

## The Strange Case of the Disappearing Touchpads

Written by Bob Snyder  
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Best Buy sold less than 10% of its initial order of HP TouchPads after its July launch and wanted HP to take the remainder of the 270,000 TouchPads back.



Then in HP's famous capitulation of the PC business, CEO Leo Apotheker said, "Our TouchPad has not been gaining enough traction in the marketplace. We have made the difficult but necessary decision to shut down the WebOS hardware operations."

Then the firesale started: Instead of taking the inventory back, HP gave Best Buy the go-ahead to dump the units. Authorizing a price drop of \$250 on the TouchPad, the retailer tried again.

This time the "music-powered by Beats Audio" units with Adobe Flash jumped off the shelves at \$99 for TouchPad 16GB and \$150 for TouchPad 32GB.

350,000 TouchPads sold in just 24 hours. 10 times the number of tablets that had been sold at Best Buy prior to HP's exit announcement.

TouchPad is now sold-out at most major retailers and also online.

And what's the lesson here? Customers love a bargain. The TouchPad had the wrong price point. Leo is definitely not a hardware guy. All of the above?

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The strange case of the disappearing TouchPads is not over yet.

At HP, now a house run by an ex-SAP executive, the initial conclusion seems to be it may have been a mistake to throw out WebOS (software that drives the TouchPad). Not a word about the hardware.

Yet some of the units came out of the box with Android software. Why? No one knows... but the story on the disappearing Touchpads isn't going to disappear for some time...

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