

# Review: G-Slate a powerful, but pricey iPad competitor

April 22 2011, By Mark W. Smith

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Another day, another possible iPad killer. This week we have the G-Slate, from LG and wireless carrier T-Mobile, the first 4G-enabled tablet to run on Google's superb Android 3.0 (Honeycomb) operating system.

The G-Slate is the second major contender set to try to topple the [Apple](#)

iPad's overwhelming supremacy, following the Motorola Xoom's February release on the Verizon network.

The G-Slate, released Wednesday, is \$529.99 after a \$100 mail-in rebate and a two-year contract with [T-Mobile](#). The tablet costs \$749.99 without a wireless contract.

## ATTRACTIVE SPECS

It's a beautiful widescreen package that is exactly what we've come to expect from these Android tablets.

Fast. Powerful. Feature-packed.

The G-Slate has two 5-megapixel cameras on the back that allow for 3D or HD video recording, a front-facing camera for video chat, 32 GB of internal memory and an NVIDIA Tegra 2 dual-core 1 GHz processor.

The 3D video recording is more a gimmick than anything, but it's a fun gimmick. The tablet comes with one pair of 3D glasses to watch your video back. Videos can also be sent out via HDMI to an HD television.

The G-Slate will connect to a WiFi network or T-Mobile's HSPA+ network, which the carrier is calling 4G. It's a souped-up version of the carrier's [3G network](#) that it says will bring much faster download speeds.

In my testing of T-Mobile's HSPA+ network, I regularly saw download speeds approach 4 or 5 megabits per second in metro Detroit, a definite increase over regular 3G speeds.

Verizon's superfast 4G network will soon come to the [Xoom](#) through a free hardware upgrade, which will bring consistent speeds approaching 15 megabits per second.

The one downside I found with the G-Slate's hardware was that it felt heavier than it should. At 1.3 pounds, it's just .03 pounds lighter than the iPad even though its footprint is considerably smaller.

## SOFTWARE STILL LACKING

The Android tablet ecosystem is still lacking a significant, polished app presence, however. The number of tablet-optimized apps has increased a bit since the Xoom's release, but don't expect more than several dozen.

That pales in comparison to the Apple iPad, which has well more than 65,000 apps designed for the tablet's larger screen.

The overall Honeycomb experience is still very slick, though. The home screen widgets, which we first saw with the Xoom, are a great way to see information at a glance. Things like e-mail messages, calendar events and Web bookmarks display directly on the home screen, saving you a click or two to see what's inside.

One of my main beefs with Android, though, is still very much present on the G-Slate: the Gmail inbox is still inexplicably relegated to a separate app than all other e-mail accounts.

The G-Slate does have support for Adobe Flash video after a software download, although the experience is often a bit choppy.

## PRICE GAME

The biggest customer repellent built into the G-Slate will almost surely be its price.

The G-Slate, along with other Android tablets, charges a purchase-prohibitive premium to buy it without a 2-year wireless contract.

If you're fine with your home's WiFi connection - as millions of iPad customers are - you'll have to shell out just shy of \$750 for the 32 GB G-Slate. That's \$150 more than a similarly outfitted iPad.

As great as these Android tablets are, that's a high bar to clear.

Motorola hasn't released sales numbers, but analysts expect the Xoom to ship just 300,000 units this quarter, while the [iPad](#) is expected to sell as many as 60 million units in 2011.

Competition can only be good for the tablet market, which is in dire need of some serious contenders to shake the iPad's dominance.

Unfortunately we're still waiting.

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