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## Apple's WWDC Announcements: A Lot to Like, but no Death Blow

*[Editor's Note: This guest post was written by Gary Morgenthaler, a partner at [Morgenthaler Ventures](#), a venture capital firm based in Menlo Park, Calif.]*

Like so many others not lucky enough to attend Apple's Worldwide Developers Conference (WWDC) today in San Francisco, I was glued to a number of live blogs reporting on the annual extravaganza. As a long-time Apple watcher, I was inspired by many things discussed on stage by Steve Jobs and his team. But I have to say, for me, the announcements didn't include a coup de grâce – that is, a death blow to its competitors.



### Big Vision

Overall, I applaud Apple for their seamless vision of computing, one in which you and I can access our content, that's automatically synced across multiple devices, from anywhere, anytime. They have laid the stepping stones for an entire "vertical" product line – from phones to tablets to computers to televisions – that shares the same underlying software platform. This makes it easier for developers to create mind-blowing applications to run up and down the line.

### Specific Highlights

I won't give you an in-depth, feature-by-feature review of what went down today (there are many reporters and bloggers who have already done an admirable job of that). At a high level, here's what stuck out for me:

*The iCloud* – This is what MobileMe was intended to be, but better. It includes impressive cloud-based syncing and storage that will challenge the offerings from Amazon and Google. In addition, I love the iTunes match feature in which your existing music files (say from your already ripped CD collection) will be automatically scanned, matched and made available to you via iCloud. Apple did change the paradigm here and usher in the post-PC era.

*Mac OS X Lion* – The most compelling aspect of Mac OS is not its 250 new features and capabilities, or Airdrop (which allows users to share documents with friends and co-workers like Dropbox), but its price of \$29.99. I expect the vast majority of developers to adopt it.

*iOS5* – Today's new iOS5 features essentially strips away the advantages of Android's current version, e.g. notifications are now less cumbersome and more useful.

### **But Not Big Enough**

But for people looking for that jaw-dropping, "I can't believe what I just heard" moment, it didn't come today. We've witnessed Apple create markets from thin air (e.g. the iPad) and it is a thing of beauty. What Apple did today was a step forward. It raised the bar for Google and Microsoft, but it didn't change the game.

### **The End Game**

What's most interesting to me is not the new list of features that come out of conferences such as Apple's WWDC, but the long-term strategic chess game that is being played by the dominant players. At the center of the battle to win the smartphone market are Apple and Google, with Microsoft trailing at least a year behind.

Winning the lucrative and growing smartphone market is a prize in itself, but I believe what Apple and Google are really after is the mobile advertising market that leadership would offer. That's what makes this game so fascinating to watch.

This is a multi-year exercise in which the winner won't be determined for 2 or 3 years. In the meantime, we will benefit from the competition of these two technology behemoths of innovation and chutzpah.