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With release of iPad, Apple has nailed it again

Tuesday, April 6, 2010

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Another Apple product debut, another smash hit. The tech world - or at least Apple's rivals - must wonder when the company will stumble, but the iPad doesn't appear to be it.

The gizmo debuted this weekend with first-day sales of 300,000. The device follows the

approach of other company products. Take an existing trend - earphone audio or cell phones - and create a stylish leap that transforms the market and upends convention.

The iPad taps into 150,000 applications available for the iPhone and invites more with its wider screen, brighter colors and sleek design. It aims to conquer the world of small tablet computers and serve up books, music and other forms of entertainment.

Like other Apple offerings, the product blurs tech boundaries. Along with gunning for Amazon's Kindle e-book, the iPad also wants to dominate the next-rung-up world of junior-grade laptops known as netbooks. It may be missing a few features such as a camera or multi-tasking abilities and carries a hefty price tag starting at \$499, but the company's deft marketing has made the device an industry standard nearly overnight.

Can the nation's purses and messenger bags handle another Apple device? The real challenge will be turning a fun-and-games device into an essential business tool. That hasn't happened yet. But Apple's steamroller success in the past suggests the company may yet turn an intriguing innovation into a workplace tool.

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