

Australia's Telstra unveils iPad-style budget tablet

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Australia's major telecom firm Telstra unveiled a tablet device to rival Apple's iPad on Wednesday, featuring many of the same functions but with the added bonus of also working as a mobile phone.

Telstra's T-Touch Tab, which goes on sale next week, allows users to make video and phone calls and send text messages, and is being touted as the country's "most affordable wireless tablet".

"T-Touch Tab will suit Australians' appetite for quick and affordable access to information, useful apps and digital media wherever they may

be," said Rebekah O'Flaherty, executive director of Telstra's consumer division.

"From games that keep the kids amused, reading e-books, checking your email or catching the weather on the move, the possibilities are virtually endless."

The device will retail for 299 Australian dollars (295 US) and has a seven inch (18 centimetre) touchscreen. It runs on Google's Android 2.1 operating system, offering access to more than 80,000 applications.

Experts have described it as Australia's first budget-priced tablet, giving it generally warm reviews.

PC World computer magazine said it stood out compared with competitors like the iPad and Samsung's Galaxy Tab as an "affordable, entry-level tablet that doesn't skimp on too many features".

Tech website Gizmodo [Australia](#) said the device was aimed at teenagers and older buyers "who might be interested in the idea of a tablet but don't want to pay 650 dollars for an iPad".

But the T-Touch's resistive touchscreen -- meaning users have to push down on it slightly -- was "probably too big a sacrifice for any discerning gadget lover," it cautioned.

Apple launched the [iPad](#) in Australia to much fanfare in May, with some customers holding overnight vigils to be first through the doors. Marketing firm GfK recently estimated almost 200,000 units had been sold.

[Apple](#) told AFP it "does not break figures down to a country level" but said more than 4.2 million iPads had been sold worldwide in the three

months to September alone.

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