

Freescale promises bargain-price tablet this year

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The devices will sport touch screens with as much as four times the viewing area of typical smartphones and be about a third of the size of an average netbook computer, according to the Texas-based company.

"We believe the tablet will emerge as a popular form factor for the next generation of smartbooks," said Freescale vice president of sales and marketing Henri Richard.

"By introducing this prototype reference design, Freescale intends to

play a vital role in propelling the mainstream adoption of smartbooks."

The tablets are designed with features including [wireless internet](#) connectivity, all-day [battery life](#), and instant activation.

Versions of the tablet operating on [Android](#) and Linux software will be demonstrated at the [Consumer Electronics Show](#) that officially starts Thursday in Las Vegas, according to Freescale.

Freescale, which specializes in making chips embedded in devices, is hoping the blueprint will "jump-start creation of smartbook tablets" based on the company's microprocessors.

Products based on the design could be in the market by mid-year, according to Freescale.

"There is clearly strong end-user demand for tablet form-factors, and new reference designs look to play a major role in helping (electronics makers) speed tablet smartbook products to market," said ABI analyst Jerr Orr.

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