

## Why Darryn got "the tech pundits" wrong

Written by Philip Roy

Sunday, 07 February 2010 19:54 - Last Updated Monday, 08 February 2010 09:05

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This started as a comment response to [Darryn's blog post here](#) , but I then (as usual) began to ramble...so I'm going to post this as a blog post. Darryn, sorry if this offends, but I continue to be staggered by your selective logic...and this from someone who deals with computers every day! There are three sections of your post that I want to deal with....Multitasking, Camera and Flash.

### Multitasking

You begin by stating a definition of multitasking..."the simultaneous execution of **more than one program**

or task by a single computer processor". I've added my emphasis into that definition.

Multitasking can simply mean the running of more than one task, but as the definition also shows, it can also mean the running of more than one program....and it is the latter that the "pundits" are referring to when they express disappointment over the iPad. I said in an email to you that I felt you needed to read what was being said by people. I don't think you have. Please don't focus on the word "multitask"...

*read*

what people are saying.

You then go on to state a fact and opinion...."the fact that they can't run more than one application at one time" and "to perform two tasks at once doesn't make sense for low power devices".

I totally agree with that last part...if it impacts the performance of the hardware then having multitasking on is silly. But that's opinion...not fact.

But I can't understand how you determine fact. On one hand you seem to be saying that they can't run more than one application and the next, why would you want to? Fact vs opinion. They're not the same thing!

You did the same in the podcast when I argued you couldn't run two applications of my choosing on the iPhone. The example I gave was running Skype chat whilst using Bento. To prove that multitasking is possible in the way the "pundits" are talking, there is only one possible response you should have given..."Yes you can". But that wasn't your response. Your response was "but why would you want to?". Again...Fact vs opinion. They're not the same thing!

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The fact the Apple allow some music (i.e., the iPod portion of the iPhone) to play, but that I can't stream music from the Pandora app whilst using a different app shows that *true* multitasking is not possible. Selective tasks, yes....but not multitasking in the way the "pundits" are talking about it.

You're entitled to an opinion...and I encourage it....but I can't see how you equate your opinion with fact?? Suggesting how Apple have chosen to do things and *why*, does not change the technical facts. It certainly makes great opinion...but it doesn't mean the pundits were wrong for stating that fact and wishing it were different.

The iPad has a camera!!

Yes, you read it here folks!! Well...you read it in Darryn's piece actually. I'm amazed the news agencies haven't picked up on it.

Remember when we (we being, well, everyone except Darryn really) say "the iPad doesn't have a camera", Darryn says...and I quote...."Actually it does".

What an advertising opportunity Apple has missed out on!! Using Darryn's logic (basically, that you can attach a camera to an iPad) why doesn't Apple say that Macs come with a scanner, a printer, an external HD, an iPhone dock, a coffee warmer and a USB stick in the form of a dog dry humping a USB port?

Answer...because they don't.

These are all things you can attach. They don't come with it. It doesn't *have* that item as part of what you buy...it has the

*ability*

to use such an item connected to it. The argument of the pundits isn't that it lack the ability to connect a camera but that it doesn't include an

*inbuilt*

one within the iPad. Darryn, please

*read*

the criticisms and what they are referring to, rather than just selectively focusing on a phrase such as "doesn't have a camera". You're doing a disservice to yourself and certainly to the

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people who you appear to be suggesting got it wrong.

We get what you are saying...you can use an external camera, but stop shaping what these pundits are saying to support your argument. If they were saying "the iPad can't use an external camera", then fine...argue against it...but they're not.

Fact vs opinion. They're not the same thing!

Flash

I love this bit..."Incidentally they said the same thing about the iPhone but it's still browsing the web 3 years on with no issues at all."

What would you call "no issues"? A bloody big blue lego block in the middle of a keynote isn't an issue? Or on my iPhone isn't an issue? The fact that I can't access the various Flash-based sites that I frequent on my iPhone somehow isn't an issue? The fact that the presentation system that has been purchased for staff across our entire University outputs to Flash and won't play on an iPhone isn't an issue? Or maybe they should output to the multimedia PDF format...after all, it's one file and a PDF, but wait....the multimedia within it uses Flash...so again, "no issue"?

Maybe it's the company across the road from Massey, making a number of games for Flash-based phones in the Asian market, who will, if they have wanted any of these games to appear on an iPhone, have had to completely recode their apps. Is recoding an entire application what you would refer to as not an "issue"? Or maybe it's the fact that the forthcoming Adobe CS5 has to generate apps with their own inbuilt engine to run these apps (to save developers recoding) what you describe as something that isn't an "issue"?

The fact that discussion concerning Flash continues to dominate shows it *is* an issue. Just because you don't use Flash, doesn't mean the rest of us don't. Simply because you and many others are OK with the lack of Flash, doesn't mean it is not an issue for others. It is. If it's one that Apple chooses to ignore, then we have to live with that...but please don't suggest that the past 3 years of iPhone use have been something that no-one has taken issue with. The tech pundits, who clearly want to Flash, have.

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And to conclude...

I'll ignore the rest of your blog post as I'm not worried about pundits saying that the iPad isn't revolutionary and innovative...they're stupid if they say that....but I still won't be buying one...I want to end with your challenge....

*"In fact I challenge you to give me one example where Flash is so absolutely vital that the task can't be done some other way."*

Ok...so here goes. First, please stop just thinking of Flash as video. That's just one aspect of Flash.

The example I'd like to give is web conferencing. We needed a system for our University that allowed for multiple users to be online via the web, to communicate, collaborate and interact with each other, with minimal set up needed. Java systems we looked at were flawed in a number of ways...they required massive Java updates or downloads for many students, seemed to have no end of issues with firewalls, caused multiple windows to appear in (umm) multiple windows (I'll explain that a bit later) and seemed to focus on video and audio streaming...we needed something that could do more. If we used Java systems, we either needed to use Java's own video codecs (I think codec is the wrong term here but I can't be bothered going off to look) or required students to install even more software....in some instances Real Player, some instances Windows Media (which counted out Mac users) or make sure they all had a consistent version of QuickTime.

We selected Adobe Connect Acrobat Pro. It's a video conferencing system that lets you video, text and audio chat, share screens, take control of computers, upload and present PowerPoints, run polls, send students off to breakout rooms, play video clips, stop and draw over video clips, use a whiteboard tool and more...all in Flash. All a user needs is Flash....and all those activities appear in separate pods in one browser window. You dismiss them almost like a widget on your Mac screen....but they all appear in one browser window....and you can move the pods around the screen just like a widget too.

The whole reason we went for this system is we don't want to do things "some other way". We don't want a system that causes such a poor experience for students that they don't want to be

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a part of it. We wanted something that we could use instantaneously with our students. In surveys I ran with students in 2007, only 26% of students reported needing to install anything to participate..and then it was usually something like a 2Mb Flash player update. That's staggering, and all thanks to the proliferation of Flash, whether you love it or hate it. Also, I don't want to talk about my Masters research too much because it is currently being marked, but the responses from students to the technology was exceptionally high and exceptionally positive.

You might not want Flash on either the iPad or iPhone....but I would kill to see it on both. Suggesting that there are "no issues at all" suggests you aren't even reading what the "pundits" are saying. This isn't just about a substitute for Flash video and some interactivity. In many circumstances, there isn't a substitute.

Sure, disagree with them....but don't suggest that because you don't agree with them, and that Apple doesn't either, that it isn't an issue to others. It has been and continues to be something that a lot of us would like to see on the devices. Don't bury your head in the sand and suggest it isn't an issue, when clearly for a lot of people, it is. Maybe not for you.

The tech pundits didn't get it wrong. Neither did you. In instances where you both expressed an opinion, no-one can question the validity of your belief. But please, your views and theirs, doesn't stop cold hard facts.