

Circuit of Culture Essay: iPhone 4s

The Apple iPhone 4s is the newest iPhone released by Apple. Its significance as a cultural product is immense, as –arguably- one of this year’s must have gadgets for the tech-savvy and fashionable. This short essay will discuss the cultural significance of the iPhone 4s in conjunction with Paul Du Gay’s ‘the circuit of culture model.’

The production of the iPhone has been highly publicized since its inception, with Steve Job’s product seminars, which have served to the both, inform and advertise to the smart phone market. As the first touch-screen phone on the market the iPhone has gone through 5 generations of refinement and improvement. Moreover, as an Apple product is undeniably one of the most recognised brands and phones in the global market, this product awareness and popularity is largely attributed to Steve Job’s and the aforementioned product seminars.

The iPhone 4s is consumed en’ mass by the global community as the most popular smart phone in the world. Today our phones are not only used as phones but as a means through which we organise/enjoy/and function in everyday life. The iPhone 4s functions as a clock, a phone, a camera, a mobile internet source and calendar- to mention just a few of its features. Individuals decide how they consume the iPhone 4s, as Du Gay et al. argues the meanings of cultural products are not merely sent by producers but negotiated through the consumers usage of the product (85). How we utilize the iPhone 4s and incorporate it into to our everyday lives portrays us either as a technologically advanced consumer or technology inept trend follower.

The iPhone 4s design is synonymous with the Apple product line, with the same basic layout as previous iPhones and the featuring of the Apple symbol in the product design. Essentially each new iPhone design pays homage to its predecessor whilst portraying itself as a more modern and desirable product, and thus making it

predecessor outdated and unfashionable. However, it is important to note that each new phone has new applications, the current iPhone 4s encompassing applications such as Siri and Face-time.

The iPhone 4s is represented as the must have modern gadget, a symbol of western modernization and the fashion-forward. Apple has succeeded in making its brand synonymous with being on trend and the technological must-haves. Indeed part of the iPhone 4s's appeal comes from the fact that it is Apples newest gadget, not because of the new technology it encompasses, or the new applications you can buy.

Apple regulates the iPhone 4s in several ways; one of the most evident ways is through the applications for the iPhone you can buy on iTunes. The applications are restricted firstly by a strict code of conduct and appropriateness as to what is accepted as into the application store. There are age restrictions on certain apps, and harsh restrictions on nudity, sexual content and crude language. What's more you can put parental locks on the iPhone for younger children and can lock your phone personally with your own security passcodes on the phone as a whole and on individual applications.

References:

Du Gay, Paul, et al. *Doing Cultural Studies: The story of the Sony Walkman*. London: SAGE, 1997. Print.