



ITV or iTV?

Reflecting on the massive behavioural change over a relatively short time stimulated by the 2007 introduction of the iPhone, what will happen when Apple introduces a TV? Is the TV ecosystem -- from programme makers, the marketers that rely on TV to sell products, to the ad agencies that buy its media -- ready for TV's iPhone moment? Just as with the iPhone (or the iPad or iPod), Apple TV won't be the first device of its kind. Even without "smart TVs," early adopters have been streaming for some time via a range of set top boxes such as Xbox or Roku or via the Airplay function on Apple's existing TV solution, all of which bring wireless connectivity to the TV. And increasing numbers are turning to the Zeebox app to combine their TV viewing and social media activities.

But the Apple TV set will almost certainly be beautiful, easy to use, and it will usher in a whole new way to navigate nearly unlimited content through the electronic device that is still the hub of most households' home entertainment.

Here's how Walter Isaacson put it in his biography of Steve Jobs.

"Steve very much wanted to do for television sets what he had done for computers, music players and phones: make them simple and elegant. 'I'd like to create an integrated television set that is completely easy to use. It would be seamlessly synced with all your devices and with iCloud. No longer would users have to fiddle with complex remotes for DVD players and cable channels. It would have the simplest user interface you could imagine. I finally cracked it.'

Assuming he had 'cracked it', has Apple acted in time? Some very large players in electronics and TV, such as LG and Samsung, have already launched very elegant all-in-one smart TVs whose appearance and functionality will be difficult to better. Due to advances in screen technology even the largest sets have edge-to-edge displays and are much thinner than current plasma or LCD TVs (only 4cms thick for a 55 inch display). They are wi-fi enabled, will link with smartphones, tablets and PCs and have a home screen which looks rather like the forthcoming Windows 8 but is fully customisable. LG call it a Home Dashboard. It can be controlled by the traditional remote or an app on your phone or tablet. Whilst the manufacturers such as LG are heavily promoting 3D and gaming, which is very impressive on the big high resolution screens, businesses will be more interested in the possibilities afforded by the household's entertainment hub working just like a smartphone or tablet. Whether its social media, YouTube

or just surfing the web, the opportunities for communicating with customers are immense. Clearly this will have massive ramifications for the TV-ad industry.

Whether that threat will be spearheaded by Apple or the current TV market leaders is anyone's guess. The incumbents now have a clear lead but every time Apple has launched a disruptive device critics have said that it's too expensive and people don't really need it. They're also saying that since we hang onto TVs longer than we do phones or computers, there's no way it will have the impact of Apple's other innovations. But similar criticisms were levelled at the iPod, the iPhone, and the iPad (that costly, "in-between" device that people weren't even asking for). Though the iPhone wasn't the first smartphone, it ushered in a different way to think about and use mobile (see page 17), and dramatically altered people's behaviour. So maybe Apple will surprise us with something no-one had thought of for TVs as well. [C](#)