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The State of the Tablet

Debbie Ginsberg

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Available Tablets

iPad/iPad 2



Company/Operating System: Apple/iOS

Cost: From \$399 (16G iPad 1) to \$829 (64G iPad 2 with cellular access; monthly cellular data plan from ATT or Verizon costs extra).

Features: 10" screen; wifi and cellular internet access; can use over 65,000 iPad apps plus most of the 300,000 iPhone/iPod Touch apps; 10 hour battery life; front and rear cameras (iPad 2).

Note: Industry rumors suggest the iPad 3 may be launched in September.

<http://www.apple.com/ipad/>

Xoom



Company/Operating System: Motorola/Android Honeycomb

Cost: \$799 (\$599 with purchase of Verizon cellular data plan, plan costs extra)

Features: 10" screen; front and rear cameras; cellular and wifi internet access; upgradable to 4G; high resolution screen; 9-10 hour battery life.

Note: Current reviews generally favor the iPad over the Xoom because while Xoom's hardware is excellent, Android's Honeycomb operating system is not as user-friendly as Apple's iOS. It is also fairly buggy. There are currently only about 100 apps optimized for Honeycomb.

<http://www.motorola.com/Consumers/US-EN/Consumer-Product-and-Services/Tablets/ci.MOTOROLA-XOOM-US-EN.overview>

PC Tablets



Company/Operating System: Various/Windows 7

Cost: \$500 for the most basic models; typical prices are \$1000-\$1500

Features: Varies depending on model. From the ASUS Eee Slate: 12" screen; USB & card reader ports; camera; wifi access to the internet; stylus; gorilla glass (extra-tough screen); 3 hour

battery life.

Note: PC tablets tend to be heavier than other tablets. They require special hardware to use with cellular networks.

<http://pear.ly/eHF2u>

Coming soon

BlackBerry PlayBook



Company/Operating System: RIM/BlackBerry Tablet OS (QNX)

Cost: \$500 (rumored base cost)

Features: 7" screen; Flash support (announced); wifi and cellular access to the internet; dual

cameras; incorporates BlackBerry security; 8 hours battery life (projected).

Release date: April 10 (rumored)

Note: Current rumors suggest the PlayBook may be able to use Android apps.

<http://us.blackberry.com/playbook-tablet/>

HP TouchPad



Company/Operating System: HP/WebOS

Cost: Unknown

Features: 10" screen; wifi and cellular access to the internet (including 4G); front-facing camera; Flash support (announced); designed for multi-tasking; touch-to-share proximity sensor (touch a smartphone to the tablet to transfer data).

Release date: Summer 2011

<http://www.palm.com/us/products/pads/touchpad/index.html>

PC Tablets – Windows 8



Company/Operating System: Various/Windows 8

Cost: Likely to vary depending on hardware

Features: Other than “optimized for tablets,” unknown.

Release date: Early 2012 (rumored)

Note: Microsoft is rumored to be planning a demonstration of the tablet in June 2011.

Tablet benefits

- **Portability** – most are lightweight (under 2 lbs) and small enough to fit in a bag or backpack.
- **Long battery life** – particularly non-Windows tablets. Windows 7 tablets use less energy-efficient hardware.
- **Productivity on the go** – tablets offer easy access to email, calendars, the web, and more. Most include productivity applications useful for research, writing, taking notes, and preparing for class.
- **Entertainment** – Tablets generally include games, ereaders, and access to TV shows and movies.

Tablet issues

- **Flash issues** – most tablets do not support Flash, and even Flash-friendly tablets are likely to run into problems.
- **Typing** – typing on a screen is difficult, and portable keyboards can add considerable weight.
- **Not optimized for business** –many tablets cannot use all functions in common business and research applications.
- **Expensive** – although tablets themselves are generally inexpensive, cellular data plans and downloadable applications can quickly run up costs.