



## Leverage | The Xpragmatic View



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 url: <http://www.xpragma.be/view145.php>

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May 31, 2010, Apple [announced](#) that it had sold two million iPads in less than 60 days since its launch on April 3.

Not bad for a product that initially got quite a bit of sceptic reactions. Too large to fit in your pocket, too small for a real PC. No camera. No Flash. No multi-tasking. Not really a Kindle-killer. Where was the business case for such a product?

Today, two million units later, little has changed. Some additional technical capabilities are introduced but the fundamental question remains: why do people need or want such a product? Despite the apparent sales success, nobody has yet come up with a convincing answer.

Of course, there are examples of specific use cases where this type of product indeed adds real value. However, these are most often related to niche markets and cannot explain the mass market success of this product.

Two million units sold and no sign of weakening sales. How on earth did we manage before the arrival of the iPad?

The success of the iPad is indeed strange. When the product was initially announced, the overall reaction was essentially an "is that all there is?" feeling. This was not really something new, since tablets were already past history. This was essentially an "average" product, averaging the features and the design of the iMac and the iPhone.

Why bother? Where was the blue ocean strategy? Where was the new market being created?

Two million units sold in two months. Most of them to individuals already owning all the iPhones, smartphones and other laptops of this world they wanted. Individuals, who are likely promoting eco-awareness and social consciousness, yet are opting for blunt consumerism and conveniently unaware of the obscure assembly lines of [Foxconn](#) in Shenzhen.

Of course, when you have the money, why not? There will always be situations where the "average" characteristics of the iPad will best suit your needs. But does this explain the "must have" craziness we are observing? Or is this a breakthrough innovation that we don't yet understand? Another creation of Apple's superb marketing machine?

According to [Steve Jobs](#), we are witnessing the end of the PC era.

Likely true, but is it because the iPad is the better product?

We doubt it. This is not the main reason. The main reason for the success of the iPad is that it leverages the flow.

The flow, this hyperconnected network of social interactions we are participating in, of continuous status updates, of information overload, of too much noise.

In order to really participate in the flow, you have to embrace it. You cannot fully be part of it while keeping conflicting opinions. Your personality has to become partly individual, partly cloud. Not participating in the flow of network interactions has to result in uneasy feelings, as if

you lose part of your personality.

In such hyperconnected environment, people have tendency evolving towards uniformity, of having common opinions since maintaining too many disparate views adds too much complexity. In addition, information overload will make that you will filter the unwanted signals and noise. Too much to handle and so little time. The net result will be a preference for average and a commoditization of opinions.

The iPad is a brainchild of the flow. A marketer's dream.

## De auteur



Marc Buyens is analyst, management consultant en zaakvoerder van Xpragma. Marc startte Xpragma in 1999 na een meer dan 20-jarige loopbaan in de IT-sector. Vandaag levert hij advies, training en mentoring diensten die zich richten op de intersectie van technologische vernieuwing, organisatorische verandering en bedrijfsstrategie: een troebele poel van niet ingeloste beloften.



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