



## The apps that keep the iPad at the top of everyone's Christmas list

When it comes to tablet PCs, there's still only one name that matters: iPad. It's just topped a Nielsen poll as the most desired Christmas present.

And however many rivals are launched, they just can't make a dent in Apple's ownership of the market. Some competitors are terrific - the best was HP's TouchPad but that flopped so badly it was deleted within weeks of going on sale. And classy Android machines like Sony's beautiful Tablet S still can't get decent traction.

But things may be about to change, now that Amazon has released its Kindle Fire tablet for just \$199, less than half the cheapest iPad, though early reviews have been mixed. [...].

So what can keep Apple on top? This week I had an early view of a range of apps which Apple hopes will do the trick. First there were games. The word edutainment is not only ugly, it has associations with tiresome educational software barely enlivened by tedious but cute animation. But Apple seems to have turned it into genuine fun. There's no reason why Android shouldn't have games as good as this. But it doesn't.

The latest iPad has a lot of games for older players. [...]

As always, the iPad delights because it is constantly new, its capabilities changing as innovative apps are released that add to the machine's potential. And the iPad hardware is inviting, handsome and pleasurable to use in a way that rival products have yet to match. Next year, perhaps Android and BlackBerry will have closed the gap, but for now the iPad still leads the field.