This Christmas I was truly blessed with some amazing gifts. I got some really great books such as the latest Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader (a repository of knowledge greater than that of the fabled library at Alexandria) and John Stewart’s; Earth, (I love science books). I also received the usual assortment of sweaters, socks and sweets but I received two gifts in particular that are vying for “best gift of the season” although everyone knows that of course, it’s all about the giving. (Wink wink.)   
The first contestant in the best gift sweepstakes was an iPad. It was a huge surprise for a number of reasons. First of all, it was about a hundred smackeroonies over Cupcake’s and my total supposed gift giving budget we’d agreed on for each other. Secondly, an iPad is something I have never mentioned, discussed or expressed any desire for in the least. It seemed to be a device with all the features of a iPhone I’d never use, with yet another technological learning curve I’d have to endure, and a price tag that made it unthinkable. So I did the natural thing. I didn’t think about it... until I unwrapped one.   
The other gift I got at Christmas that both surprised and excited me the most, apart from the coupon for a 14” pizza from our generous neighbours, was the news our son Matt was moving out again.  
When the news was announced, I outdid myself in fatherly behaviour by quashing my initial reaction (YAAAAHOOOO!!!!!!) and asked caring questions about his new digs. Not that it mattered that much to me, although I’d draw the line at a cardboard box in the river valley. Still, in college, I lived in a lady`s basement; actually just a bed in her laundry room. I still get flashbacks from the smell of Tide. Believe me, I`m no stranger to sketchy accommodation. Matt’s new address, however, is a decent apartment in Edmonton’s south side. I was almost kind of disappointed.  
So let’s compare these two wonderful gifts and try and establish which one is truly superior.  
COST: Both gifts cost about the same since I’d agreed at one time that if Matt moved out, I’d pay his first month’s rent. Many might view such an offer as a callous bribe but I prefer to think of it as supportive, financial encouragement that just happens to be in the form of a callous bribe. Advantage iPad.  
WARRANTY: I believe the iPad comes with some kind of warranty however, I have no guarantees whatsoever, Matt’s move will be permanent. Advantage iPad.  
SECONDARY COSTS: Warning! The iPad is basically an electronic, hi-tech money pit. Just to make your new toy work, you have to buy an iTunes card. With money in your iTunes account you can download books, TV shows, movies, video games; in fact an unbelievably wide spectrum of entertainment, almost all for a price. To duplicate my MP3 song collection, I’d need to fork over a thousand bucks or so, just to give you an example. Matt’s move, however, has a lot of unknown future costs, apart from the already missing half a freezerful of food, the bulk of the contents of our canned goods cupboard and a total raping and pillaging of my liquor collection. Advantage iPad.  
LIFESTYLE CHANGES: With the iPad, I can now play Facebook Scrabble from the comfort of my recliner. With Matthew gone, however, I don’t need to play Scrabble on the recliner because I won’t have to share the computer desk with Matt. Total, unrestricted dominion over my computer desk will finally be mine!!!! Unless, of course, Cupcake wants it. Advantage iPad.  
COMMUNICATIONS: With the iPad, I can access my Hotmail account to get my important messages. Matthew was terrible about giving messages. With him not even home, people won’t think that their message was delivered and the onus will be on them to get hold of me. Maybe they could email me. Advantage iPad.  
SECURITY: The iPad is so wonderfully portable, I’d lose it for sure so it will never leave the house to ensure it will always be safe. If something does go wrong, however, it can be replaced. Matt, on the other hand, we are willing to send out into the world with no way to keep him safe, despite him being a non-renewable resource. Advantage iPad.  
SPACE REQUIREMENT: The iPad only takes up space the size of a small notepad. With Matt leaving, I don`t just lose an occasionally surly tenant with lousy payment habits, I gain a den!!!!! Advantage Matt leaving.  
OVERALL IMPACT: The iPad will change how I do some things but not what I do. Matt leaving, however, changes many things. It is an exciting beginning for him which will truly launch his adult life. A successful launch is imperative for me to see myself as a successful parent. From that perspective, for him and for me, his news was the greatest gift I could imagine that doesn`t involve the lottery commission. Advantage Matt.  
The clear winner is obvious.  
Good luck, son!