

Nintendo to start selling 3DS with larger screens

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In this image released by Nintendo Co., Japanese game maker Nintendo's 3DS LL, left, and 3DS are shown. Nintendo has upgraded its 3DS handheld to sport a screen nearly twice as big as the previous model amid hot competition against smartphones and tablets that are wooing people away from dedicated gaming machines. The Kyoto-based maker of the Super Mario games and Wii home console said Friday, June 22, 2012, the Nintendo 3DS LL, called 3DS XL in overseas markets, goes on sale in Japan and Europe July 28, and in the U.S. from Aug. 19. It will sell in Japan for 18,900 yen (\$236) and \$199.99 in the U.S. It did not give a price for Europe. (AP Photo/Nintendo Co.)

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console said Friday the [Nintendo](#) 3DS LL, called 3DS XL in overseas markets, goes on sale in Japan and Europe July 28, and in the U.S. from Aug. 19.

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The 3DS, which has a touch panel and delivers 3-D imagery without special glasses, has two screens — one is 3.53 inches and the other is 3.02 inches.

The LL or XL version's screens are 4.88 inches and 4.18 inches, according to the company. Screen inches refer to the diagonal measurement so LL screens are 1.9 times bigger.

"There were demands for a bigger screen, and so we are ready to respond with a size-variation model," Nintendo President Satoru Iwata said in a video on the company's website. "You can enjoy powerful 3D imagery."

It weighs a bit more and is slightly bigger than the previous model. But battery life was extended to up to six and a half hours for 3D games from the previous five hours, and up to 10 hours from eight hours for regular games.

Yusuke Tsunoda, analyst at Tokai Tokyo Securities Co., said bigger screens are generally almost always a plus for game machines sales, and the affordable price adds to the appeal.

"People who already have the 3DS and those who don't may buy it. After all, it's so cheap," he said.

Nintendo and Japanese rival Sony Corp. with its PlayStation Vita

handheld are fighting tough competition from smartphones and tablets, which allow users to not only play games but also spend time on social media and other entertainment.

The bigger screens may help differentiate Nintendo's handheld from other devices, but the upgraded screen is still smaller than the iPad.

Iwata has repeatedly shrugged off the threat from smartphones.

"Nintendo doesn't want to compete in a sector other than where it feels its strength lies," said Tsunoda.

Nintendo has sold 17 million 3DS machines worldwide so far. Sony has sold 1.8 million of its PS Vita machines.

Nintendo is also planning a new home console called Wii U for later this year. It will have a 6.2-inch touchscreen controller that works separately from what's on the TV monitor. But it won't work as a portable like the 3DS or 3DS LL.

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