

Solid debut for Amazon's Kindle Fire: research firm

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The Kindle Fire is displayed in New York City in 2011. Amazon's Kindle Fire, which went on sale in November, had a solid debut, leapfrogging Samsung tablets to become the top-selling device after Apple's iPad, a market research firm said Thursday.

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The Seattle-based Amazon shipped 3.9 million Kindle Fires in the fourth quarter to grab 14.3 percent of the global tablet market, IHS iSuppli said.

The Cupertino, California-based Apple shipped 15.4 million iPads during the last three months of the year and saw its share of the [tablet](#)

[market](#) fall to 57 percent from 64 percent a year earlier, it said.

Samsung shipped 2.1 million tablets during the quarter for an eight-percent market share, down from 11 percent a year earlier, IHS iSuppli said.

Samsung offers a variety of tablets powered by Google's Android software.

The Kindle Fire costs \$199, less than half the price of the cheapest [iPad](#).

It has a seven-inch (17.78-centimeter) screen, smaller than the iPad's 9.7 inches (24.6 centimeters), connects to the Web using Wi-Fi and is powered by Android.

According to IHS iSuppli, the toughest competitor for the iPad in the fourth quarter was not the Kindle Fire and other tablets but Apple's own newly introduced smartphone, the iPhone 4S.

"The rollout of the [iPhone](#) 4S in October generated intense competition for Apple purchasers' disposable income, doing more to limit iPad shipment growth than competition from the Kindle Fire and other media tablets," said Rhoda Alexander, senior manager for tablet and monitor research for IHS.

Alexander said the Kindle Fire had a "respectable start."

But its long-term viability "will hinge on the success of Amazon's business gamble, which depends on tablet sales driving substantial new online merchandise sales at Amazon.com in order to attain profitability," she said.

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