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Iphone Launch

from Business English Pod

Today, we're talking about Apple's new mobile phone – the iPhone – actually it's a combination of phone, iPod and internet browser all rolled into one gadget. We'll be looking at the hype – or massive publicity - surrounding the launch of the iPhone and taking a closer look at the vocabulary we use to describe product launches and the retail market.

After six months of unprecedented hype, thousands of people last Friday finally got their hands on the iPhone, the new cell phone that Apple is banking on to become its third core business next to its moneymaking iPod players and Macintosh computers. By early evening Thursday, short lines of eager customers were camped out at Apple and AT&T stores across the nation.

The gadget, which combines the functions of a cell phone, iPod media player and Web browser, went on sale in the United States at 6 p.m. last Friday.

At Apple's flagship store in New York City, the trickle of customers that began queuing on Monday grew to 100's by late Thursday, ready to brave yet another rainy night on the pavement of Fifth Avenue, outside the only 24-hour Apple store. The gadget with a 3.5-inch touch-screen display, which Apple CEO Steve Jobs has touted as "revolutionary," has been the focus of endless media speculation and has been parodied on late-night TV. Since its unveiling in January, expectations that it will become yet another blockbuster product for Apple has propelled the company's stock up more than 40 percent.

Apple itself has set a target of selling 10 million units worldwide by 2008, gaining roughly a 1 percent share of the cell phone market. And despite the handset's price tag of \$499 for a 4-gigabyte model and \$599 for an 8-gigabyte version, some bullish Wall Street analysts have predicted sales could hit as high as 45 million units in two years.