

Hands on with a Nintendo DSi XL

March 3 2010, By Gieson Cacho



Nintendo DSi XL.

It seems almost annual now -- a new year and a new version of the Nintendo DS comes out. Nintendo's almost Apple-like in its offerings, and judging by the sales figures, it's a move that works. On March 28, the Japanese company will release the Nintendo DSi XL (Yeah, that's a mouthful.), the hand-held's fourth iteration.

I had a chance to play around with the bigger, badder system this week at the [Nintendo](#) Media Summit. My first impression when I saw it on the table next to a Nintendo DSi was "Whoa, that's big." No longer pocket-sized, the new hand-held boasts a screen that's 93 percent larger than the latest system.

For comparison's sake, I placed my [iPhone](#) next to the DSi XL, and Nintendo's screen was bigger. Add an exact same one on top and the thing almost looks like a miniature netbook.

Holding it in my hand, the portable almost felt like one. There's a heft to it, but it's not a dog-killer. I can't imagine holding that thing up on a coach for long. Instead, it seems as if it'd be better used if it were laid on a table. Other than the size, the system's buttons and such feel the same. Unfortunately, there's no Game Boy Advance slot.

So who would buy this? I mean Nintendo sold 6 million hand-helds in 2009. It seems as though Nintendo purposely made this for a different demographic. Some would assume that it'd be for those who have been wanting to upgrade but held off on the DSi. But looking at the size and color, I really think this is aimed at women.

You can't really fit it in your pocket now. The size makes it something you'd throw into a bag or a purse. On top of that, the wine red color and stylus pen strikes me as more feminine than its smaller counterparts.

At the summit, most of the portables were a mix of Nintendo DSi and Nintendo DSi XL systems. One of the games plugged into the DSi XL was "Picross 3D." As the name implies, it's a version of the original that uses three dimensions. Instead of looking at shapes on a flat grid, you'll have to rotate cubes stacked around each other. It take some getting used to. You'll have to rotate shapes by swiping the stylus across the screen, and you can look around an object in 360 degrees. To dig a shape out of all those blocks, players have to read the numbers on each side of the block and figure out which ones in a column are good blocks and which ones are disposable.

The process is based a lot on logic. In a way, it's almost like Sudoku. Each number on the block tells you how many blocks in that row are

solid. Sometimes they aren't even consecutive. (That little detail is marked by circled number.) And by process of elimination, you should be able to figure out the correct cubes from the disposable ones.

But if you happen to destroy the wrong one, the game will penalize your score and remake the correct cube albeit with a few cracks in it. The figures you can make are rather simple and remind me a lot of the ones you would see "3D Dot Heroes."

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Citation: Hands on with a Nintendo DSi XL (2010, March 3) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-03-nintendo-dsi-xl.html>

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