

Google puts iPad in the crosshairs (Update)

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The Motorola Xoom Android Honeycomb tablet is displayed during a press event in January 2011. Google on Wednesday provided a glimpse at tablet computer software crafted to dethrone the iPad and courted developers key to the success of Apple gadgets.

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Google showed off a Honeycomb version of its Android operating system that will debut on the upcoming Motorola Xoom tablet that won rave reviews at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas last month.

"Honeycomb is tailored for the new generation of tablet-sized computers," Google mobile products director Hugo Barra said while

demonstrating software features at the Internet titan's headquarters in Mountain View, California.

"We've spent a tremendous amount of time really optimizing performance on Honeycomb."

The free, open-source operating system is expected to quickly be built into an array of touchscreen tablets in a booming market currently dominated by the iPad launched by Apple last year.

In a sign that Google is intent on wooing the developers behind the "apps" fueling the popularity of smartphones and tablets, executives here stressed that Honeycomb is built as a platform for software innovation.

Google also [announced the launch of an Android Market webstore](http://market.android.com) at market.android.com, where people can get work or play applications for devices running on the mobile operating software.

The Internet giant set out to address a long-standing complaint by allowing developers to make money from in-application transactions such as buying virtual goods, music or other digital offerings.

"We've gotten a fair amount of feedback from developers that they want more ways to make money from their applications," said Android engineering director Chris Yerga.

"Today, we are releasing code for in-app monetization to the entire Android developer community."

Disney Mobile general manager Bart Decrem said the US entertainment powerhouse had held off bringing its hit "Tap Tap Revenge" music game to Android devices until songs could be sold to players.

Tap Tap Revenge was one of three Disney games for Android unveiled by DeCrem at the Google event.



"We've waited until the announcement today to bring 'Tap Tap Revenge' to Android because giving our users the hits they love is a key part of the game," DeCrem said.

Disney's most successful mobile game, Tap Tap has been downloaded more than 50 million times.

The slew of applications for Honeycomb demonstrated after the presentation included interactive software to link tablet users to CNN news stories, images and video.

"There is no secret that tablets are becoming a force in the marketplace and something we are going to be watching throughout the year," said CNN vice president of mobile Louis Gump. "We've been hard at work for an Android app for the tablet."

A free CNN application for Honeycomb tablets will launch "in the near future," according to Gump.

The Honeycomb event took place on the same day that News Corp.'s Rupert Murdoch unveiled "The Daily," a digital newspaper created exclusively for the iPad.

Murdoch, an enthusiastic fan of the iPad, said The Daily will only be available on Apple's tablet computer for now but will eventually appear on other tablets.

"We expect to be on all major tablets. But we believe that this year and maybe next year really belong to Apple," he said at an event in New York.

The Daily will be sold through Apple's App Store and iTunes and cost 99 cents a week or \$39.99 a year.

Apple has apparently begun more firmly enforcing a rule that financial transactions in applications must go through its payment system, with the Cupertino, California-based firm getting its 30-percent cut.

It reportedly rejected a Sony application linking people to the Japanese firm's online shop for digital books for its electronic reader because sales would be consummated outside of the Apple App Store.

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