Apple unveils 'new iPad' with sharper screen

MIKE LIEDTKE - AP Technology Writers - Associated Press

Apple gave the new iPad a bunch of new features, but no new name.

When it goes on sale next week in the U.S. and several other countries, it will be "the iPad" or perhaps "the new iPad" - not "iPad 3" or "iPad HD," as some had speculated.

The lack of a new name could cause confusion for buyers, particularly since the older model, the "iPad 2," will still be sold.

But the naming practice is consistent with Apple's practices for the iPod. New models were simply called "iPod," and consumers were left to figure out which generation of the product they were looking for.

The new iPad revealed Wednesday has, as expected, a sharper screen and a faster processor. What was more surprising was that the new features mean the tablet will be slightly thicker and heavier than the iPad 2, because it needs a more powerful battery to drive the high-resolution screen.

The battery life remains the same: about 10 hours of use.

Prices aren't changing from the previous models. They will start at $499. Versions capable of accessing cellular networks will cost $629 to $829.

Apple is keeping the basic model of the iPad 2 in production, and dropping the price to $399.

Apple said the new display will be sharper than the high-definition television set in the living room, and show more saturated colors than previous models. A graphics chip with four processing "cores" will drive the screen, accounting for some of the added power consumption.

At the launch event in San Francisco, Apple Inc. CEO Tim Cook said, "We are taking it to a whole new level and are redefining the category that Apple created with the original iPad."

Earlier, Cook spoke of a "post-PC" era dominated by the iPad and other Apple products.

The new iPad will go on sale March 16 in the U.S., Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Japan, Puerto Rico, Singapore, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the U.S. Virgin Islands. A week later, it will go on sale in 25 more countries.

Compared to the iPad 2, the new model features a higher-resolution camera on the

back, similar to the one in the iPhone 4S.

The new iPad will be 9.4 millimeters thick, or 0.37 inches. That compares with 8.8 millimeters, or 0.34 inches, for the iPad 2. The weight is going up from 1.33 pounds to 1.44 pounds for the Wi-Fi-only model.

Apple also confirmed that the new model will come in a version that can use Verizon Wireless' and AT&T Inc.'s "LTE" wireless broadband networks. They offer speeds that are faster than the "3G" networks used by previous iPads, and current iPhones.

Apple is updating some of the software on the tablet to take advantage of the new features. For example, it's introducing a version of the Mac's iPhoto photo organization and manipulation program for the iPad.

Apple also said it would start letting users store movies in its iCloud remote storage service, so they can be accessed through the Internet by PCs and Apple devices. It already lets users store photos, music and documents in the service.

Apple is also upgrading its Apple TV set-top box so it can play movies in 1080p, the highest-resolution commonly used video standard.

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Peter Svensson reported from New York.

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