

Tipping Point Commentaries

The Next Wave of Mobile Computing

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It is arguable that the tipping point being pondered here has already occurred, or certainly Apple aficionados would certainly claim. However, wouldn't they have made that claim with the first iPhone? Probably and again if, in fact, one claimed to have tipped a trend into action twice, the first time probably wasn't it and it becomes arguable that neither was the second time.

from:

T-Mobile to Offer First Phone With Google Software

By LAURA M. HOLSON and MIGUEL HELFT

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Apple's iPhone has shaken the cellphone industry, partly because of its design, but mostly because [AT&T](#) and Apple have allowed owners to download any number of applications to their phones. That freedom to individualize a phone's functions has helped increase the popularity of the iPhone.

Phones using Google's software will do the same thing. Google is making the Android operating system software available free to an alliance of companies, including cellphone carriers and manufacturers who have agreed to provide devices which, like personal computers, allow users to decide which applications run on them.

Google thinks that many consumers will want to personalize their mobile phones with unique applications and services, including those made by Google.

Google is eager to get the Android platform on phones quickly because it thinks that the mobile Web is vital to the long-term growth of its digital advertising business.

In the end, market share will probably define where the tip occurred. Given the recent spate of poor cell phone operation that has dogged the second version of iPhone, it appears to have foundered on its principle function of connectivity, otherwise it is an expensive, but attractive Palm Pilot. However, bad press does not elevate Android given that it has no traction yet.

These points are merely refined arguments that don't attend what it is that constitutes what the Tipping point actually is. The key feature is not going to be the sizzle of the touch-screen, attractive as that is. Rather, what will catapult either, or both of these products will be in their extensibility. That is, the add-on applications will define the trend, not the vehicle they move in.

This moves the products into the **cloud** of design providers that vastly eclipse the engineering talent available to either Apple or Google, as vaunted as their engineers are for coming up with novelty. If the term of **cloud** is unfamiliar to you, then you should investigate it further as many Tipping Points are destined to emerge from this source.