

On newest iPhone, another camera

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Seeking to fend off intensifying competition from Google and others in the smartphone business, Apple introduced a new version of the iPhone on Monday that includes a front-facing camera for video chats.

The iPhone 4 is faster and thinner than previous models, with a crisper display and a more angular look. It has a 5-megapixel camera and can shoot and edit high-definition video.

"This is our new baby," said Steven P. Jobs, Apple's chief executive, as he presented the phone during the company's annual Worldwide Developers Conference here. "I hope you love it as much as we do."

Analysts said the new phone came at an opportune moment for Apple. While previous versions of the device continue to sell briskly, buyers have been faced with an increasingly large array of attractive smartphones.

Some phones powered by Google's Android software match and in some cases exceed the capabilities and speed of the iPhone 3GS, the most recent model.

The iPhone 4 should help Apple re-establish its leadership, some analysts said.

"When it ships, it will be the best smartphone on the market," said Tim Bajarin, an analyst with Creative Strategies, who has been following Apple for nearly three decades. "It gives Apple a year's lead on competitors, if not more."

A Google spokesman, Mike Nelson, declined to comment on the new phone.

The iPhone 4, priced at \$199 for a model with 16 gigabytes of storage or \$299 for one with 32 gigabytes with a two-year contract, will go on sale June 24 in the United States and four other countries. Apple plans an aggressive international rollout after that; Mr. Jobs said the phone would be on sale in 88 countries by September.

While the iPhone 4 was greeted with cheers by the loyal Apple developers in the hall, Mr. Jobs's presentation included few surprises. Some of the secrets of the iPhone 4 were revealed after a prototype, apparently left behind in a bar by an Apple engineer, ended up in the hands of reporters for the technology blog Gizmodo, which published details of the device's hardware.

And Mr. Jobs did not introduce a new version of the Apple TV device or announce that the iPhone would be available on Verizon Wireless, despite speculation on technology blogs that he might do so.

Analysts and developers were particularly impressed by the iPhone's video chat feature, called FaceTime. For now, however, chats can be conducted only with other iPhone 4 owners, and only over Wi-Fi networks. Mr. Jobs said Apple would work with carriers to bring video chats to cellphone networks.

"I think video chat is going to be something that really differentiates the iPhone from other devices," said Charles Wolf, an analyst with Needham & Company.

The phone includes a new high-resolution display and is powered by Apple's A4 chip, the same microprocessor that is in the iPad tablet computer. And Mr. Jobs said the phone's battery life had been improved.

At 9.3 millimeters, it is 24 percent thinner than the iPhone 3GS, and Mr. Jobs called it "the thinnest smartphone on the planet." A gyroscope inside the iPhone 4 will allow developers to add new motion input to games and other applications.

Much of Mr. Jobs's presentation was dedicated to demonstrating how the new iPhone would work with the next version of Apple's mobile operating system, now called iOS 4, which will be made available free to current iPhone owners.

There were signs of Apple's intensifying rivalry with Google. At one point, Mr. Jobs showed an e-mail message from a developer who said that he had made more money in the first day of sales of his iPad application than in five years of selling Google ads on his Web site.

Mr. Jobs also said existing ads that appeared in applications on the iPad and the iPhone, many of which are sold by Google-owned AdMob, were not good because clicking on them took people out of the apps and onto the Web.

Mr. Jobs said Apple's new iAds system, which is built into iOS 4, would keep users inside the apps and allow them to go back easily to what they were doing.

He said that major advertisers, including Nissan, Target, Sears and Best Buy, had agreed to spend about \$60 million on iAds in the second half of the year.

Analysts said the iPhone 4 should help Apple sustain its sales momentum, appealing both to new iPhone customers and to owners of the two-year-old iPhone 3G who were looking to upgrade. They also said that less expensive plans from AT&T, which put caps on the amount of data that users can consume, would help sell the iPhone 3GS, whose price will drop to \$99.

"I think they are going to sell a lot of new subscriptions to people who have held back on buying a smartphone with a data plan," said Charles S. Golvin, an analyst with Forrester Research.

Apple shares fell \$5.02, or 1.96 percent, to close at \$250.94 on Monday amid a broad market drop.

Fonte: New York Times, New York, June 7th 2010, Technology, online.