iPads Have Big Potential For Retailers

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Tablets encourage new shopping experiences

The features of Appleâ€™s iPad and competing tablets have made them an ideal entertainment and media consumption device, but many tablet owners also have a strong interest in online shopping, and retailers are taking note.

â€œThe iPadâ€™s portability, tactile screen and vivid graphics foster a casual and exploratory shopping experience that leads t product discovery, impulse buying and shared purchasing,â€• said Jeffrey Grau, eMarketer principal analyst and author of the new report, â€œHow the iPad Is Transforming Retail.â€•

Some 41% of consumers likely to purchase an iPad cited shopping as a reason for their interest, reported Vision Critical, a Vancouver-based research and technology firm, in a November 2010 survey.

This year, eMarketer estimates, the US installed base for tablet devices will reach 24 million. And research from Pew Internet and American Life Project and Forrester Research shows buyers tend to be young, educated and wealthy.

â€œSavvy retailers are creating iPad shopping experiences that deepen their connections with customers,â€• said Grau. â€œTh iPad is like a companion. There is also a certain sense of intimacy in curling up on a couch with the device. It inspires a serendipitous shopping experience, somewhat akin to browsing a catalog.â€•

In addition, retailers may have an even bigger opportunity in arming in-store sales associates with the devices. Thanks to the iPad, retailâ€™s dream of web-enabled in-store kiosks providing additional product information and access to an â€œendles aisleâ€• of goods may finally be realized.

The full report, â€œHow the iPad Is Transforming Retail â€• also answers these key questions:

* What is the sales outlook for tablet computers?
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* How is the iPad changing shopping behavior?
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* How are retailers using the iPad in their stores to help customers?
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* How are retailers using the iPad to create unique online shopping experiences?

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