First enjoyed as a consumer device, the new breed of tablet computers is rapidly expanding into the workplace. The Federal Aviation Authority has even authorized the iPad for pilots, replacing the usual heavy bag full of paper charts and manuals. Will tablets make a similar shift in legal departments and law firms?

# iPad 2 — Passing Fad or Laptop Replacement?

BY RON POL

If so, this shift will put one of the most locked-down, least-PC-friendly tablets to the test in the workplace. Is the iPad 2 a laptop replacement?

### Tablets — work or play?

Laptops unchained the mobile professional. Smartphones added a new dimension of "instant on" accessibility. With elements of both, the tablet has been embraced by personal users; its convenience factor has become increasingly evident on commuter trains and planes.

Tablets also have a place at work. I now read many work papers — *ACC Docket*, *The Economist* — and many news sources, exclusively on an iPad. A colleague, juggling board papers, business magazines and memoranda in dozens of folders and a bulging bag, glanced wistfully at the same amount of information, which I held easily in one hand.

But for most mobile professionals, tablets need to be more than media consumption devices; they also need to create, manipulate and distribute work product. If they can do this better than laptops, the business case for an invaluable work tool makes itself.

### Better in many ways

Tablets offer useful advantages over laptops. With its long battery life, lack of cables and a screen comparable in size to a small laptop, for most trips, I no longer need a bag. "Instant on" and

> But for most mobile professionals, tablets need to be more than media consumption devices; they also need to create, manipulate and distribute work product.

not being tethered to a tabletop or lap also helps. Switch it on and immediately jot a few notes, check the calendar and fire off some emails. No need to find a work space or the extra time to accommodate powering up and shutting down a laptop. Beyond Wi-Fi coverage, the iPad also connects to an iPhone's personal hotspot, eliminating the need for multiple mobile accounts.

### Not designed as laptop replacement

One of the biggest drawbacks of tablets is their limited laptop-type functionality, such as keyboard/mouse for bigger documents, limited processing power and a lack of easy compatibility with the main software packages "back at the ranch" — especially between the notorious Apple/Microsoft divide.

Like many business users, I use a range of products and want them all to work seamlessly. The iPad is excellent by itself, but as a work tool, it lacks the humility to work "natively" in a PC environment. However, smart developers have come up with some great solutions. So can a few hardware add-ons and software applications transform the iPad into a serious business tool?

### Hardware fix

For larger documents, and when you have a few spare hours to tackle the bigger jobs, the Crux 360 or ClamCase transform the iPad into an original tablet computer format. A protective case flips over to become a keyboard and flips again to sit behind your iPad when it's being used as a tablet.

For road warriors, keeping the iPad's slim form is a huge priority. The iEagle Foldable Wireless Keyboard and separate stand, or Apple's Wireless Keyboard combined with the In-case Origami Workstation (a keyboard case that converts to a stand for most tablets), provide an elegant solution.

*Editor's note: This is part one of a two-part series.*

RON POL is past president of New Zealand's Corporate Lawyers' Association, acting general counsel for public and private organizations and advises legal departments and law firms. Pol is also an award-winning columnist for his work with the *ACC Docket*. He welcomes comments at *ronald.pol@teamfactors.com*.

*Part two*

### Software fix

Many businesses use Microsoft Office and other proprietary applications. The obvious solution is to buy the Apple equivalent, **Pages** (for

# iPad 2 — Passing Fad or Laptop Replacement?

BY RON POL

Word), **Keynote** (for PowerPoint) and **Numbers** (for Excel), but frankly, I don't want any of my work product siloed. If I create a document in the office, or use a colleague's document, I want to work on it while traveling, and vice versa, regardless of how it was created.

I need a customer-centric solution, with my work product at its core, irrespective of platform, thus bypassing any proprietary shootout between Apple, Microsoft or anyone else. Thankfully, there are plenty of options, although some systems work better with different workplace IT protocols: Some prevent remote access to work computers, while others allow systems that operate within the confines of a corporate firewall.

**Documents to Go** and **Quickoffice** provide office compatibility solutions for nearly any mobile device, with the ability to create, synchronize, and edit word processing, spreadsheets and presentation files on the go.

**LogMeIn** and **GoToMyPC** provide access to your main computer from your mobile device with internet connection.

> I need a customer-centric solution, with my work product at its core, irrespective of platform, thus bypassing any proprietary shootout between Apple, Microsoft or anyone else.

For example:
- There is no need to email documents to yourself. Most of these systems back up changes without the need to "save" or switch between devices. Edit a document on your tablet, your work computer or on the website, and it's automatically updated everywhere.
- There is no need to email big attachments either. Simply "share" a document with others;

Online backup systems like **SugarSync**, **Jungledisk**, **Mozy** and **Backblaze** are quickly becoming integrated with office compatibility systems, and some also operate as active day-to-day file-accessing systems (like **DropBox**, which also operates as a backup system).

anyone you choose can access any of the files or folders you select.
- Most of these systems offer plenty of free storage to get started, and if you use an existing member's link, *both* get additional free storage. (Use mine when you sign up for a free account, and we will both get additional free storage right off the bat: *www.sugarsync. com/referral?rf=fdftdoo6hwyit*.)

These systems also resolve the issue of limited processing power. With all your files easily accessible, there's less need to store locally on your mobile device, even as their capacity continues to expand. I now reserve offline access mostly for "plane reading" documents.

### Presentations fix

What a brilliant device to drive presentations: compact, powerful, instantly on. Well, the iPad would be, if it didn't have some serious drawbacks in this area.

The hardware side is easy: You'll need an **Apple VGA Adapter**, or something similar, to connect a projector. On the software side, a couple of apps resolve design issues that limit the iPad's capability as a great presentation tool. **Expedition VGA Browser** lets you run Keynote presentations, display websites and play videos through a projector. The real problem, however, is that the iPad won't run PowerPoint. Keynote is a good alternative, but I want the freedom to use both. Currently, the simplest fix involves converting presentations to PDF format, with PDF readers like **GoodReader** supporting "VGA out" for presenting.

Remaining problems with no solutions available (that I'm aware of):

RON POL is past president of New Zealand's Corporate Lawyers' Association, acting general counsel for public and private organizations and advises legal departments and law firms. Pol is also an award-winning columnist for his work with the *ACC Docket*. He welcomes comments at *ronald.pol@teamfactors.com*.

- Converting to PDF creates static slides without animations. Personally, I seldom use animations, so this is an easy trade-off for the ability to ditch the laptop. Preventing countless business users from accessing the full functionality of interactive presentations, video and live websites, however, is more of a problem.

- A more significant issue renders the iPad pretty much useless as a serious presentation tool. In some venues, with a projector and your mobile device at the back of the room, it's simply not possible to use an iPad to run your presentation. A spare USB port on a laptop lets you use a remote presenter, but the iPad has no USB ports. Ironically, for an inherently

mobile device, the real problem is being tethered to an iPad when delivering a presentation — having to swipe each page without the ability to walk about to better engage your audience.

- Although **i-Clickr PowerPoint Remote** lets you use an iPhone to control PowerPoint presentations from laptops, at the time I am writing this column, I can't find an application enabling iPhones to run similar presentations from an iPad. This renders the iPad functionally useless as a presentation tool for most business people.

### Paper-only environments slipping away

Unable to run many common office applications natively, the iPad 2 remains mostly an elegant media consumption device, although a series of hardware and software workarounds can transform it into a laptop replacement for some business people.

The explosion of competitors might prompt change, but in the meantime, traditional laptops and other tablets that more effectively combine the functionality of USB ports and easier interaction with common office applications might deliver a more seamless business solution, especially for business travelers. And as pilots use them with no interference to navigation and electronic equipment, another paper-only environment will disappear when airlines also allow passengers to use tablets during an entire flight. ◣

*Have a comment on this article? Visit ACC's blog at* www.inhouseaccess.com/articles/acc-docket.

---

# ACC Webcasts

*ACC Webcasts offer CLE/CPD credits. They're right here.*

You need to get up to speed on the latest legal developments and fulfill your CLE/CPD requirements. ACC Webcasts are your answer. Convenient and cost-effective, live webcasts are offered weekly and dozens are available on demand. Expand your legal knowledge and earn CLE/CPD credits. Everything you need is right here.

webcasts.acc.com

ACC Association of Corporate Counsel