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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.

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

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.