

Review: Acer's Iconia W700 Windows 8 tablet

February 27 2013, by Omar L. Gallaga



During the rise of the iPad and Android tablet devices, there were a trickle of Windows-based slabs, but since the October release of the more touch-friendly Windows 8 operating system, it's turned into a flood.

Aside from Microsoft's own tablets, Surface RT and Surface Pro - the first PCs the company has ever made on its own - it's interesting to see how companies like Dell, [Lenovo](#) and HP interpret [Windows 8](#) in deciding what makes a [tablet](#), what makes a laptop and what kinds of devices can straddle those two categories. Acer, for instance, introduced two Windows 8 tablets. The lower-end model is the W510, which sells for about the price of an [iPad](#) (about \$550-\$750). According to reviews, it's not very powerful.

On the other hand, the model I test-drove, the Acer Iconia W700, is a beast. It runs on a powerful Intel Core i5 processor, has a gorgeous high-resolution screen and includes enough accessories to make it a laptop in everything but its actual form.

The \$1,000 tablet comes with a small Bluetooth [wireless keyboard](#) (which doesn't clip on to the tablet the way keyboards for the Surface tablet do), a bulky faux leather protective case, an ugly but effective beige docking cradle/ stand and even an adapter to connect the device to an external monitor or [projector](#).

The bright, gigantic (for a tablet) 11.6-inch screen is very responsive, and the tablet runs not only touch-friendly apps designed for Windows 8 but pretty much any older [Windows software](#) you'd care to throw at it, even graphics-intensive games. It has HD cameras on the front and back as well as physical volume buttons and a USB 3.0 port.

If it were just a laptop, it would be a bit on the pricey side, but not a bad purchase at all.

As a tablet, however ... it's problematic. It's thick and weighs more than two pounds, which doesn't seem like much until you compare it with Apple or [Android](#)-based tablets that weigh a fraction of that. If you drop it on your foot, expect a bone to break. The dock and case only add more

bulk and weight. You'll feel like you're carrying around a phone book. And there's no nice way to carry everything together. The case, keyboard and stand don't fit together at all; a laptop bag would be necessary, or an owner would need to choose what to leave behind while taking the tablet out of the house.

The W700 feels like buying a sports car to drive around town and then hitching a trailer to it because you frequently have to haul around lumber. Sure, you could do that, but pretty soon you'll realize that it's perhaps not the most elegant way to get things done.

Which brings us to the question: Who is this for? If it's going to stay on your desk, why not just get a comparable (and likely cheaper) laptop? If you need a tablet because you travel a lot, there are sleeker, lighter options. And for the price of this device, you could buy a mid-range Windows 8 laptop and an iPad or iPad Mini and still be carrying fewer items than what goes with the W700. On the other hand, it has excellent battery life (more than six hours, which isn't great for a tablet but excellent for a [laptop](#)) and is fast, capable and responsive. It's a good first Windows 8 effort from Acer and I hope a sign of even better things to come.

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