

B&N, Samsung unveil reading-focused Nook tablet (Update)

August 20 2014, by Mae Anderson



A brand ambassador handles a new Samsung Galaxy Tab 4 Nook during the unveiling of the co-branded tablet that will replace B&N's Nook, Wednesday, Aug. 20, 2014, in New York. The 7-inch tablet will sell for \$179 after a \$20 instant rebate, the same entry price of the non-branded Samsung Galaxy Tab 4. (AP Photo/John Minchillo)

Barnes & Noble and Samsung unveiled a new reading-focused tablet that will replace the bookseller's own Nook tablets.

The 7-inch Samsung Galaxy Tab 4 Nook will sell for \$179, the same entry price of the non-branded Samsung Galaxy Tab 4.

The move had been expected since Barnes & Noble said in June it would team up with Samsung to release co-branded Nook tablets in August.

For the first time, the Nook will have a camera. The 1.3 megapixel camera on the front is on par with what's on other tablets, but the 3.0 megapixel rear one isn't as sharp.

The Nook offers access to both the Nook app store and Google's Play store for Android apps—the latter unavailable in previous Nook tablets.

The New York company spent years investing in its Nook e-book reader and e-book library, but they struggled to be profitable. And in December the chain said it was evaluating the future of its tablets. Still it offered a new non-tablet e-book reader during the holiday season.

In an interview, Barnes & Noble CEO Mike Huseby said Nook tablets hadn't done well in the past because they weren't full-featured. This one, he said, has a camera and other features expected in Android tablets, while offering additional ones targeted at readers.

While it's possible to install a Nook app on most Android tablets, the Nook tablet goes further in offering a home screen with quick links to favorites and recently read books. You can pause reading to check email or Facebook, then hit a book icon on the corner of the home screen to instantly resume your book.



Mike Huseby, CEO of Barnes & Noble, speaks during the unveiling of the Samsung Galaxy Tab 4 Nook, a tablet that will replace B&N's Nook, Wednesday, Aug. 20, 2014, in New York. The 7-inch tablet will sell for \$179 after a \$20 instant rebate, the same entry price of the non-branded Samsung Galaxy Tab 4. (AP Photo/John Minchillo)

Amazon's Kindle Fire tablets also emphasize reading, alongside shopping, movies and other Amazon services. They have had more success than Nooks.

Huseby said Barnes & Noble has the advantage of having more than 600 stores where customers can come in to check out the products before buying and return for tutorials and other help.



Tim Baxter, president of Samsung Electronics America, speaks during the unveiling of the Samsung Galaxy Tab 4 Nook, a co-branded tablet that will replace B&N's Nook, Wednesday, Aug. 20, 2014, in New York. The 7-inch tablet will sell for \$179 after a \$20 instant rebate, the same entry price of the non-branded Samsung Galaxy Tab 4. (AP Photo/John Minchillo)

"Amazon doesn't have them," he said. "You can call them on the phone or chat online, but they don't have a store in which you can get a human contact and expert bookseller."

B&N has been trying to turn itself around as competition from discount stores and online retailers toughens, and as consumers shift away from traditional books to digital formats.



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Barnes & Noble says it will continue to make and sell its \$99 Nook GlowLight e-readers.

In July, Barnes & Noble said it would separate the Nook and retail businesses. The retail business includes bookstores and the BN.com website and has been outperforming the Nook unit. Nook Media, whose investors include software company Microsoft Corp. and educational book publisher Pearson Inc., houses the digital and college businesses of Barnes & Noble.



Tim Baxter, president of Samsung Electronics America, left, and Mike Huseby, CEO of Barnes & Noble, pose for a photograph during the unveiling of the Samsung Galaxy Tab 4 Nook, a co-branded tablet that will replace B&N's Nook, Wednesday, Aug. 20, 2014, in New York. The 7-inch tablet will sell for \$179 after a \$20 instant rebate, the same entry price of the non-branded Samsung Galaxy Tab 4. (AP Photo/John Minchillo)

The company expects the separation to be complete by April 2015.

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Citation: B&N, Samsung unveil reading-focused Nook tablet (Update) (2014, August 20) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-08-bn-samsung-co-branded-tablet.html>

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