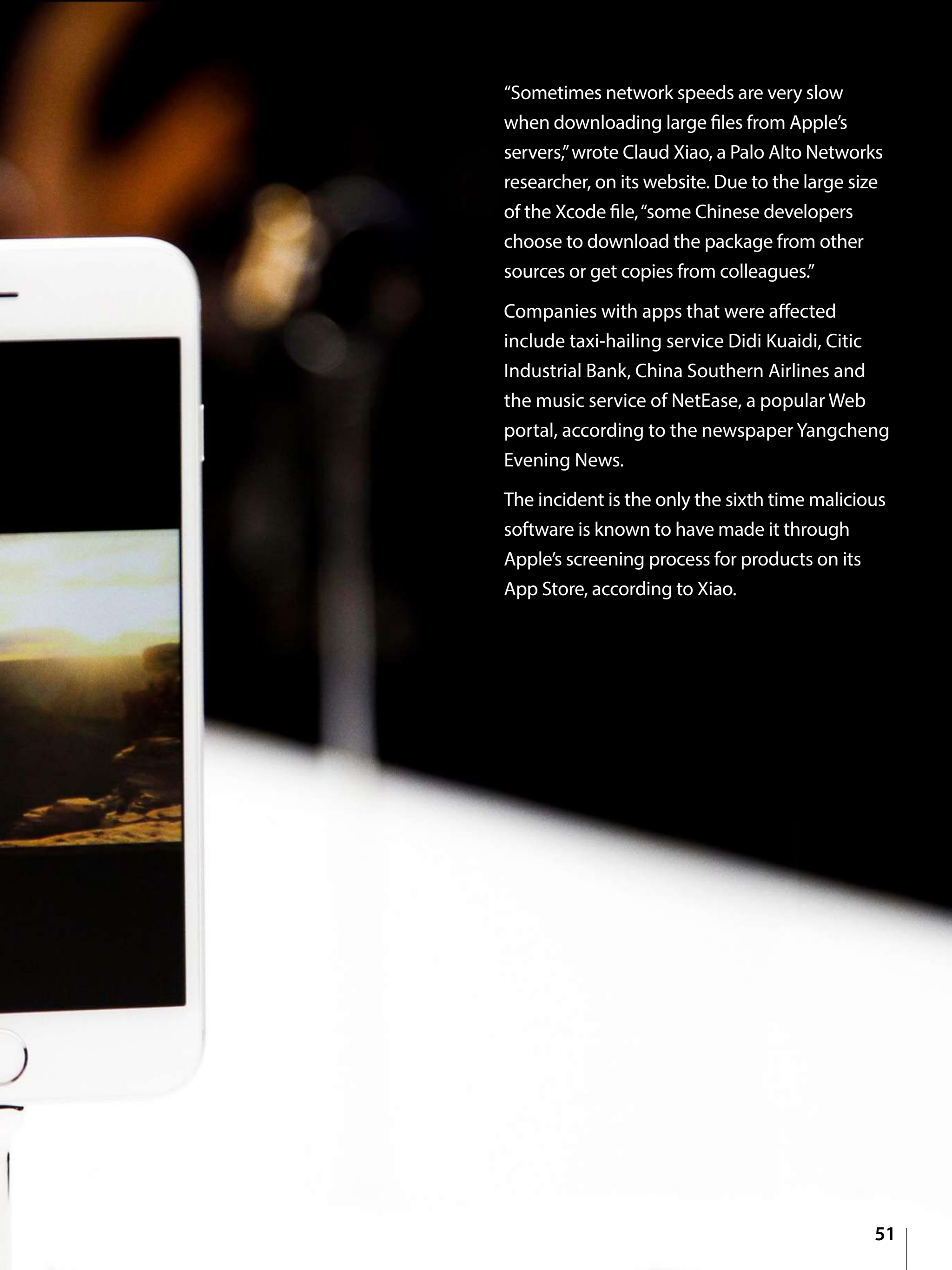
Cybersecurity experts say the episode shows that any device, including those running Apple's iOS software, can be vulnerable to hackers even though Apple is known for rigorously scrutinizing apps that are offered in its store.

"I wouldn't say that the floodgates for iOS malware are open now, but this vector is probably something that other attackers are going to try to replicate in the future," said Ryan Olson, director of threat intelligence for Palo Alto Networks, in an interview. He said Apple is undoubtedly working on improving its ability to block similar attempts.

Hackers are increasingly looking for new ways to target mobile apps and devices, including iPhones, because they are so widely used by many consumers, added Darren Hayes, a cyber-security expert at Pace University in New York.

The creators of this malware took advantage of public frustration with Beijing's Internet filters, which hamper access to Apple and other foreign websites. That prompts some people to use copies of foreign software or documents that are posted on websites within China to speed up access.





"Sometimes network speeds are very slow when downloading large files from Apple's servers," wrote Claud Xiao, a Palo Alto Networks researcher, on its website. Due to the large size of the Xcode file, "some Chinese developers choose to download the package from other sources or get copies from colleagues."

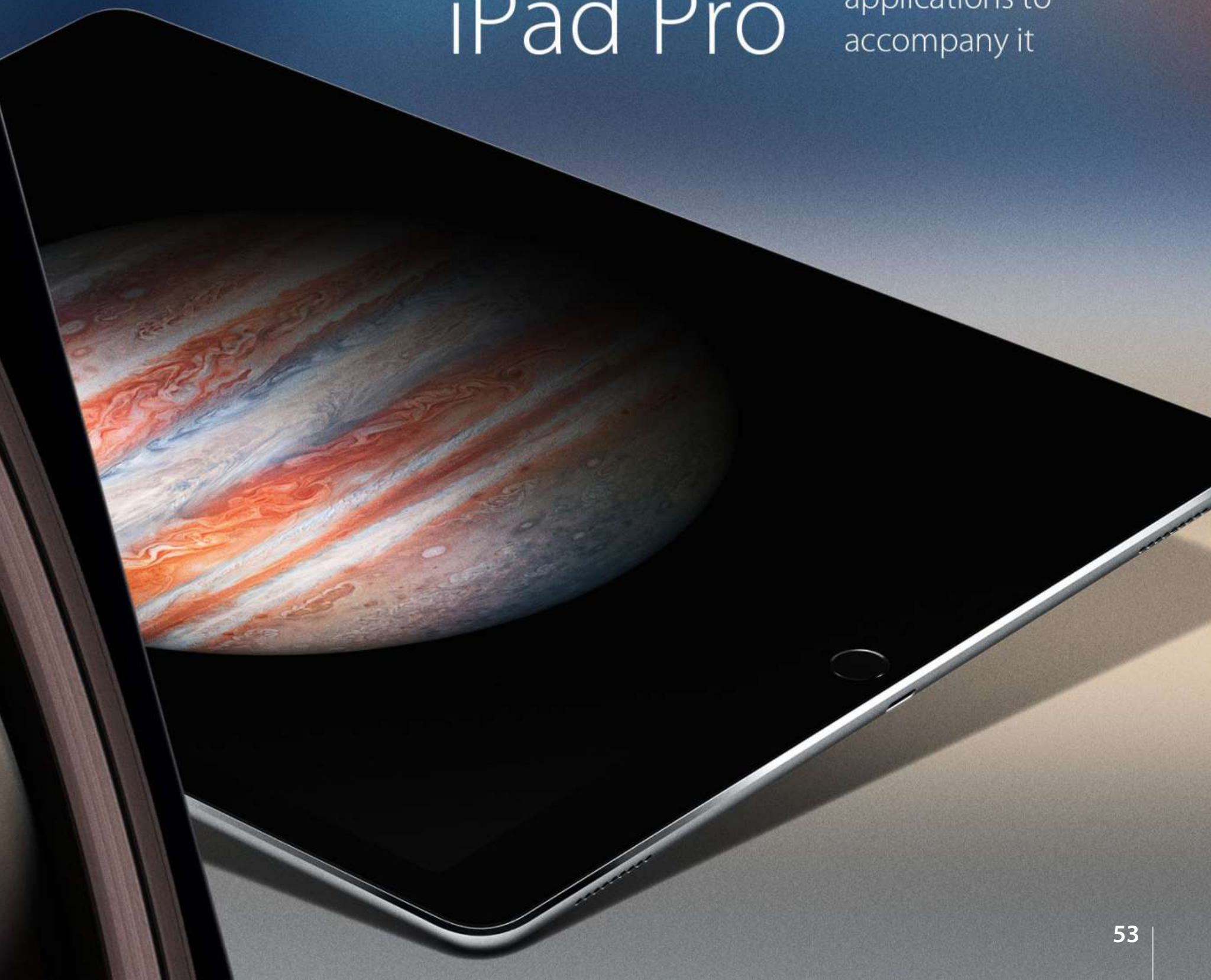
Companies with apps that were affected include taxi-hailing service Didi Kuaidi, Citic Industrial Bank, China Southern Airlines and the music service of NetEase, a popular Web portal, according to the newspaper Yangcheng Evening News.

The incident is the only the sixth time malicious software is known to have made it through Apple's screening process for products on its App Store, according to Xiao.



Pro for it! The powerful applications for the new iPad Pro

Lots of impressive professional applications to accompany it



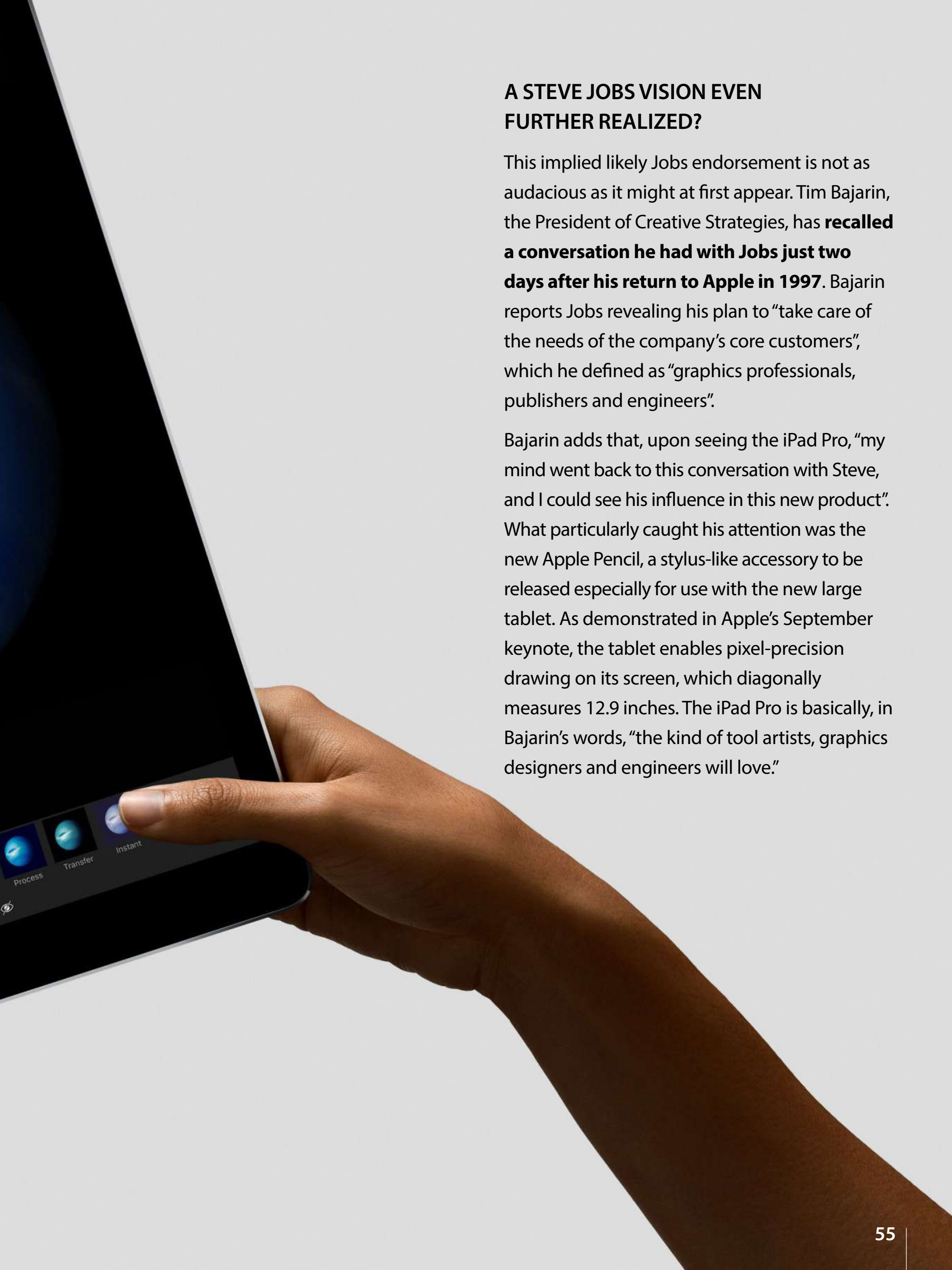


When, on January 27, 2010, Apple announced the first version of the iPad, then CEO Steve Jobs described it as "**our most advanced technology in a magical and revolutionary device**", adding that it "will connect users with their apps and content in a much more intimate, intuitive and fun way than ever before." Changes to the iPad since then have largely been in the form of subtle refinements - but, with the upcoming iPad Pro, both the largest and most powerful addition yet to the product line, Apple has unveiled a device that Jobs could have announced in similarly enthusiastic terms.

A STEVE JOBS VISION EVEN FURTHER REALIZED?

This implied likely Jobs endorsement is not as audacious as it might at first appear. Tim Bajarin, the President of Creative Strategies, has **recalled a conversation he had with Jobs just two days after his return to Apple in 1997**. Bajarin reports Jobs revealing his plan to "take care of the needs of the company's core customers", which he defined as "graphics professionals, publishers and engineers".

Bajarin adds that, upon seeing the iPad Pro, "my mind went back to this conversation with Steve, and I could see his influence in this new product". What particularly caught his attention was the new Apple Pencil, a stylus-like accessory to be released especially for use with the new large tablet. As demonstrated in Apple's September keynote, the tablet enables pixel-precision drawing on its screen, which diagonally measures 12.9 inches. The iPad Pro is basically, in Bajarin's words, "the kind of tool artists, graphics designers and engineers will love."

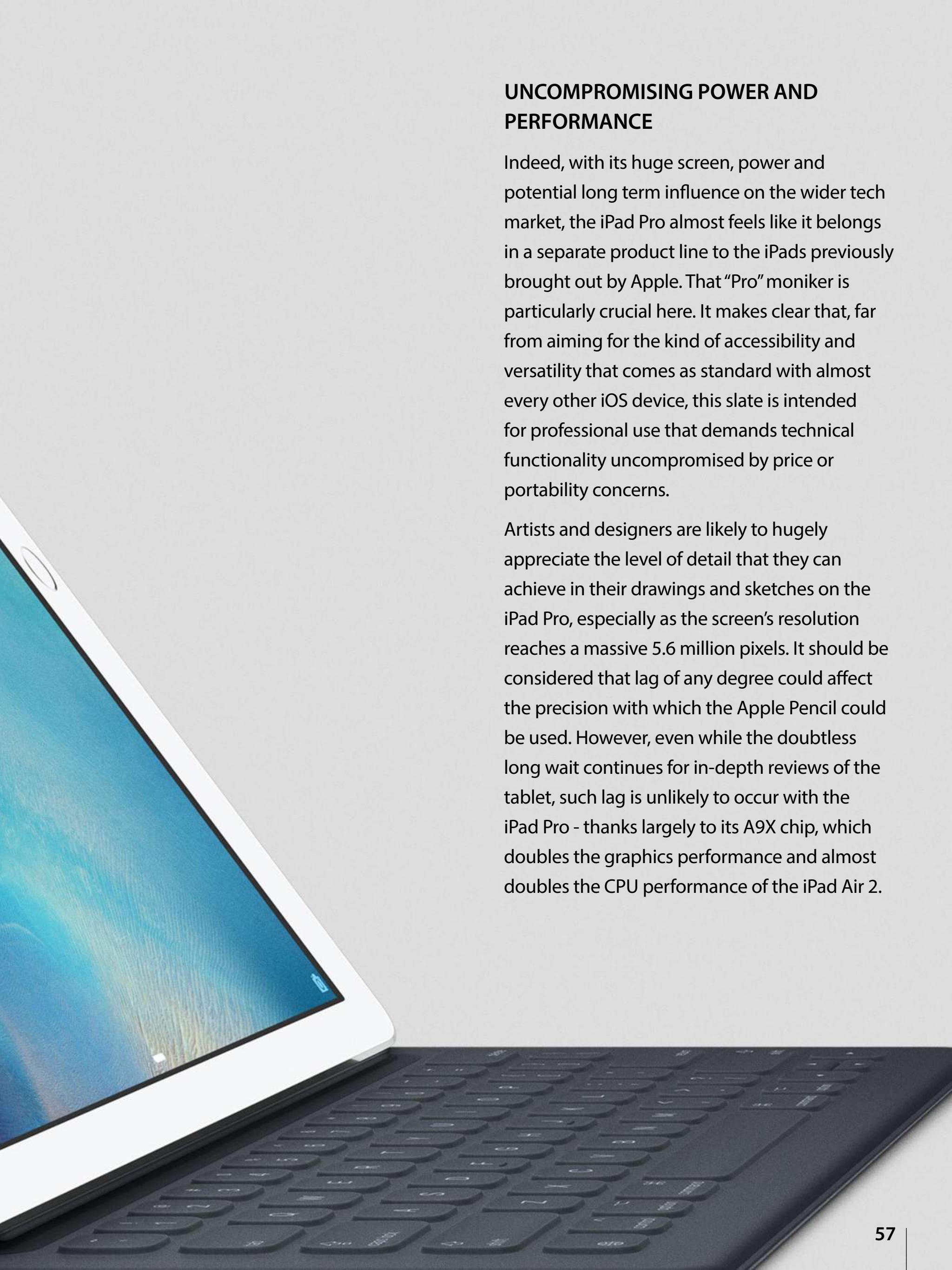



9:41
Wednesday, September 9

UNCOMPROMISING POWER AND PERFORMANCE

Indeed, with its huge screen, power and potential long term influence on the wider tech market, the iPad Pro almost feels like it belongs in a separate product line to the iPads previously brought out by Apple. That "Pro" moniker is particularly crucial here. It makes clear that, far from aiming for the kind of accessibility and versatility that comes as standard with almost every other iOS device, this slate is intended for professional use that demands technical functionality uncompromised by price or portability concerns.

Artists and designers are likely to hugely appreciate the level of detail that they can achieve in their drawings and sketches on the iPad Pro, especially as the screen's resolution reaches a massive 5.6 million pixels. It should be considered that lag of any degree could affect the precision with which the Apple Pencil could be used. However, even while the doubtless long wait continues for in-depth reviews of the tablet, such lag is unlikely to occur with the iPad Pro - thanks largely to its A9X chip, which doubles the graphics performance and almost doubles the CPU performance of the iPad Air 2.





PICTURE THIS: BRAND NEW GRAPHICS APPS FOR THE iPAD PRO

At a basic level, the Apple Pencil will enable quick doodles for brainstorming in the Notes app, and adding handwritten annotations to PDFs and documents to be sent through Mail. At a far more sophisticated level, this accessory could be used for intricate creative illustrations and sketches, rich with writing and color, in advanced third party apps like Paper by FiftyThree. This provides **something of a virtual artist's kit and, in its original form for iPad, won Apple's App of the Year accolade**.

In fact, graphic artists and designers watching Apple's September keynote must have had that unmistakable feeling of Christmas arriving



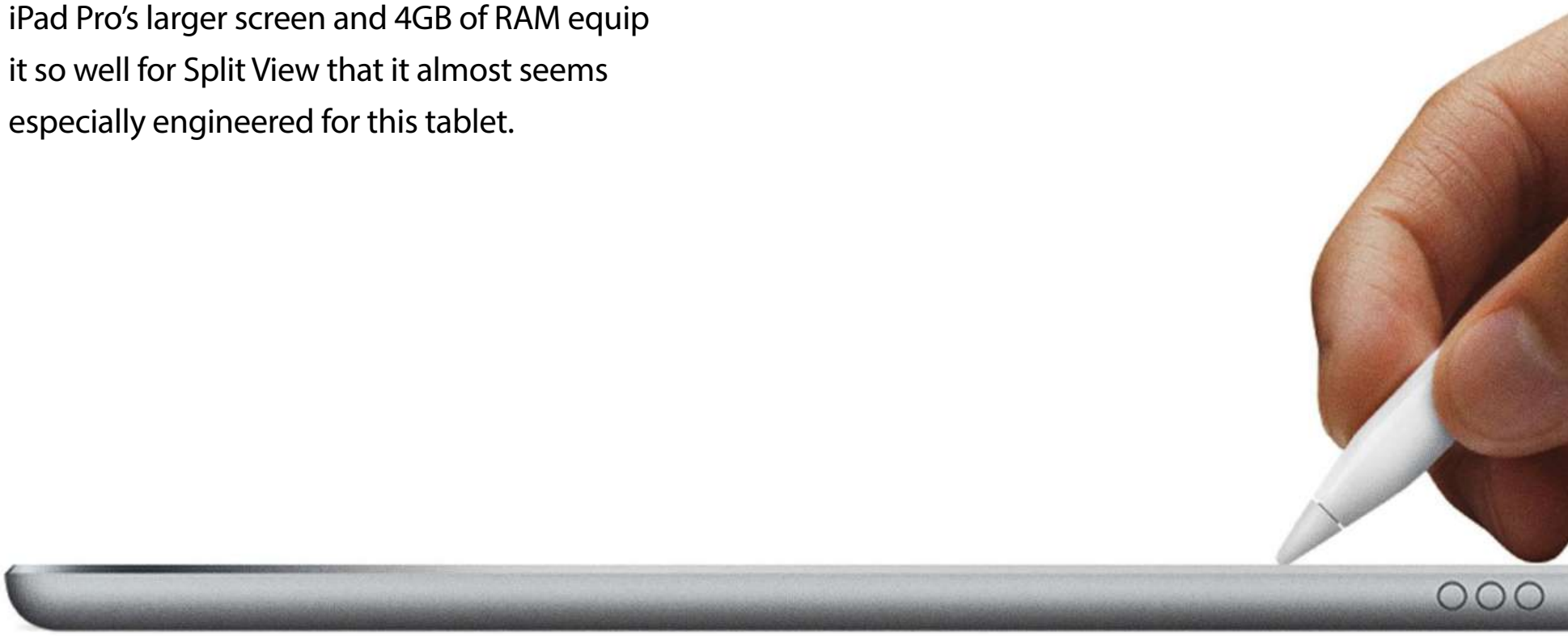
early when Adobe demonstrated **a whole new piece of software for the iPad Pro - called Photoshop Fix - alongside two other apps for the tablet, Photoshop Comp CC and Photoshop Sketch**. Photoshop Fix is suitable for retouching huge images in real time, while its facial detection feature enables easier alteration of facial features and expressions.

And then **there's UMake, a 3D design app** that we could imagine proving especially useful for architects and industrial designers eager to visualize their ideas from blueprints. On September 9, Phil Schiller, Apple's Senior Vice President of Worldwide Marketing, gave us a brief preview of how this will look on the iPad Pro, before claiming that this app, too, will make good use of the Apple Pencil.

THE AMAZING FUNCTIONALITY OF MICROSOFT OFFICE ON THE iPAD PRO

Despite Microsoft's fluctuations in fortunes since the company's peak of popularity in the 1990s, one thing that has never changed is Microsoft Office's reputation as the best and most widely-used productivity software suite. As Schiller said on stage, "these guys know productivity" - and promptly taking his place on stage was Kirk Koenigsbauer, Corporate Vice President of Microsoft Office, who was there to demonstrate the effectiveness of this software on the iPad Pro.

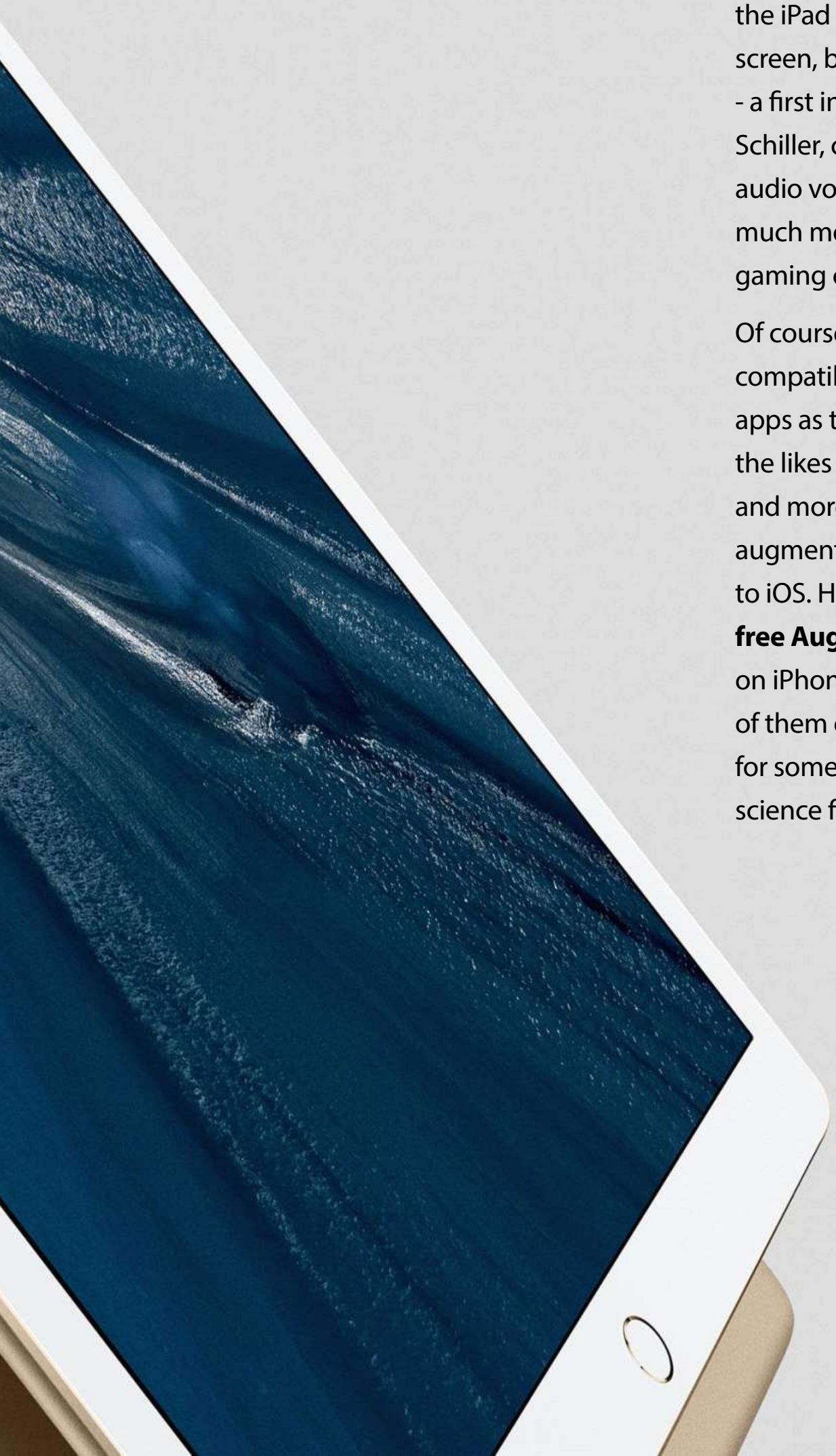
As **we have recently recalled from seeing this demonstration**, the multitasking Split View feature introduced to iPads with iOS 9 significantly bolsters the iPad as a productivity tool. Though the 2GB of RAM present in both the iPad Air and the new iPad Mini 4 allows for smooth use of Split View on these devices, the iPad Pro's larger screen and 4GB of RAM equip it so well for Split View that it almost seems especially engineered for this tablet.



As Koenigsbauer demonstrated, within Word, it will be possible to make colored mark-ups on documents using the Apple Pencil and copy and paste charts from Excel into Word. That ever-familiar presentation software, PowerPoint, can also be used on the iPad Pro - and it was shown how a chart could also, with PowerPoint and Excel open side-by-side on-screen, be copied and pasted into a presentation slide. This has obvious implications for how business presentations and university lectures, to cite just two examples, could be more easily prepared on an iPad than ever before.







THE FUTURE COULD BE CLOSER THAN WE THINK...

In narration on September 9, Apple's Chief Design Officer, Jony Ive, talked of the iPad's unique ability to provide "an immersive experience". This is arguably even more true of the iPad Pro, due to not just its generously-sized screen, but also its four-speaker sound system - a first in any Apple device, and, according to Schiller, capable of providing "three times the audio volume of an iPad Air 2". Just imagine how much more - yes - immersive music, movies and gaming could be...

Of course, as iPad Pro runs on iOS 9, it will be compatible with all of the same multimedia apps as the rest of the iOS device line - think the likes of Apple Music, Spotify, iTunes, Netflix and more. It will also be compatible with the augmented reality apps that have been brought to iOS. However, while these apps, **such as the free Augment**, certainly remain very functional on iPhones and iPod Touches, the experience of them on the iPad Pro has the potential for something much more akin to ambitious science fiction turned science fact.





A HUGE TABLET THAT COULD MEET HUGE AMBITIONS

The iPad Pro, then, looks set to live up its name and provide nothing less than a professional experience for a large variety of creators and consumers. Whether it's graphics, art, documents, music, games or even thrillingly futuristic augmented reality that is being created or consumed, the iPad Pro should make it all run with very few, if any, technical hiccups. Come the slate's eventual release this November, a lot of dreams will be ripe for realization - perhaps even those of a certain former Apple boss. ■

by Benjamin Kerry & Gavin Lenaghan



GROUPON TO CUT 1,100 JOBS, ABOUT 10 PERCENT OF WORK FORCE

Groupon is cutting 1,100 jobs in the coming year, roughly 10 percent of its workforce.

The e-commerce and online deals company said in a blog post Tuesday that the cuts are mainly in its international business. Having already closed its operations in Greece and Turkey, Groupon said it is also leaving Morocco, Panama, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Taiwan, Thailand and Uruguay.

The Chicago company said it wants to focus its money on energy on fewer countries.

"We saw that the investment required to bring our technology, tools and marketplace to every one of our 40 (plus) countries isn't commensurate with the return at this point," Chief Operating Officer Rich Williams wrote in a blog post.

Groupon Inc. said in a regulatory filing that the cuts will be essentially done by September 2016 and lead to pre-tax charges of up to $35 million, the bulk of it in the current quarter.

Shares of Groupon fell 10 cents, or 2.4 percent, to $4.07 in midday trading. The stock has traded in the range of $3.53 and $8.43 in the past 52 weeks.





ANNUAL JAPAN VIDEO GAME SHOW OPENS WITH RECORD EXHIBITORS

Japan's annual video game show opened Thursday with a record number of exhibitors, including independent companies and newcomers, a positive sign for an industry that has faced tough competition from games on social media and mobile devices.

The Tokyo Game Show, which continues through Sunday, at Makuhari Messe convention center in the Tokyo suburb of Chiba, features more than 2,000 booths from 480 exhibitors.

Although Japanese game machine makers such as Sony Corp. and Nintendo Co. have been leaders in the industry for decades, the Tokyo show underlined its increasingly global makeup, with more than half of the exhibitors coming from abroad.

A special section was set up for independent game designers from Asia.

Alwyn Lee, chief executive of Daylight Studios, a small independent game company from Singapore, was showing a PC and Mac version of his game that starred potato-shaped characters.

He acknowledged the market was bigger in the U.S. than in Japan, but his company has invested in adapting the game to the Japanese language, set to launch in a couple of months here.

"We are getting feedback to adapt to the Japanese market," he said. "Japan is very famous for the mobile market, but this is the first time we are trying the desktop market."

YouTube and online retailer Amazon with its Twitch game service, both brands not typically associated with games, were also first-time exhibitors at the Tokyo show.

The event also had the perennial favorites, such as the latest versions of the "Street Fighter" combat game from Capcom and the "Metal Gear Solid" action adventure game from Konami Digital Entertainment.




PS4
Project
Morpheus


BRAVELY DEFAULT


ARK SPHERE
画面をタッチしてください

It also highlighted offerings from lesser known companies.

One was "Oyaji Girly," which means "girlish old man," designed by female high school students, billed as an action game in which an old man is targeted to take on female traits.

Earlier this week, Sony Computer Entertainment, the game division of the Japanese electronics and entertainment company, announced a 5,000 yen ($41) price cut in Japan for the Play Station 4 home console, another move designed to woo fans. The console will now sell for 34,980 yen ($289) starting Oct. 1.

There were long lines at Sony's booth for its VR headset, which offers virtual reality games, promised for next year.


PLAYER1
KEN
67
PLAYER2
NASH

iTunes

Review



Trailer

Movies & TV Shows

Rotten **Tomatoes**

CERTIFIED FRESH 85%



iTunes **Preview**

by Kenneth Branagh
Genre: Kids & Family
Released: 2015
Price: $19.99

★★★★★
758 Ratings

Cinderella

In this live action revival of the legendary fairy tale, Cinderella (Lily James) is, as ever, eager to go to the ball - but her wicked stepmother, Lady Tremaine (Cate Blanchett) and evil stepsisters, Drisella (Sophie McShera) and Anastasia (Holliday Grainger) have something to say about that. Nonetheless, Cinderella's Prince Charming (Richard Madden) could still be waiting...

FIVE FACTS:

1. This movie is heavily inspired by Disney's 1950 classic animated film of the same name.

2. Cinderella is directed by Kenneth Branagh and scripted by Chris Weitz.

3. Hayley Atwell, best known for playing Peggy Carter in movies and TV series of the Marvel Cinematic Universe, appears in this film as Cinderella's mother.

4. Cinderella globally premiered **on February 13, 2015 at the Berlin International Film Festival**.

5. In a positive review of the film, Time's Richard Corliss **particularly praised Cate Blanchett's performance, calling her "Cate the Blanch-ificent".**

See more in iTunes



Cate Blanchett Interview

The Connection

In 1970s France, real-life magistrate Pierre Michel is on a mission to take apart the drug smuggling operation known to history as the French Connection. The kingpin he pursues is Gatean "Tany" Zampa (Gilles Lellouche), whose "La French" prepares to retaliate. Through drug raids, arrests and interrogations, Michel soon starts perceiving a threat much closer to home...

FIVE FACTS:

1. The Connection takes place in Marseille in 1975.

2. Distributor Drafthouse Films has described this movie as the "European flipside" to the American-made 1971 crime movie classic The French Connection.

3. On review aggregator site Rotten Tomatoes, the Critics Consensus reads: "The Connection doesn't do itself any favors by forcing comparisons to The French Connection, but it's a reasonably entertaining thriller in its own right."

4. Jean Dujardin is best known for his lead role in the 2011 black-and-white romantic drama The Artist.

5. The animated Gaumont logo that opens The Connection is itself from the 1970s.



iTunes **Preview**

by Cédric Jimenez
Genre: Thriller
Released: 2015
Price: $12.99

★★★★½
25 Ratings

Rotten **Tomatoes**
CERTIFIED FRESH
74%



Trailer

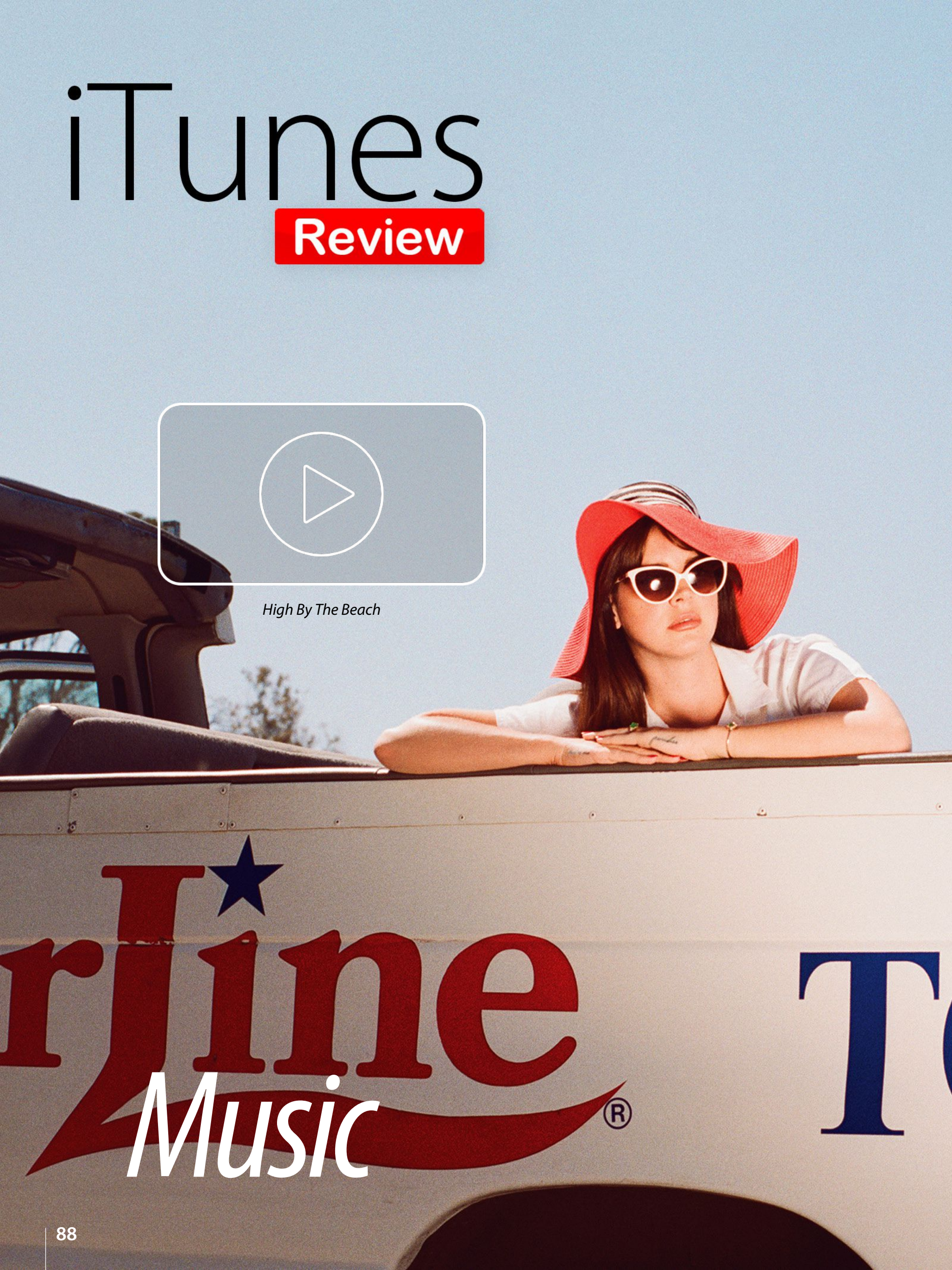




Motorcycle Scene

iTunes

Review



High By The Beach

Music



iTunes Preview

Genre: Alternative
Released: Sep 18, 2015
14 Songs
Price: $12.99

★★★★★
2563 Ratings

Honeymoon

Lana Del Rey

The self-described "Hollywood sadcore" singer is back with her fourth studio album. It's eagerly anticipated by millions of fans who have grown to love her 1950s and 1960s style dream pop, and acclaimed by music critics for its sophistication and Del Rey's typically accomplished vocals. People who love her previous releases Born to Die and Paradise should start getting especially excited...

FIVE FACTS:

1. Del Rey has said that she chose her distinctive stage name because it reminded her "**of the glamor of the seaside. It sounded gorgeous coming off the tip of the tongue.**"

2. In March, it was reported that, **in the US, Del Rey was the most streamed female artist on Spotify**.

3. Del Rey's inspirations **have included Nirvana's Kurt Cobain**.

4. Back in 2008, under her then stage name of Lizzy Grant, **Del Rey referred to her music as "Hawaiian glam metal and surf noir"**.

5. While working on Honeymoon, Del Rey commented in an interview with Billboard: "**It's growing into something I really like. I'm kind of enjoying sinking into this more noirish feel for this one**."



See more in iTunes





Interview

How Big, How Blue, How Beautiful (Deluxe)

Florence + The Machine



iTunes **Preview**

Genre: Alternative
Released: Jun 02, 2015
16 Songs
Price: $12.99

★★★★★
2243 Ratings

The British indie rock band Florence + The Machine, fronted by Florence Welch, will be performing at the Apple Music Festival on September 28 - so why not prepare by listening to the deluxe version of their chart-topping album of this summer? This new release adds five extra tracks to those of the original album, including demo versions of the title track and "Third Eye".

FIVE FACTS:

1. Welsh has described the band's name as **"a private joke that got out of hand", as bandmate Isabella Summers used to be nicknamed Isabella Machine.**

2. How Big, How Blue, How Beautiful was **the band's first album to top the US Billboard 200 chart**.

3. This year, the band became **the first with a female lead vocalist to headline the Glastonbury Festival since Skunk Anansie in 1999.**

4. Florence + The Machine's **special guest for their Apple Music Festival concert at London's Roundhouse will be James Bay**.

5. You will be able to watch their performance **for free through Apple Music on an iPhone, iPad or iPod Touch, through iTunes on your computer or through Apple TV**.



What Kind of Man



Live Performance and Interview



A LITTLE LEAGUE FOR 'MINECRAFT' GAMERS

On a recent afternoon inside the Cinemark Playa Vista multiplex, a sold-out movie theater was packed with more than 100 children and their parents. The youngsters weren't gathering to watch "Minions" or "Inside Out" for the zillionth time. Instead, they came armed with their laptops to competitively play the video game "Minecraft" together.

"The theaters want to be a destination not just for movies but for entertainment," said Brett Morris, president and COO of Super League Gaming, a company that's turning conventional movie theaters into e-sports playgrounds for children.

From their laptops, the players - mostly ages 7 to 14 - duked it on a virtual "Minecraft" playing field while a third-person perspective was projected on the mammoth theater screen, welcoming parental spectators and broadcasting bragging rights at the end of each round.

After hosting several similar such preview events, Super League Gaming is kicking off its inaugural six-week fall season Oct. 5 in more than 30 cities, including Chicago, Philadelphia, Miami and Anchorage, Alaska. The season's top winner will receive a $5,000 scholarship.

Super League Gaming, which has partnered with the AMC and Regal theater chains in addition to Cinemark, was born out of Morris' desire to marry the comradery of little league sports with the communal nature of old-school game arcades.

"We grew up in a generation where we would go into an arcade and compete," said Morris, who has two gamer daughters. "It wasn't just about competition. The memories we relished most were the social moments. Our kids don't have that face-to-face interaction."

Morris said the league's organizers selected "Minecraft" because the hugely popular brick-building game encourages creativity and collaboration. It's also an open-source title, meaning Super League Gaming organizers can freely tinker with it to suit their competitive needs.

"We've made `Minecraft,' the world's most popular game, better by adding this theater element," said Morris. "We've built it to take advantage of all the interaction that the kids can have inside the theater. It's not the same experience as just playing by yourself."

Despite the competitive aspect of Super League Gaming, Morris said the organization isn't necessarily looking to groom the next generation of e-sports athletes.

"Currently, e-sports is very competitive," said Morris. "It's different with `Minecraft.' We see ourselves as a recreational league below e-sports, where you can actually come in and play. Our kids are coming to the theater to play together, not just watch."

Online:
http://www.superleague.com

REVIEW: APPLE WATCH IMPROVES WITH NEW SOFTWARE



Apple Watch's new software brings useful enhancements, though it's not the same as getting a new watch.

That same watch can now do more. For the first time, non-Apple apps are able to display video and use the watch's sensors and controls. In addition, the watch now works with Wi-Fi, extending how far you can go without a phone with you. These enhancements address many of my initial frustrations with the watch.

But the hardware itself isn't changing, apart for some new color and band choices. Promised battery life remains at 18 hours, something Apple will need to address in upcoming generations given that rival smartwatches are promising more. For now, you might need to buy a spare charger to give the watch a power boost while you're sitting at work. Even 15 minutes will help.

The watchOS 2 update for Apple Watch arrived Monday, delayed by nearly a week as Apple fixed an unspecified bug.



Image: Dickson Lee

The update comes as Apple Inc. pulled several Chinese apps, including the popular WeChat, from its app store after third-party developers were tricked into inserting malicious code into their apps. The malicious software isn't believed to affect the watch's functionality, though it could collect data on the tethered iPhone and send them to remote servers, according to security experts. Users should delete any Chinese apps they got or updated recently from their iPhones and iPads and get new versions from the app store once they are available.

As for the watch update, first make sure your phone has the latest software, iOS 9. Then go to the Apple Watch app on the phone, choose "General" and then "Software Update."


26°



Image: Dickson Lee

Apple's own fitness apps are smarter with Monday's update:

- Before, the watch displayed only current pace during your runs. I've found that to swing wildly on all sorts of fitness trackers, including Apple Watch. During my most recent marathon, my usually reliable Garmin GPS had me going faster than two minutes a mile at one point - more than three times as fast as the winners. Average pace is more useful, as it factors in the occasional errant readings. The watch finally lets you choose that instead, though you need to dig in the settings on the phone to change that.

- The watch also tracks mile-by-mile splits for the first time, matching what many phone apps, the Fitbit Surge and the Microsoft Band offer. It's not the same as choosing your own splits manually, such as after each lap on a track. But it's progress. The splits aren't displayed on the watch, though, but in the Activity app on the phone after you sync your workout.

- The nagging reminders that you need to stand up if you've been sitting at your desk for too long can be paused if you happen to be on a flight or a road trip. And it's clearer whether you've already earned credit for standing during


24



a given hour. A blinking blue bar appears in the Activity app on the watch if you haven't yet.

You also have more choices for watch faces: Choose photos of your kids or friends to appear on the main watch screen. Or choose time-lapse video from one of six cities. At 10 p.m. your time, you see what Paris or Shanghai looks like at 10 p.m. local time. It's cheaper than a flight. When charging, the watch functions like an alarm clock on a nightstand.

Beyond that, the watch update lets you reply to email and set more than 12 friends as favorites.

Many improvements are still pending, however. Apple apps have had the ability to run natively on the watch, meaning they can access sensors and controls directly and aren't merely extensions of phone apps. Now, non-Apple apps have that capability. But those apps are just starting to appear. For instance, GoPro will let you use the watch as a viewfinder for its camera, but not for a few more months.

Even with the update, the Apple Watch still isn't a must-have gadget for everyone, the way smartphones have become. But Apple is headed in the right direction, and the update should improve the experience for those who do get the watch now.

JUDGE LARGELY UPHOLDS BERKELEY CELLPHONE ORDINANCE

A federal judge has mostly upheld a new Berkeley ordinance that requires cellphone sellers to warn customers about keeping their cellphones too close to their bodies.

U.S. District Judge Edward Chen on Monday rejected the wireless industry's request for a preliminary injunction against the entire ordinance. CTIA-The Wireless Association said the ordinance was pre-empted by federal law and violated the First Amendment.

Chen said that except for one part, the law was consistent with Federal Communications Commission statements and the legitimate government interests of consumer awareness and public safety. "There is a reasonable scientific basis to believe that (radio-frequency) radiation at some levels can and do present health risks," he said.

The city ordinance requires cellphone retailers to tell customers that they could be exposed to radio-frequency radiation at levels exceeding federal guidelines if they keep their cellphones in their pants, shirt pockets or bras while the devices are switched on and connected to a wireless network.

Chen blocked the law from going into effect until the city removed a line that said the potential risk is greater for children. That contention is a matter of scientific debate, Chen said.

Theodore Olson, an attorney for the wireless association, said the group was pleased that the judge had blocked enforcement of the ordinance as drafted and was confident that the entire ordinance would ultimately be struck down.

"As the federal government has repeatedly recognized, the overwhelming weight of scientific evidence refutes Berkeley's ill-informed and misleading mandatory warnings about cellphones," he said.



REVIEW: BETTER PHOTOS, ANIMATED SHOTS IN NEW iPHONES



Photography gets even better with Apple's new iPhones.

Although the iPhone is already among the best smartphones for everyday shots, images from previous iPhones haven't been as sharp as what rival cameras produce. The new iPhone 6s and 6s Plus models address that, with 50 percent more detail, while introducing animation for still images and brighter low-light selfies.

Screens remain at 4.7 inches and 5.5 inches diagonally, but they have new technology offering shortcuts to frequent tasks.

The iPhone 6s starts at $200 with a two-year contract in the U.S., and $649 without. The Plus costs $100 more. Both models start shipping Friday in the U.S., China, Japan, the U.K. and several other markets. Last year's models are now $100 cheaper than the new ones.

You might not need a 6s if you just got a new phone last year, but go for the 6s over the 6 if you're ready to upgrade from an older model. After testing both new models for nearly two weeks, I find the price difference worth it.





CAMERAS GET BETTER

At 12 megapixels, instead of 8 megapixels, the new cameras produce sharper photos. The difference is particularly noticeable when cropping or enlarging photos for printing. Samsung's high-end phones are at 16 megapixels, but their images are wider. If you chop off the sides to match the iPhone's 4-by-3 ratio, resolution is about the same. More important is getting your shot in focus, and the automatic focus on both cameras is good.

Other improvements in the iPhone's camera result in better contrast and less distortion than before. Trees look greener and buildings browner in several test shots. Samsung's phones have also been good at contrast, but colors are sometimes off. Orange construction barriers look red using Samsung's Galaxy S6 phone, while a greenish statue came out grey. The iPhones reproduce colors more accurately.

For video, the iPhone catches up with several Android phones and can now record at Ultra HD, also known as 4K. There aren't many 4K displays available yet, so this is mostly about recording memories for tomorrow's screens. But the new phones do let you zoom in during playback, so you can see some of that 4K detail today. The Plus model also has better anti-shake technology, so scenes don't look as though you're on a boat.

Still images on the front camera improve to 5 megapixels, from 1.2 megapixels, matching Samsung's phones. Better yet, the new iPhone's screen functions as a flash so faces come out when snapping selfies in bars and other low-light settings. This is rare in smartphones.

ANIMATED PHOTOS

When you open the camera app, the phone continually records video in the background. Snap a shot, and the phone saves some of that video leading to that shot, plus some afterward - three seconds in all. Now, that photo comes to life when you view it. Apple calls this "Live Photos." Just tap and hold the screen to see the three-second animation. Share it with other iPhones, the Apple Watch and Mac computers - and soon, through Facebook.

HTC's One camera had a similar feature, but you have to know about it and turn that on. With iPhones, it's on by default. It takes practice and requires about double the storage of a regular photo. But it's worth it - especially for parents and pet owners. Imagine taking a shot of your kid blowing out birthday candles, then tapping the screen to see it in action.






iPhone
S

A NEW TOUCH SCREEN

The iPhone's screen is now three-dimensional, as the phone responds differently to light, medium and hard touches.

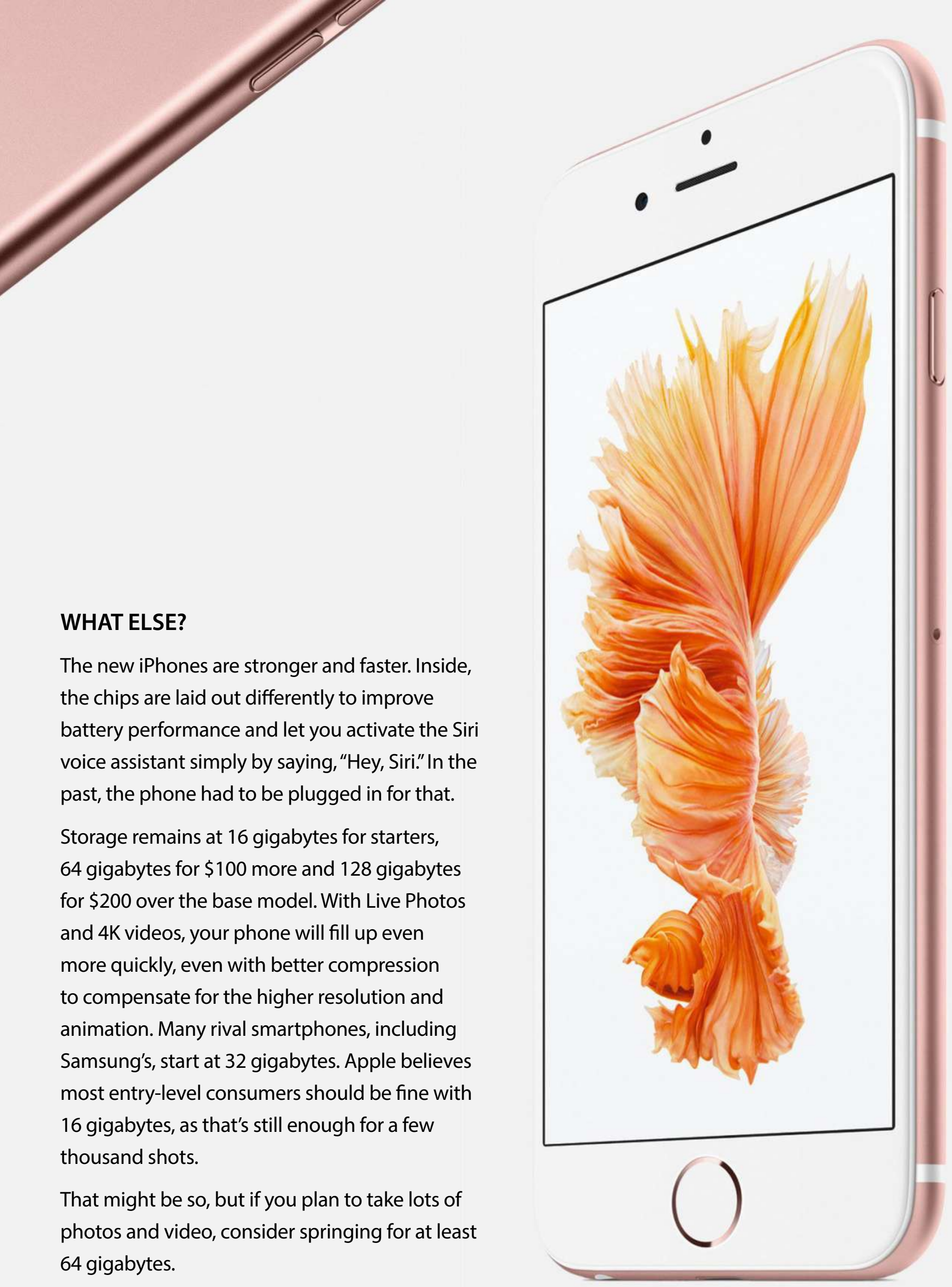
A light touch does what the phone does today. You can open an app or move a cursor when typing.

Press a bit harder on an app icon to access a contextual menu, similar to right-clicking the mouse on Windows computers. Do this with the camera app to quickly take a selfie or record video. Normally, you have to open the camera first, then choose what you want to do.

Inside apps, this medium touch opens a preview, such as a map when you click on an address in a message. Lift your finger, and you're back to the message. But press even harder to launch the Maps app. In some apps, options slide up from the bottom with a medium touch.

This feature, called 3D Touch, takes getting used to. Out of habit, I still open apps the regular way, even though 3D Touch is quicker. But it could one day be as useful as the fingerprint reader on phones. Now that I am used to that, I rarely enter passcodes anymore.





WHAT ELSE?

The new iPhones are stronger and faster. Inside, the chips are laid out differently to improve battery performance and let you activate the Siri voice assistant simply by saying, "Hey, Siri." In the past, the phone had to be plugged in for that.

Storage remains at 16 gigabytes for starters, 64 gigabytes for $100 more and 128 gigabytes for $200 over the base model. With Live Photos and 4K videos, your phone will fill up even more quickly, even with better compression to compensate for the higher resolution and animation. Many rival smartphones, including Samsung's, start at 32 gigabytes. Apple believes most entry-level consumers should be fine with 16 gigabytes, as that's still enough for a few thousand shots.

That might be so, but if you plan to take lots of photos and video, consider springing for at least 64 gigabytes.

FACEBOOK NOW SELLING VIDEO ADS TARGETED USERS WILL SEE



Facebook is now selling video ads that the target audience is sure to see.

The world's biggest online social network said Thursday that advertisers can now buy ads that will be seen - from top to bottom - on a user's screen. Of course, this is still no guarantee that the user will choose to watch the entire video. But the option is likely to make advertisers happy.

Facebook, which started showing mobile ads in 2012, views video as the next frontier in advertising. The company says the new buying option will be available for every type of ad, including text, photo and video.

Facebook also formed a partnership with analytics company Moat to measure the effectiveness of video ads, including how many people watch them and for how long.







REVIEW: THE BEARABLE NICENESS OF 'THE INTERN'

The world of Nancy Meyers sure is beautiful.

But her studied production design and dreamy interiors have become such a focal point, that they've almost eclipsed her storytelling. It marginalizes what she does, and how she has, from "The Parent Trap" to "It's Complicated," created her own lovely and implausible cottage industry of movies that are, for the most part, exceedingly pleasant to watch.

She tells stories about divorce, affairs, and later life loves, using wit and humor that is somehow blue and sassy, but also innocent. Meyers is one of the more retro writer-directors working today.

"The Intern," her first film in six years, is a curious case, melding together those modern retro sensibilities in a way that even further distances her work from reality. This is not a love story, though. It's a workplace tale about a smiley, unflappable 70-year-old retiree Ben (Robert De Niro) who goes to intern for the 30-something CEO of an online retail startup.

With only the most polite issues peppering the plot, it's less a study of generational conflict and more of a series of loosely connected events about a guardian angel sent out of retirement to tell Anne Hathaway that she really can have it all.

Ben's adjustment to working with all these kids might be the hook, but Jules Ostin (Hathaway) is the centerpiece and heart of the movie. In the past year and a half, she has built an insanely successful clothing business from the ground up and is now juggling a kid, her relationship with her stay-at-home husband, and a board of directors who want to replace her with a more seasoned CEO.

She has her quirks. but Jules is neither the prototypical cutesy, clumsy comedy heroine nor the passionless executive who just needs to loosen up. In fact, Jules isn't a type at all. Hathaway plays her as serious, wise, playful, and insecure. Every time you think she might descend into caricature, Hathaway pulls back and grounds Jules.

Her unusually developed character has the somewhat adverse effect of exaggerating Ben's

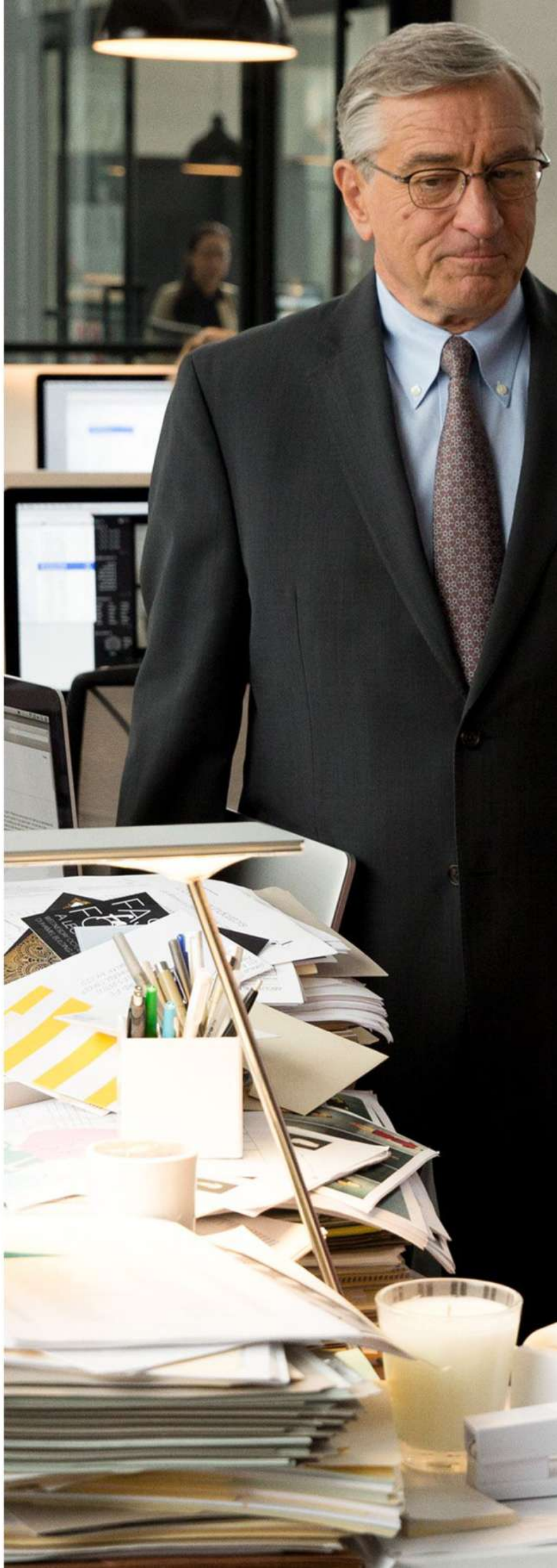


Image: Francois Duhamel



one-note, but charming simplicity. Ben spent his entire career at a factory that made phonebooks. He was married, now he's widowed, retired and bored of it. De Niro plays him as so nice, and so cuddly that he's almost alien. He is the grandpa from "Up" without the edge, here to tell millennial men to stop dressing like little boys, to carry handkerchiefs because ladies cry, to stay at work until the boss leaves, and to talk to, not text, romantic prospects.

Beyond a flirtation with the office masseuse (Rene Russo), Ben has nowhere to grow. He's set in his perfectly PC retro-modern ways, just there to help everyone - especially Jules.

It's an odd relationship with few actual revelations. That's because there's no big conflict. Jules says she doesn't really like old people, and at one point worries that Ben knows too much about her, but those all dissolve without much ceremony.

There are of course some other issues that Jules and Ben must deal with, but even those are minor. Nothing is ever that wrong in the Meyers-verse. It might not be a life you recognize from reality, but is the one that we fantasize about thanks to magazines and movies like this.

It can be cloying at times, but the disconnected timelessness of it all is all the more reason for Meyers to keep doing her own thing as long as she can. She doesn't speak to what's trendy in filmmaking. Aside from the technology, "The Intern" could have just as easily existed in 1990.

Still, in keeping everything so polite, "The Intern," while being a pleasant and watchable movie, is also entirely ephemeral. Maybe that's why, like Meyers' other films, "The Intern" will likely be so re-watchable, too.

"The Intern," a Warner Bros. release, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America for "some suggestive content and brief strong language." Running time: 121 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

MPAA Definition of PG-13: Parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.




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