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Hands On With Tablets

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Hands on with Tablets

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iPad Air

Connection options: Wifi, AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, Verizon.

Memory: 16 GB, 32 GB, 64 GB, 128 GB.

Price range: \$499 - \$929.

Operating system: iOS7.

Notes: Faster processor than the iPad 3 & 4. Similar to 4th Gen iPad, but smaller and lighter.

Older versions: iPad 2 is still available (\$399-\$529, 16G only, Wifi, AT&T, and Verizon only).

Extra memory: No extra slots.

Bottom line: Versatile and easy to set up.

iPad Mini with Retina Display

Connection options: Wifi, AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, Verizon.

Memory: 16 GB, 32 GB, 64 GB, 128 GB.

Price range: \$399-\$829.

Operating system: iOS7.

Notes: Faster processor than the original iPad Mini.

Older versions: Original iPad Mini without Retina available (\$299-\$499, 16G only, Wifi, AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, Verizon).

Extra memory: No extra slots.

Bottom line: Great if you want a smaller tablet.

Compare iPads: <http://store.apple.com/us/ipad/compare>

Microsoft Surface 2

Connection options: Wifi. Cellular version (AT&T & Vodafone) coming in early 2014.

Memory: 32 GB, 64 GB.

Price range: \$449-\$549.

Operating system: Runs Windows RT.

Notes: Includes Office 2013 RT; can store files using Windows folders.

Other versions: The original Surface still available. The more expensive Surface Pro 2 runs Windows 8.1 and comes with a stylus. A mini version is expected in 2014.

Extra memory: USB port.

Bottom line: Because it comes with Office, it's ready to go almost right out of the box.

Samsung Galaxy Tab 3 (10.1")

Options: This version is wifi only; other Samsung tablets use Verizon, Sprint, T-Mobile, U.S. Cellular, AT&T.

Memory: 16G; add up to 64GB with a Micro SD card.

Price range: \$359.99 (other Samsung tablets run to \$599.99).

Operating System: Android.

Other versions: Samsung Galaxy 2 (for cellular access); Samsung Galaxy Note (more powerful and includes stylus).

Extra memory: Micro USB, Micro SD.

Bottom line: A solid, basic tablet.

Compare the Air, Surface, and Galaxy Note: <http://goo.gl/9HrNrb>