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Ex. 20

The Futurist: We Predict the iPhone Will Bomb

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Until June 29, it's hard to tell too much about the iPhone, but I can tell you with near-certainty one thing: the product was almost certainly rushed to market before Apple's engineers would have liked.

At MacWorld, Jobs said: "We're shipping them in June". Had the phone release date been set in July or August, the entire tech world's collective red flag would have swung. So they set the release date as June 29 — a Friday, and the last weekday of the month. This, coupled with the fact that Apple has never, in recent memory, released a product on a Friday, should make everybody say "Hmmm," and suggests they took a calculated risk of releasing a product that might be a little buggy (probably about as bad as the first run of screen-flickering, case-cracking, motherboard-busted MacBooks), rather than suffer the embarrassment of not keeping their word.



Which means that when the iPhone comes, Digg will likely be full of horror stories from the poor saps who camped out at their local AT&T store, only to find their purchase was buggier than a camp cabin.

Here's what we're predicting will go wrong with the iPhone, and a little about what may go right.

CRACKED SCREENS

The iPhone is thin — just 11.6mm — and nearly the entire front is made up of the much-heralded touchscreen. That means glass. And, as anybody who has ever tossed a Wiimote knows, glass breaks. So when Mr. Customer gets a shiny new iPhone and sticks it in his back pocket (after all, that's where he's kept EVERY phone since the StarTAC), don't be surprised if he finds that glass screen can't sustain all 200 pounds of him. Cracked screens will be to the iPhone what scratched backs were to the Nano.

THAT "KEYBOARD"

That virtual keyboard will be about as useful for tapping out emails and text messages as a rotary phone. Don't be surprised if a sizable contingent of iPhone buyers express some remorse at ditching their BlackBerry when they spend an extra hour each day pumping out emails on the road.

TAKE THAT RAZR!

Thank goodness for 3.5mm headphone jacks. If Apple had been stupid enough to include an undersized socket, that alone would be reason enough for many of us to pack a separate music player (which sort of defeats the purpose of having an iPhone, now doesn't it?)

SLURP AWAY

And about that WiFi. Chances are it won't be smiled upon, but the smart money says that you guys find a way to slurp (SHARE) songs with other iPhone users, and chances are they'll be a lot easier to find than one of those **"one million"** (<http://crunchgear.com/2007/05/28/one-million-zunes-somehow-sold/>) Zunes in the wild (and certainly won't be bogged down by songs that expire after a few listens.)

WORST SOFTWARE IDEA EVER

Expect there to be absolutely zero demand for a "Bootcamp Mobile," which would let insane iPhone users load up Windows Mobile on their iPhone. Please don't do it, Apple.

A PHONE-LESS iPHONE

What kind of gray market will pop up for contract-less phones? Since AT&T is REQUIRING iPhone purchasers to sign up for 2-year contracts (any lawyers out there know if this is legal?), it isn't difficult to imagine folks who have no real need for the phone aspect looking for a nice web-browsing widescreen iPod. But boy will they be expensive (probably about \$750 new.)

BLANK SCREENS

And now for the number one prediction about problems that will plague the first run of iPhones off the assembly line: battery life. Try watching a movie for more than an hour on a 5G iPod and you'll know what I'm talking about. Then throw in the battery-sucking demands of WiFi, phone calls, browsing the Web, and backlighting a larger screen than any iPod has ever had.

Here's hoping my dire predictions come to naught.



Seth Porges writes on future technology and its role in personal electronics for his column, *The Futurist*. It appears every Thursday and an archive of past columns is available [here \(http://www.crunchgear.com/category/the%20futurist\)](http://www.crunchgear.com/category/the%20futurist).

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