Clipboards Safe For Now - iPad Launch Delayed

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The much-anticipated iPad tablet computer from Apple, Inc., which was targeted for potential hospital use, will start hitting U.S. store shelves on April 3, slightly later than originally planned. When Apple unveiled the touch-screen device Jan. 27, the company said the first iPads would reach the market in late March worldwide, not just in the U.S. Now, international releases are planned for later in April.

The company did not specify why the tablet is not coming out until April, and Apple spokeswoman Natalie Harrison would not elaborate. However, Canaccord Adams analyst Peter Misek had said this week that Apple might have to delay or limit the size of the launch because of an unspecified production problem. Misek thought Apple's Taiwan-based supplier, Hon Hai Precision, could be facing a production bottleneck or a shortage of components.

The first iPads to go on sale will connect to Wi-Fi networks only and cost $499, $599 or $699, depending on the data storage capacity. Versions that also can connect to 3G cellular networks are expected to go on sale in late April for $629, $729 or $829. Apple has not yet disclosed international pricing. U.S. customers will be able to begin placing orders for both models from Apple's website on March 12.

Apple says the iPad will include 12 new applications designed especially for the computer. It will also run almost all of the more than 140,000 apps already available for the iPhone and iPod Touch.

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