

# iPad



# VS



# Mac

**Do** you need a laptop or a tablet? We help you discover which Apple device is best suited for your needs

WRITTEN BY RYAN BUTT

**I T USED TO** be the case that choosing between a MacBook and an iPad was easy, but Apple has started to blur the lines between the two in ways that few of us could have expected. In terms of power, we have now reached parity thanks to the new iPad Pro which uses the same M1 chip as the MacBook Air, and when you start to look at the storage onboard the comparisons become even closer. For example, you can buy a 12.9-inch iPad Pro for only \$200 more than the equivalent 256GB MacBook Air,

but if you opt for the 11-inch iPad Pro then you can pay only \$100 more than the 256GB MacBook Air for 512GB of storage. This makes the cost analysis almost moot, which is then exacerbated by the fact that the M1 chipped MacBooks can run most iOS apps and games as well. With so many titles now available on macOS it can come down to how each will work for you in terms of the physical forms. We'll try to help you decide which device will be best for you, but there's little doubt that Apple is making this a tricky question to answer.



## QUICK LOOK The flat iPad keyboard

Many people will quite rightly presume that a physical keyboard is best for long periods of typing and data entry, and in many ways this assumption makes sense – but there is more to the story. A software keyboard like the one on the iPad can be customized to work in specific ways, which can make it as efficient as real keys.



**A HALF A SCREEN**  
The main disadvantage of using the iPad software keyboard is that it takes up half the screen, which lessens how much text you can view. However, you will be working on a much smaller and more portable device while typing.

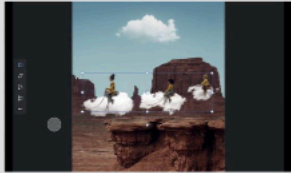
**B APP KEYBOARDS**  
Many apps will customize the keyboard and allow specific functionality just above the keys. This will speed up your data input and could be likened to the hardware touch bar that was added to some MacBooks.

**C FORGET THE KEYBOARD**  
There's a good argument for using voice dictation for data entry, whether you're using a MacBook or an iPad. The software tech is the same in both, so the end results will be identical.

**D FLICK TO CHANGE**  
The ability to insert numbers and punctuation with a simple gesture is a big advantage on the iPad side. Not only is it very efficient, it will likely reduce the strain on your fingers and wrists as well.

## PRO IPAD APPS

You no longer need a “proper” computer when performing many professional tasks



**1 ADOBE PHOTOSHOP**  
Most people are aware of Photoshop, but are likely less aware of just how powerful the iPad version is. You can now undertake complex image manipulation wherever.



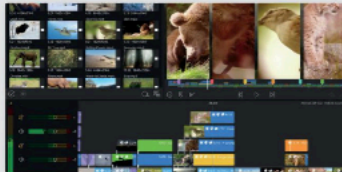
**2 GARAGEBAND**  
Apple makes GarageBand, and has not scrimped on features when it comes to the iPad. In this app the Apple Pencil arguably gives you greater control than on the Mac.



**3 AFFINITY PHOTO**  
Whether you need unlimited layers, brushes or smart object importing, Affinity Photo offers it all on the iPad. Again, the Apple Pencil offers near perfect control.



**4 CODE EDITOR**  
If you have a data input system you are happy with, either an external keyboard or the iPad screen, Code Editor gives you every coding tool you could possibly need.

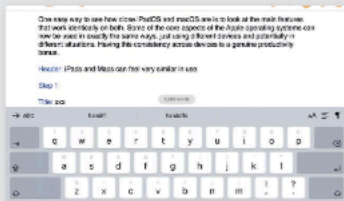


**5 LUMA FUSION**  
Video editing on an iPad? Yes indeed. With the later iPads and the Pro models you will notice little difference in performance compared to a Mac. A big leap forward.

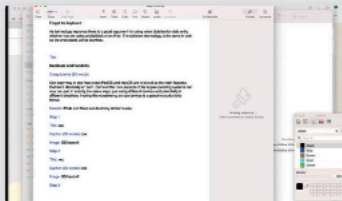


**6 AUTOCAD**  
AutoCAD lets you view and edit CAD drawings wherever you are with just your iPad. This is perfect for when you're on site and you need to make instant adjustments.

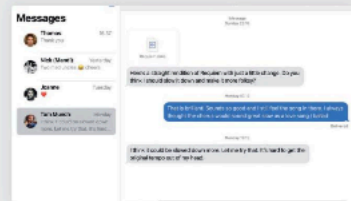
>>> **DUPLICATE AND HANDOFFS** Some of the core aspects of the Apple operating systems can now be used in exactly the same ways, just using different devices and potentially in different situations. Having this consistency across devices is a genuine productivity bonus



**1 START THE PROCESS**  
In many apps you can start creating a document or task on an iPad, and then you can have a break and leave it for when you need to return later.



**2 CONTINUE YOUR WORK**  
When you open the work on your MacBook it should return to the exact point you left it. The feature you are reading has been created on both.



**3 WORK WHERE YOU WANT**  
Messages is a very good example of how identical the two platforms are in use, which should help you to make your choice on hardware alone.

»» **WRITE ANYWHERE** The Scribble feature offers a new way to use an iPad, and one which is not present in macOS. Potentially, it lets you control your iPad almost entirely with the Apple Pencil and offers unique flexibility



**1 SET IT UP**  
To enable Scribble, all you need to do is go to Settings > Apple Pencil and ensure that the icon next to 'Scribble' is green. You can try it out immediately.

**2 WRITE AND SEARCH**  
In Safari you can simply start writing with the Apple Pencil in the search bar. At no point will you need to bring up the keyboard if you have Scribble enabled.

**3 EXTRA SCRIBBLE FEATURES**  
In Settings you can learn how to delete, select, and insert text using Scribble. It proves that the feature is much more than just writing words.

## QUICK LOOK True word processing

The MacBook is arguably the perfect portable device for writing longform articles and getting work done on the go. Pages is provided by Apple, and you get all of the features you require in the best alternative to Microsoft Word available today. The thing to remember is that Pages on the iPad is now not very different at all.



**A EVERY TEMPLATE**  
All of the Pages templates you're used to using are in the iPad version. Indeed, you'll be hard pressed to find a feature that doesn't work as well on the iPad version as it does in the macOS version.

**B A MULTIMEDIA MARVEL**  
From simple text-based letters to complex leaflets and presentations, you can do it all in Pages on the iPad, and arguably have greater control over how images are added.

**C SMART ANNOTATIONS**  
If you want to add annotations and draw additions you can. The Apple Pencil acts as the main differentiator between the Mac and iPad, and your choice could be influenced by your creativity.

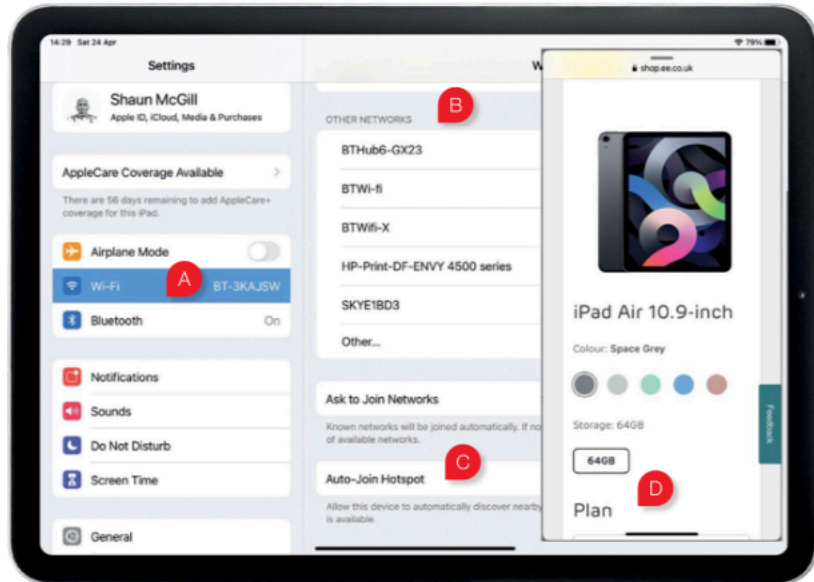
**D EVERY SINGLE SETTING**  
Every feature should be present on the iPad, including the useful word count at the bottom of the screen. Tap any paragraph three times and the count automatically adjusts to your selection.



## QUICK LOOK

### Stay connected

If there is one feature Mac users have been hoping for over the past few years, it's cellular connectivity. Despite the fact that Apple has made MacBooks more portable than ever, you still need an iPhone for connections outside of Wi-Fi. The iPads, however, all have this option if you need it. It is a very strange omission.



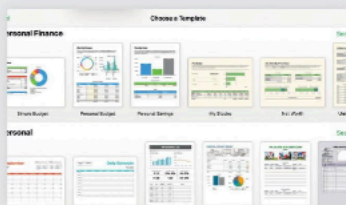
**A A NEW SIM** You will need to purchase a separate data plan for your iPad to be able to use it outside of the house and away from Wi-Fi. The relevant options will be available at the top of the main Settings screen.

**B WI-FI EVERYWHERE** If you are careful with your security, you can be fairly sure of decent Wi-Fi coverage in most public places. Cellular can perform better for you, however, if you are undertaking data-hungry tasks on the road.

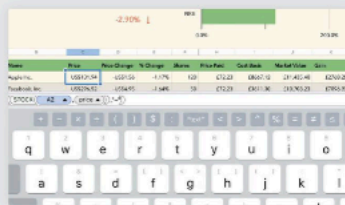
**C A CHEAPER OPTION** If you carry your iPhone with you anyway, using the hotspot feature will be cheaper and almost as convenient. This works in exactly the same way for a MacBook, which evens the feature setup a bit.

**D MIND THE COSTS** An iPad cellular connection is very handy, but you really need to think hard about the costs. Most providers offer a monthly plan that includes the cost of the hardware, but standalone SIMs can prove quite costly over time.

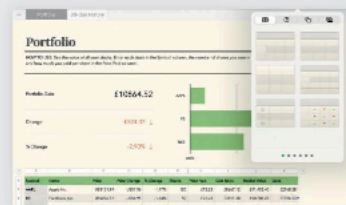
>>> **ADVANCED CALCULATIONS** There's one task in which the iPad wins for the majority of users. Numbers is an advanced spreadsheet solution, and one where data entry is usually done in short bursts. When you consider this alongside the iPad touchscreen, the benefits are clear



**1 SIMPLE OR COMPLEX** Numbers on the iPad has all the pre-formatted spreadsheet templates you need. Choose one, customize the look, and add data to make it your own.



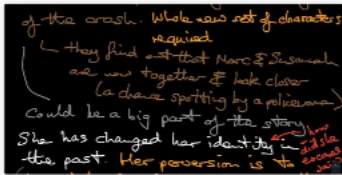
**2 QUICK NAVIGATION** The ability to tap on any cell with your finger or Apple Pencil is much quicker than using a trackpad or mouse. This adds up to big time savings.



**3 WHAT YOU SEE...** The unblemished screen view on the iPad offers a clean summary of your work. It equals the Mac and surpasses it in many crucial areas.

## ENHANCE YOUR CREATIVITY

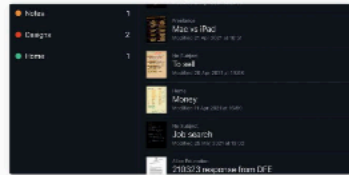
Combine the Apple Pencil with some of the specialist apps designed to take advantage of it



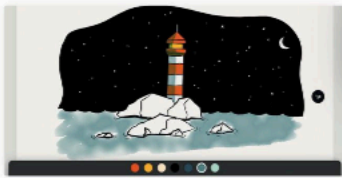
**1 A GOOD START**  
In an app like Notability you can create an ongoing personal notebook using the Apple Pencil. Our tip would be to use a black background and watch your ideas flow.



**2 EXPLORE YOUR TALENTS**  
The later iPads and Apple Pencil 2 lend themselves to letting you explore your ideas in a relaxing way. The results may surprise you and take you away from paper forever.



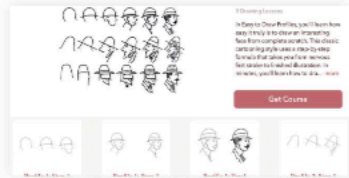
**3 CAPTURE YOUR NOTES**  
Notability and GoodNotes let you organize all of your drawings, notes and ideas in a structured way so that they are always available when you need them. It feels natural.



**4 DRAW WITH PAPER**  
Paper is an excellent Apple Pencil-centric solution for drawing at almost any level. If you have little artistic talent, you can still enjoy creating pleasing works in just a few minutes.

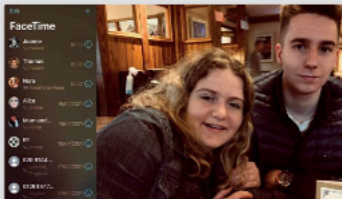


**5 PASS SOME TIME**  
Pigment lets you create stunning works by simply coloring them in, just like you did as a child. The varied tools and Apple Pencil precision make the experience very realistic.

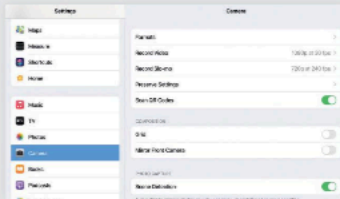


**6 LEARN TO SKETCH**  
ShadowDraw is all you need to learn how to sketch, and it could change the way you view drawing forever. Over time your abilities will improve more than you could have imagined.

**>>> COMMUNICATE IN STYLE** The need to communicate remotely has become much more important and the hardware you use will be vital, no matter what software you use. This is one area where an iPad can beat the majority of Macs



**1 SEE EVERYTHING**  
Whether on a MacBook or an iPad, the FaceTime interface is great for seeing your correspondent clearly. Today's Apple screens are more than capable.



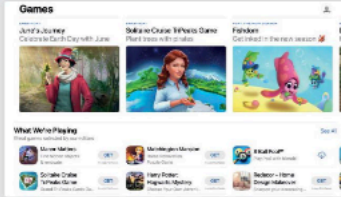
**2 THE CAMERAS MATTER**  
The iPad Air FaceTime camera is capable of 7MP photos and 1080p HD recording. The MacBook Air only offers a 720p FaceTime HD camera.



**3 IT ALL WORKS**  
The iPadOS versions of apps such as Zoom have more options than their macOS equivalents. The iPad can work in conjunction with a Mac.



>>> **ARCADE QUALITY GAMING** In theory, a MacBook is better for gaming, but the main issue is the relatively small range of titles available. On iPadOS you can choose from thousands of titles, but you can now run many on an M1 Mac. This makes choosing between the two difficult



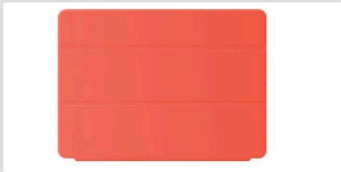
**1 THE GREAT LEVELLER**  
Apple Arcade has brought a selection of excellent games to both iPadOS and macOS, but the range is still limited to just a couple of hundred titles.

**2 SO MANY GAMES**  
In the iPadOS App Store you'll find thousands of games, and this is where an iPad can have the edge in terms of variety. It's comparable in performance.

**3 THE BLURRED LINES**  
The fact that M1 Macs can now run iOS apps and games blurs the lines a little, but we'd argue that the iPad is more suited to extended sessions.

## THE BEST IPAD ACCESSORIES

Gear to protect your iPad when you're out and about, and make it even more usable



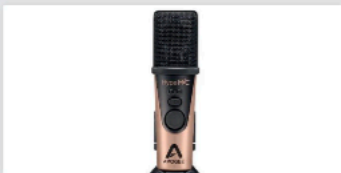
**1 PROTECT EVERYTHING**  
The Smart Cover comes in a variety of colors, it offers excellent minimally sized protection for an iPad, and it also acts as a very useful desk stand.



**2 MULTIPLE PORTS**  
The USB-C Digital AV Multiport Adapter takes advantage of the single port in the new iPads to give you instant access to HDMI displays and USB-A devices.



**3 GET YOUR GAME ON**  
The SteelSeries Nimbus+ Wireless Gaming Controller will work with all of your Apple Devices and takes advantage of the huge range of iPad games available.



**4 PODCAST FROM ANYWHERE**  
With the Apogee HypeMiC Microphone you can create podcasts no matter where you are on the iPad using a range of pro software. The editing process will be easy too.



**5 A PAPER SCREEN**  
If you are drawing on your iPad or take notes every day, a screen protector from Paperlike will help you be more accurate and recreate the real feel of paper.

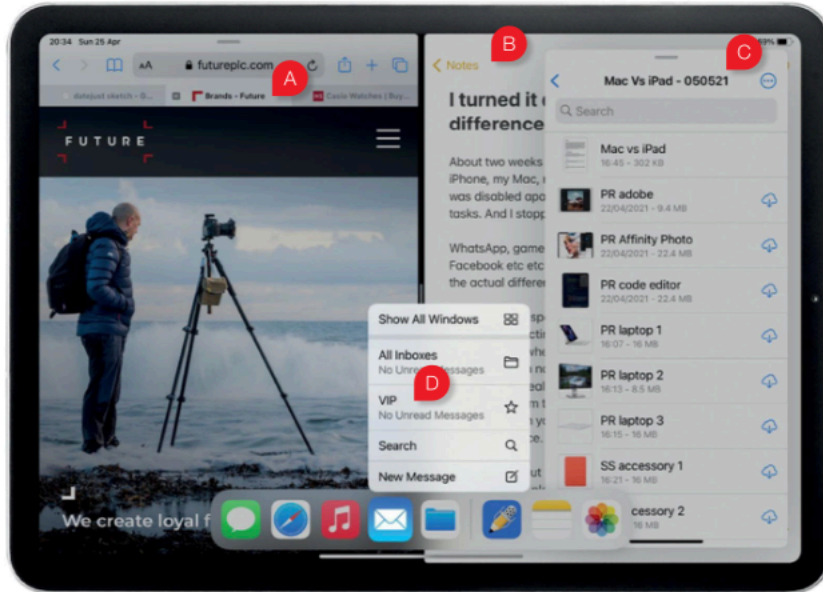


**6 CARRY ALL**  
For serious work away from home, you may want to carry a few accessories and your iPad with you, and this is where the FINTIE Portfolio Sleeve Bag will be useful.

## QUICK LOOK

### Mobile multi-tasking

One huge advantage that a MacBook has is the ability to truly run multiple apps and processes at the same time, and to do so in a way that feels natural and simply right. The iPad has always struggled to match macOS in this area, but it is improving. This remains, however, a definite win for the MacBook.



**A ALL IN ONE** You can use each app that is displayed in part of the iPad screen as normal – for example, opening multiple tabs in Safari, and the process is managed by grabbing an icon from the Dock and pulling it upwards.

**B TWO APPS WORK** For true productivity two apps side by side work best, because you can use them as you would normally with very few visual restrictions. This could become a standard setup for you in the future.

**C THE THIRD APP** With two apps running side by side you can bring up a third from the Dock and use it in a mini window on the left or right of the screen. It is a clever solution, but it still falls behind macOS in terms of productivity.

**D A FOURTH APP** Even with three apps running on the iPad screen, you still have access to a fourth app by bringing up the Dock and holding on an icon. You will see various actions available that you can take immediately.

**>>> BUILD AN IPAD DESKTOP** A handful of accessories can help you close the gap to a MacBook, or even an iMac if you own a recent iPad. This can be tricky, because the ultimate price may exceed that of a new MacBook, but you will have the portability available to you



**1 A MAGIC KEYBOARD** The Magic Keyboard is an expensive accessory, but the typing experience is superb and it gives you a trackpad while servicing as an adjustable stand.



**2 A BIGGER SCREEN** A monitor like the Dell U2415 UltraSharp can be used with the iPad to increase the display size. It can make the iPad Pro or Air feel like an iMac.

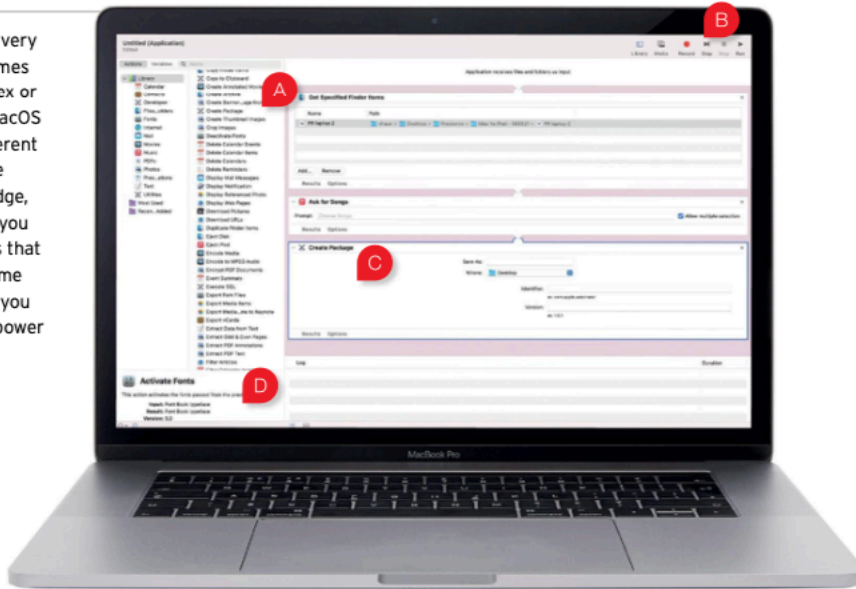


**3 FULL CONTROL** The Magic Trackpad 2 is ideal for precise control and input in a desktop situation. You're likely to want to tap the iPad screen, so this should suffice.



## QUICK LOOK Automate your Mac

iPadOS Shortcuts are very handy, but when it comes to dealing with complex or repetitive tasks the macOS Automator is in a different league. With very little programming knowledge, or indeed none at all, you can build automations that will save you lots of time every day and enable you to truly embrace the power of your Mac.



**A MULTIPLE INCLUDED ACTIONS**  
Automator includes a lot of actions that you can run in sequence to complete complex tasks. It will take some time to learn them all, but it will be worth it in the long run.

**B RECORD AND GO**  
You can record your automations just as you would a simplistic macro. Trial and error is the key here to finding packages that will work for you and make your days just a little easier. The options are endless.

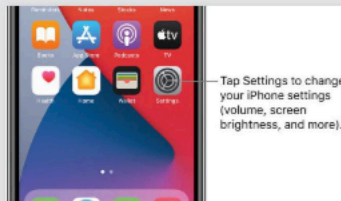
**C DO SOME LEARNING**  
Each action has a description that will offer an indication of what it can do, but you can read up on Apple's site and elsewhere to truly understand what is possible. You may be surprised at the power available.

**D BUILD AN APP**  
If you create a package from your actions others will be able to run them just as they would an app. While Automator will not make you a programmer, it can offer solutions at scale for those who need them.

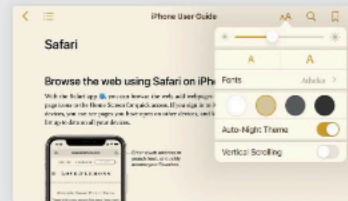
>>> **A BRILLIANT READING EXPERIENCE** It's perfectly possible to read on a MacBook, but the reality is that it still feels like reading on a computer. The form factor of the iPad makes it feel much more suited to reading as you would with a traditional book or a Kindle device



**1 BUY THE BEST**  
There are perfectly formatted books, even user guides, available from Apple. The experience will be greatly enhanced when reading on an iPad.



**2 TAP TO ZOOM**  
You should be able to tap on any image in a book and then view that image in much greater detail. Tap the "x" at the top right to zoom out.



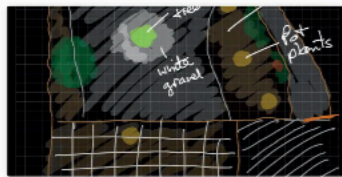
**3 YOUR READING EXPERIENCE**  
The majority of eBook reading apps for the iPad allow you to customize the theme and font options to tailor the experience for your tastes.

# APPLE PENCIL ADVANTAGES

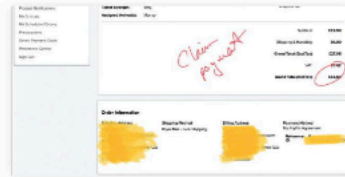
A big differentiator between the Mac and iPad is use of the Apple Pencil for creative tasks



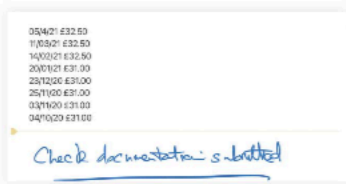
**1 CREATE DIGITAL ART**  
There are multiple apps in the App Store containing a multitude of tools to let you create intricate artwork on your iPad. This is where the Apple Pencil truly shines.



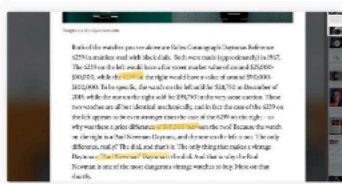
**2 MANAGE YOUR PROJECTS**  
You can dispense with paper now and use the Apple Pencil to draw simple plans for your garden, home or any other personal project that you need to manage.



**3 ANNOTATE DOCUMENTS**  
The annotation of documents would usually require a printer and a long process to do it properly, but now you can pick up your Apple Pencil and annotate in seconds.



**4 MORE INTRICATE NOTES**  
Many of the default Apple apps include support for writing naturally with the Apple Pencil, and Notes is just one example. It can quickly become your default way of working.

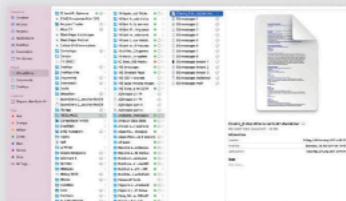


**5 DO MUCH MORE**  
Snap a screenshot of a web page, tap the "Full Page" option and then highlight any part of a website you need to. This offers lots of flexibility for many tasks.

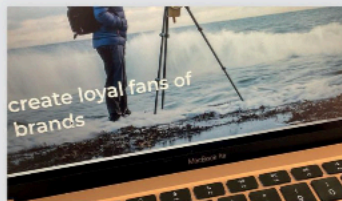


**6 HAVE SOME FUN**  
There are many games that support the Apple Pencil and some can bring a traditional way of playing on the iPad through natural input. This accessory can change everything.

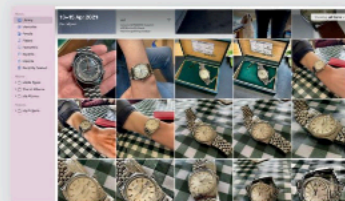
**>>> DISTINCT MAC ADVANTAGES** No matter how impressive and flexible the later iPads are, there are still areas where a MacBook running macOS can offer a more complete and bespoke solution for specific tasks



**1 OPEN ANY FILE**  
With so many file formats available it is likely that you will either have default access, or be able to find a Mac app to handle all of them.



**2 ALL IN ONE**  
An iPad is more portable and easier to use for reading and web browsing, but the all-in-one nature of a MacBook is hugely convenient and more complete.



**3 CORE FUNCTIONALITY**  
From editing photos to sharing data between apps, the "full operating system" nature of macOS provides more seamless use when undertaking tasks.



## WHO SHOULD USE WHAT?

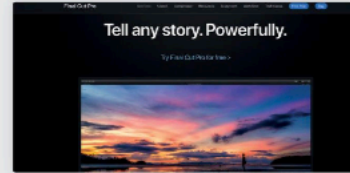
Still not sure which device is best for you? Here's a brief roundup based on usage



**1 THE TYPICAL USER**  
If your main computer uses are web browsing, email and other simple tasks where data entry is not too common, it is likely that an iPad will do everything you need.



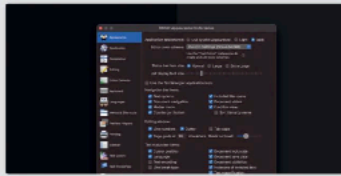
**2 THE CREATIVE PERSON**  
For many creative people, an iPad is ideal for drawing and sketching, and it is now capable of audio and video editing with some seriously powerful apps available.



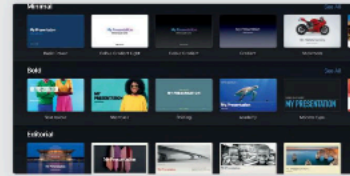
**3 THE PROFESSIONAL CREATOR**  
If you need serious power and are aiming to undertake complex video editing or image manipulation for many photos, we would suggest that a Mac is still the way to go.



**4 THE WORKER**  
Not everyone gets to choose their work computer, but for those who can the Mac still wins for most uses. The form factor and compatibility lift it above the iPad.

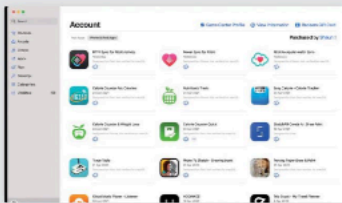


**5 THE PRO CODER**  
You can code on an iPad when you are travelling, but the reality is that a powerful Mac is still required for complex coding and translation. This is somewhat unavoidable.

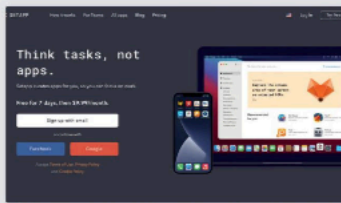


**6 THE SALESPERSON**  
For those who travel a lot for work and who need to present and interact with customers, the iPad is actually a much more impressive device to work with.

>>> **MAC APP FLEXIBILITY (INCLUDE RUNNING iOS APPS ON MACOS)** Despite having fewer apps available than iPadOS, the actual flexibility within macOS is great, and in some areas much more wide-ranging than in iPadOS



**1 MACOS AND iOS APPS**  
Having access to all of your macOS and iOS apps is a bonus, and ensures that you can run your favorite solutions on all of your Apple devices.

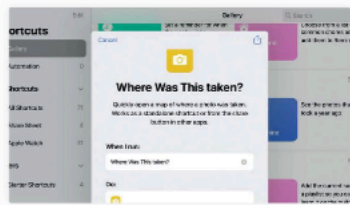


**2 SUBSCRIBE TO APPS**  
Setapp is a service that allows you to subscribe on a monthly basis to get continued use of an impressive selection of powerful apps. Ideal for many users.

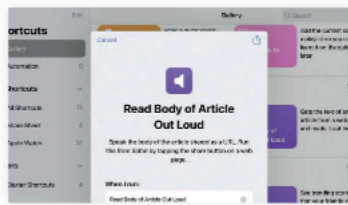


**3 YOU HAVE CONTROL!**  
You can download thousands of apps direct from developers, which is something you can't do within iPadOS. This is a big advantage for macOS.

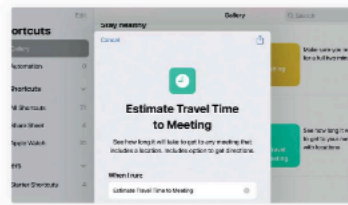
**>>> ESSENTIAL IPAD SHORTCUTS** The number of Shortcuts available for iPadOS is growing. With considered curation, you can build up a set of Shortcuts that will improve the way your iPad works in many different ways



**1 WHERE WAS IT TAKEN?**  
Use this Shortcut to instantly see a map detailing where a particular photo was taken. It can help to bring back special memories in a whole new way.



**2 READ THE WEB ALOUD**  
This Shortcut is very clever and potentially useful for everyone. Use the share sheet while in Safari, choose the Shortcut, and listen to the page text.



**3 GET ORGANIZED**  
When you have a series of meetings coming up, this Shortcut is ideal for including the amount of travel time. This is often missed when on a busy schedule.

## QUICK LOOK

### A simple Mac

Launchpad is a macOS feature that does not get the credit it deserves, but if you take some time to familiarize yourself with it then you may use it more than you expect. It is very basic visually, but gives you the chance to use a simple interface and access your apps in a more logical fashion every single time.



**A MAKE IT YOURS**  
You can drag any app icon to a new position or delete apps. The fact that your iPadOS apps can be accessed if you are using an M1 powered Mac is an added bonus. It is versatile below the surface.

**B SEARCH AND SELECT**  
The simple search bar at the top gives you instant access to whatever app you need. With the keyboard in place you can click and start typing straightaway and the results will appear instantly.

**C IT'S SO FAMILIAR**  
Launchpad feels so familiar, and there is more than a resemblance to the iPad interface. The icons feel almost identical to those in iOS, and it tricks your mind, making it hard to distinguish between macOS and iPadOS.

**D IT'S STILL A MAC**  
The Dock at the bottom of the screen reminds you that it is still a Mac you are using. macOS is already a natural and easy-to-use operating system, and Launchpad takes this idea even further.