Why don't more products take advantage of the Smart Connector, the magnetic snap-in port found in the iPad Pro? Fast Company spoke to a number of accessory makers, and discovered the reason is, perhaps unsurprisingly, Apple itself.

So far only four accessories support the Smart Connector. One is the Apple Smart Keyboard, the first and only iPad Pro keyboard cover. Then there are two keyboards and a docking station, all made by Logitech. Logitech managed to bring its Smart Connector-enabled products to market thanks to a close partnership with Apple, meaning other companies having to compete with both.

As Incipio tells Fast Company, “with an iPad Pro keyboard on the market already, we are evaluating the market’s appetite for another iPad Pro keyboard and identifying if there are any gaps that we can fill... [W]e are developing with having a point of difference in mind rather than developing to be quick to market.”

IDC points out getting Smart Connector components is both time- and cost-prohibitive. One source claims the component lead time is close to 6 months, which is not tenable in an industry that is all about rapid development cycles. Meanwhile other companies, such as Brydge, point the pogo pin design of the Smart Connector is impossible to use in its flexible aluminium iPad keyboards.

Bluetooth keyboards are also arguably more attractive to customers, since the wireless standard allows for easily detachable peripherals that are usable with other devices. In addition, while Bluetooth device require an internal battery, this "isn't such a big deal," especially so in the current era of long-life rechargeable batteries.

Still, the Smart Connector has a lot of potential-- Fast Company suggests "a keyboard that could charge the iPad through a built-in battery, or one with extra storage that integrated with Apple's new Files app in iOS 11." It can even handle other kinds of peripherals, such as a MIDI keyboard dock. Peripheral makers simply need to realise that, while Apple ensures such peripherals are easier to make.

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