

# Apple to host virtual iPad event, may hint at new AirPods

20 April 2021, by Barbara Ortutay



In this Saturday, March 14, 2020 file photo, an Apple logo adorns the facade of the downtown Brooklyn Apple store in New York. Epic Games said Tuesday March 30, 2021, it filed a complaint about Apple to the U.K. competition watchdog, which is investigating the iPhone maker over concerns it has a dominant position in app distribution. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens, File)

Many of us may be suffering from virtual event fatigue after a year of video calls. But not Apple, which plans new product announcements at what seems likely to be an iPhone-less online event on Tuesday

It's the first such event for the company in 2021.

Analysts expect new iPads and likely new color versions of the iMac. The company could also show off something called AirTags, which look to be coin-sized tracking devices you can stick on stuff you don't want to lose—your tortoise, your phone, your coffee cup or perhaps small children.

Apple may also use the event to announce a software update that would let users block snoop apps from collecting personal information. Such data is frequently gathered from all smartphone

users to help sell digital ads—without obtaining their explicit permission to follow their online activities and whereabouts. Facebook has fiercely resisted the privacy tool, and has framed the forthcoming restrictions as a threat to small businesses that depend on advertising to finance their digital services.

Apple so far has only said the new safeguard, known as App Tracking Transparency, will come out in the early spring as part of a free software upgrade to the iPhone.

And while you might be tired of watching your coworkers' sleepy heads in Brady Bunch-like rectangles on your monitor, Apple's product launches, even the virtual ones, are a different breed, says Wedbush analyst Daniel Ives.

"In this virtual environment Apple's product launches have been very successful in courting developers and consumers around its new product lineup," Ives said. "Apple is a unique brand and product launches, even virtually, are the linchpin."

Besides the iPads—including refreshes for the iPad Pro, the iPad mini and the low-cost iPad—Ives also predicts a new Apple Pencil, a stylus for freehand art and writing with certain iPad models—and some hints around the new AirPods 3 wireless earbuds he expects to be launched in a separate virtual event in early summer.

Then, in the fall, Apple will likely hold its much-anticipated iPhone event, unveiling the iPhone 13. It has not yet said whether it'll be in person or not, but for the millions of Apple fans, developers and others who tune in on their events online anyway, it likely won't matter.

"The viewership for Apple's product launches are in the tens of millions, which speaks to the excitement these virtual events have brought, although it can't match the Broadway feel of a live Cupertino unveil,"

Ives said.

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