Apple Issues Apology for iPad Pro ‘Crush!’ Ad and Pulls It from TV – Here’s Why

Apple released its new iPad Air and Pro on Tuesday with an advertisement to introduce the iPad Pro to the world. But days later, after public backlash, Apple issued an apology – and is cutting the ad from TV.

The Crush! iPad Pro ad shows a mountain of familiar objects associated with creativity, like paint, a piano, a record player, and even books, bursting under the force of a hydraulic press.

The ad’s ending shot shows off the thinness of the new iPad Pro, made all the more clear by the bulky objects that had to be pressed to make it. Apple emphasized at the event that the new tablet is its thinnest product yet, even more so than the iPod nano.

Related: Is It an iPad or a MacBook? Apple Makes It Tough to Tell By Revealing a 13-Inch iPad Pro With ‘Outrageously Powerful’ M4 Chip for AI

Creative objects under a hydraulic press. Credit: Apple

Ad Age reports that Apple decided not to run the ad on TV.

“Creativity is in our DNA at Apple, and it’s incredibly important to us to design products that empower creatives all over the world,” Apple marketing VP Tor Myhren told Ad Age on Thursday. “Our goal is to always celebrate the myriad of ways users express themselves and bring their ideas to life through iPad. We missed the mark with this video, and we’re sorry.”

[embedded content]

Even if some viewers understood Apple's concept, the ad sparked mixed emotions. Americus Reed II, a marketing professor at The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, told the Associated Press that the ad came across as "technology crushing the life of that nostalgic sort of joy (from former times)."

The ad also drew criticism from Hollywood creatives. Actor Hugh Grant called it: "The destruction of the human experience. Courtesy of Silicon Valley." Filmmaker and author Justine Bateman asked why Apple ran an ad that crushes the arts.

> *The destruction of the human experience. Courtesy of Silicon Valley. https://t.co/273XB3CfnF*
>
> *— Hugh Grant (@HackedOffHugh) May 8, 2024*

Of course, the ad also sparked fears of AI replacing creative jobs.

A CNET editor said it looks like "a multi-year cycle where creativity seems like it's on the brink of being replaced by AI."

A Microsoft/LinkedIn report from earlier this week based on a survey of more than 30,000 people showed that almost half are worried about AI taking their jobs. A March report analyzing five million job postings on Upwork, a freelancing website, showed that AI is already impacting jobs.

Related: Employers Say They Want to Hire Candidates With AI Skills, But Employees Are Still Sneaking AI Tool Use in the Office

From before ChatGPT's release in November 2022 to February of this year, writing gigs declined by 33%, translation work by

19%, and customer service jobs by 16%, per the report.

The Apple ad has a similar concept to an ad that LG ran in 2008 promoting the KC910 smartphone. The LG ad also showed a hydraulic press crushing things like speakers and a keyboard to form a new device – in that case, a phone.

A 2018 ad Apple released to promote a previous version of the iPad also earned some Internet ire, although to a far lesser extent than this year's ad. In the 2018 ad, a child asks, "What's a computer?" while working on her iPad Pro.

Related: AI Is Impacting Jobs. Here Are the Gigs Affected the Most

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