

Xoom tablet debuts Feb. 24 with \$800 price

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A Xoom tablet is displayed at the 3GSM World congress in Barcelona, on February 17. US telecom titan Verizon on Thursday will begin selling Motorola Mobility's hotly awaited "Xoom" tablet computer at a price close to that of a top-of-the-line iPad.

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Xoom will be the first tablet on the market powered by "Honeycomb" software crafted specifically for such devices by Internet powerhouse [Google](#) and has been heralded as a viable challenger for Apple's market-ruling iPad.

Xoom will be sold for \$800, but the price will be trimmed to \$600 for those who opt for two-year service contracts with Verizon.

[Wireless 3G](#) plans will begin at \$20 monthly for a gigabyte of data.

The six iPad models range in price from \$500 to \$830 with the three higher-priced models having [3G mobile](#) telecom connection capabilities while the three less costly tablets only link to the Internet using Wi-Fi at hot spots.

With a 10.1-inch (25.6-centimeter) screen, the Xoom is about the same size as Apple's iPad, which hit stores in April and has other leading technology companies around the world scrambling to catch up.

Xoom also features a front-facing 2-megapixel camera for video chats and a rear-facing 5-megapixel camera that captures video.

The Xoom [tablet computer](#) was crowned the best gadget at the giant Consumer Electronics Show (CES) last month.

"This is really the next generation of tablets," [Motorola](#) Mobility device team head Alain Mutricy said as he held a [Xoom](#) in one hand at the awards ceremony.

"Our partnership with Google has been very intense and has enabled some great technology."

The CES accolades came just four days after Illinois-based Motorola split into two companies, Motorola Mobility and Motorola Solutions.

Motorola Mobility will focus on mobility, the Internet and computing markets while Motorola Solutions will target next-generation communications solutions to government, public safety and enterprise customers.

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