The iPhone 6 Won't Wow: 6 Reasons Why

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Apple's getting hammered by analysts and investors [1] as I write this, and I've been trying to resist the urge to say "told ya so."

Sorry, no will power today.

Back in September, after the much-awaited and meh-filled unveiling of the iPhone 5 [2], I made a declaration that's being borne out further in this week's headlines -- the iPhone jumped the shark [3] some time ago. At the time, I was reacting to the lack of any groundbreaking innovation in the latest Apple smartphone iteration. But this week, word came that iPhone demand was slumping and Apple had reportedly cut component orders.

Is that really such a big deal, you say? No, not necessarily. It could just be the normal drop in sales after the holidays. Or it could be that, *plus* the six reasons below that lead me to continue to believe that the iPhone will join Adam Lambert, Sarah Palin, and many others on the list of pop culture icons that peaked around 2010.

Just to be clear on what I'm saying, my best educated guesses are that we will see a new iPhone this summer, and it will be an iPhone 5S with mostly iterative updates, a choice of colors [4], and perhaps the lower-cost model [5] of the latest rumors. But the real question is: then what?
When I think of the last time Apple really gave us a major innovation, all I think of in recent years has to do with the iPad.

My gut tells me the iPhone as we know it will be done at that point. I have a hunch there will never be an iPhone 6, because Apple will be forced to move into a significantly different form factor to keep people interested and compete with the movement toward bigger phablet-like thingies and emerging wearable electronics (lots of us have fat thumbs, after all). Or, there *will* be an iPhone 6 and it will disappoint. Here are my reasons for all my iPhone doom and gloom:

1. iOS is stale: After a panel discussion [6] last summer, I cornered two analysts who together keep four very close eyes on Cupertino. Asymco's Horace Dediu and Piper Jaffray's Gene Munster both expressed a sentiment that's become even more common since then -- iOS doesn't seem so fresh anymore. Forget Adam Lambert, the interface feels more like something that would consider Clay Aiken a contemporary.

How iOS can catch up with hipper offerings from Windows Phone and Android [7] -- let alone getting back to the UI vanguard it established half a decade ago -- without upsetting hordes of legacy users is a task of Microsoftian proportions. And it only works out for Microsoft about half the time.

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