

See Apple's pivotal product announcements through history

June 5 2023, by Michael Liedtke



Steven Jobs, then chairman of the board of Apple Computer, leans on the new Macintosh personal computer following a shareholder's meeting Jan. 24, 1984 in Cupertino, Ca. The Macintosh computer lived up to the revolutionary promise made by Apple co-founder Jobs at it's 1984 unveiling. Credit: AP Photo/Paul Sakuma, File

Apple has a long history of designing products that aren't the first to be introduced in a particular category but still redefine the market. With the [company unveiling a headset](#) equipped with virtual and augmented reality technology already available in other devices, here is a look back at some of Apple's other breakthrough products:

THE MACINTOSH COMPUTER, UNVEILED JANUARY 1984

Heralded by [a now-most famous TV commercial](#), the Macintosh computer lived up to the revolutionary promise made by Apple co-founder Steve Jobs during its 1984 unveiling. Among other things, the Mac ushered in the era of the graphical user interface (known as "GUI" in tech parlance) and the navigational mouse. In many ways, it was the first realization of Jobs' vision to turn computers into ["a bicycle of the mind."](#)

THE IPOD, UNVEILED OCTOBER 2001

Although it wasn't the first of its kind, the iPod changed the way people thought about digital music players just like Jimi Hendrix changed the way thought about the guitar. The iPod was compact, stylish, initially capable of storing up to 1,000 songs (the capacity would extend far

beyond that of the first model in 2001). It then spawned the iTunes story that provided a legal way to buy and download music at a time of rampant piracy. The device also signaled Apple might evolve into something more than a computer maker.

THE IPHONE, UNVEILED JANUARY 2007

It's difficult to overstate how much the iPhone has changed the world. In technical terms, it introduced the convenience of touchscreens at the time that a physical keyboard was still all the rage on the top-selling [smartphone](#)—the BlackBerry—when Jobs first took out what was all-in-one [computer](#), camera and music player out of his pocket in 2007. A year later, Apple would open a store that would make it common to think there must be an app for just about anything, [render the BlackBerry obsolete](#) and make smartphones indispensable.



Apple's digital music player, iPod, is displayed after its introduction by Apple Computer Inc. chief executive officer Steve Jobs during a news conference Tuesday, Oct. 23, 2001 in Cupertino, Calif. Although it wasn't the first of its kind, the iPod changed the way people thought about digital music players just like Jimi Hendrix changed the way thought about the guitar. Credit: AP Photo/Julie Jacobson, File

THE IPAD, UNVEILED JANUARY 2010

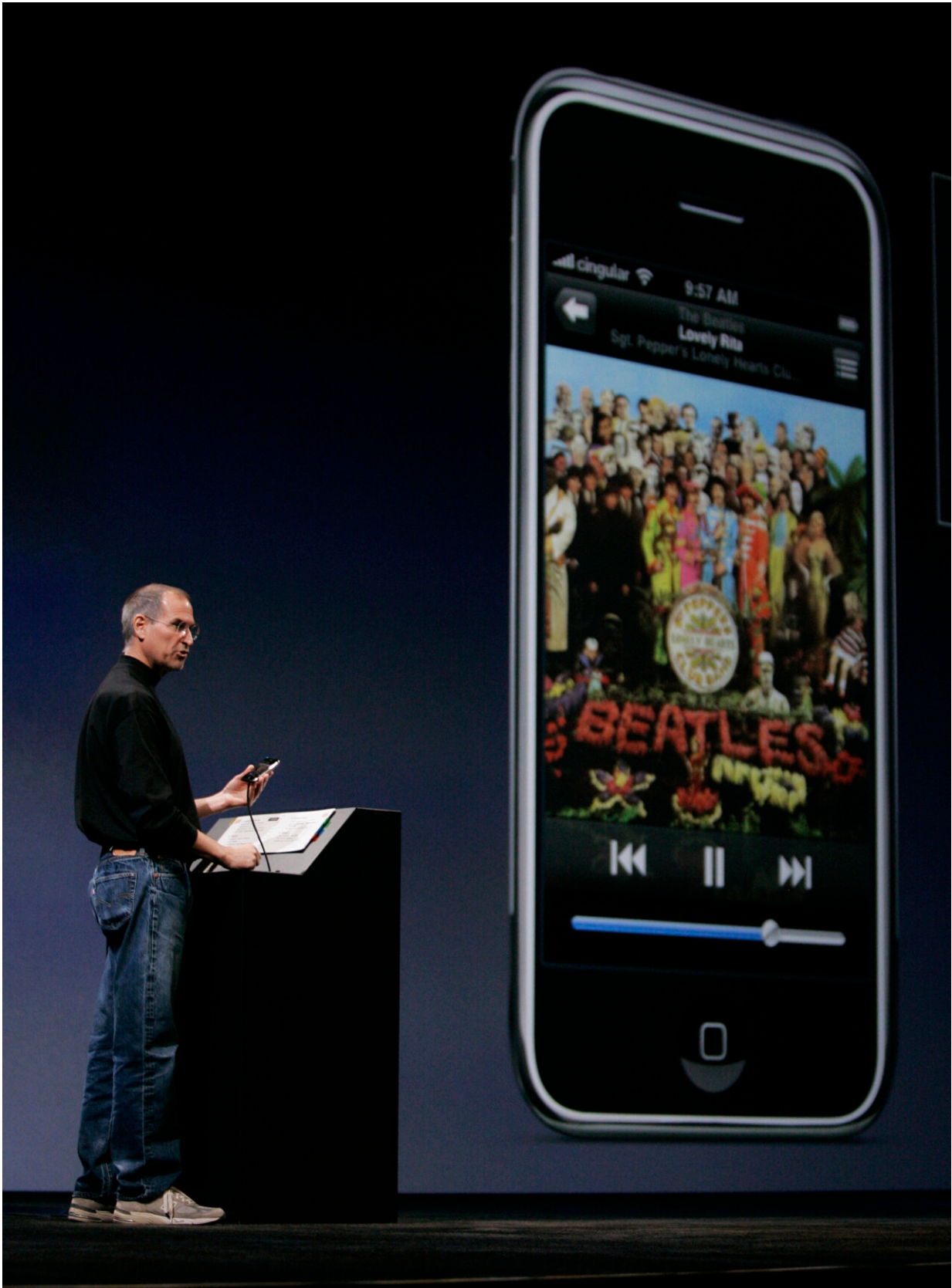
The iPad created a middle ground between laptops and smartphone. The tablet provided people with a quicker, more convenient way to browse the web, check email, and read books than a laptop on a larger screen than smartphones—an advantage that became even more important as video streaming craze took off. The iPad's success also pressured Microsoft to start building in more touchscreen options and adding other tablet-like features for its Windows operating system that powers most laptop and desktop computers.

THE APPLE WATCH, UNVEILED SEPTEMBER 2014

The Apple Watch created a device that made it possible to wear something akin to a smartphone on your wrist because it included cellular capability. It also offered some of the same apps people use on their smartphones. Apple initially marketed its smartwatch almost like a fashion accessory before pivoting once it realized that its fitness and health tracking features were the tools that people seemed to find most valuable.



Apple CEO Steve Jobs shows off the new iPad during an event in San Francisco, Wednesday, Jan. 27, 2010. The tablet provided people with a quicker, more convenient way to browse the web, check email, and read books than a laptop on a larger screen than smartphones. Credit: AP Photo/Paul Sakuma



Steve Jobs, then CEO of Apple, demonstrates the new iPhone by playing a Beatles song during his keynote address at MacWorld Conference & Expo in San Francisco, Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2007. The iPhone introduced the convenience of touchscreens at the time that a physical keyboard was still all the rage on the top-selling smartphone – the BlackBerry – when Jobs first took out what was all-in-one computer, camera and music player out of his pocket in 2007. Credit: AP Photo/Paul Sakuma, File



Phil Schiller, then Apple's senior vice president of worldwide marketing, talks about AirPods during an event to announce new products on Wednesday, Sept. 7, 2016, in San Francisco. The AirPods helped popularize wireless headphones with an Apple chip that provided more reliable and stable connections with devices while making it easy to shift from one gadget to another. Credit: AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez, File



Apple CEO Tim Cook introduces the new Apple Watch on Tuesday, Sept. 9, 2014, in Cupertino, Calif. The Apple Watch created a device that made it possible to wear something akin to a smartphone on your wrist because it included cellular capability. Credit: AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez, File

AIRPODS, UNVEILED SEPTEMBER 2016

The AirPods helped popularize [wireless headphones](#) with an Apple chip that provided more reliable and stable connections with devices while making it easy to shift from one gadget to another. The product also

served another key purpose for Apple: AirPods quickly muted the initial outrage of the company's decision to remove the [headphone jack](#) from iPhones in 2016 while creating another lucrative sales channel.

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