

RIM unveils launch date, price for PlayBook, iPad rival

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The new BlackBerry PlayBook on display in 2010 in San Francisco. Blackberry maker Research In Motion (RIM) announced Tuesday that its iPad rival, the PlayBook, would go on sale next month at a price identical to that of the hot-selling Apple tablet computer.

Blackberry maker Research In Motion (RIM) announced Tuesday that its iPad rival, the PlayBook, would go on sale next month at a price identical to that of the hot-selling Apple tablet computer.

The BlackBerry PlayBook will be available at Best Buy and other stores in the United States and Canada on April 19, the Waterloo, Ontario-based RIM said in a statement. Orders can be placed online as of Tuesday.

RIM is offering three models of the PlayBook. A version with 16

gigabytes of storage will cost \$499, a 32GB model will sell for \$599 and one with 64GB will cost \$699. The prices are the same as for comparable models of the [iPad](#).

The PlayBook features Wi-Fi connectivity to the Internet while Apple sells both Wi-Fi and 3G versions of the iPad.

"Tablets are becoming a bigger part of our business everyday and the launch of the BlackBerry PlayBook will heighten the level of excitement in this category," said Scott Anderson, head of merchandising for Best Buy Mobile.

RIM describes the PlayBook as the first "professional-grade" tablet and has stressed its integration with its BlackBerry smartphone, a favorite among many business users.

The PlayBook is RIM's first foray outside the mobile phone realm.

[BlackBerry](#) users can pair their handset with the PlayBook using a Bluetooth connection to view their email, calendar, documents or other content.

The PlayBook has a seven-inch (17.8-centimeter) touchscreen, smaller than the iPad's 9.7 inches (24.7-cm), and also plays Adobe Flash video software, which is banned from the Apple device.

At less than a pound (425 grams), the PlayBook is lighter than the iPad 2's 1.3 pounds (590 grams) and is also thinner.

It features front- and rear-facing cameras for video conferencing, a feature which was added to the iPad 2 which went on sale in the United States on March 11.

Apple sold over 15 million iPads last year and scores of other companies have been scrambling to release their own tablet computes in a bid to grab a share of the fast-growing market.

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