



## **Tech Talk: Do you really need that new iProduct or is it just short-term gadget lust?**

by Rhodri Marsden

A few weeks ago, I found myself being guided, as if by an invisible force, to an electrical shop in New Malden. My brain (the invisible force in question) had decided I urgently needed to acquire the latest iPad. I stood in the showroom and was about to reach for my credit card when I realised that I didn't actually need it.

I wanted it, but was having trouble working out why. I had a first-generation iPad sitting at home that I didn't use very much and had considered selling, and yet here I was, about to spend money I didn't have on another one.

A voice in my head told me to stop being stupid and go home. So I did. I'm not having a pop at the iPad. But this was the most vivid experience I've had of desiring, almost fetishising, ownership of a gadget for no reason I could identify.

Later that day, I wondered why. My grandfather used to upgrade his car every year – his only real extravagance – but no, it couldn't be a genetic thing. It was more a combination of peer pressure, the urge to be an early adopter, and clever marketing on the part of Apple. Its mastery of the psychology of shopping gives its products this emotional attraction, whether we need them or not.

Apple, of course, doesn't have a monopoly on this.

To use one of my least favourite phrases: it's a lifestyle thing. So is gadget lust a bad thing? It keeps the economy ticking over, after all.