

Tech review: Galaxy Tab 4 blends in with the crowd

August 1 2014, by Jim Rossman, The Dallas Morning News



I'm always in favor of new hardware, but once I buy a gadget, I want it to be the current model for as long as possible so I can feel good about my purchase.

Apple is on a yearly schedule for most of its hardware, especially iPhones and iPads.

If you pay attention to the Android world, there are so many players it seems there's always a new tablet about to hit the market. It can be hard to keep track of what's new.

Today, we're looking at Samsung's 8-inch Galaxy Tab 4 (\$239.99, samsung.com), a nice, mid-level tablet.

Mid-level is industry-speak for "not too expensive," which makes the Tab 4 a good choice for students headed back to school.

SPECS

The Tab 4 isn't going to top any specification comparison, but in a field as crowded as Android tablets, there's room for some middle ground.

The 8-inch-wide screen has a resolution of 1,280 pixels by 800 pixels, which means its pixel-per-inch (ppi) count is 189, which is far less than competitors like the Google Nexus 7 (\$229) or Amazon Fire HDX 7 (\$229), which both have 323 ppi.

The Tab 4's screen is also not as bright as those competitors, according to CNET.

The CPU is a 1.2GHz quad-core with 1.5 gigabytes of RAM and 16 gb of storage. There's a microSD card slot to add more storage (up to 64 gb).

The front-facing camera has 1.3 megapixels, while the main camera has a 3-megapixel sensor. Video can be captured at 720p HD.

The other ports available are for headphones and a Micro-USB port for charging and syncing.

Communication is via Wi-Fi (802.22 a/b/g/n) or Bluetooth 4.0 LE. The Tab 4 also has a GPS chip.

Held in a landscape position, the Tab 4 has an IR transmitter that turns the tablet into a remote that can control your TV or other home theater components.

This is a feature I've liked on Samsung hardware for a few years, and it works well using the included WatchON app.

The battery is a 4,450 mAh lithium-ion with up to 10 hours of video playback or 12 hours of Internet browsing.

The Tab 4 weighs 11.11 ounces, and it measures 4.88 inches by 8.27 inches by 0.31 inch.

SOFTWARE

The Tab 4 runs Android 4.4.2 (Kit Kat) that also has Samsung's Touchwiz software on top.

If you've operated a Samsung device in the last year, you'll be quite familiar with the interface, which includes S Voice, Samsung's counterpart to Apple's Siri.

What I like in the Tab 4 is the Multi Window feature that allows two apps to share the screen. The apps are divided by a line the user can slide

across the screen to give one app or the other more screen real estate.

As much as I'm sure Samsung doesn't want to hear it, after S Voice, Multi Window and WatchOn, I can't see too much of this other software being used a lot.

That's not to say there isn't plenty of great things that can be done on an Android tablet, but I don't think users are making their buying decisions based on the software set included by Samsung.

CONCLUSION

The Samsung Tab 4 is in a tough spot.

It costs more than the Google Nexus 7 or the Amazon Kindle HDX 7, but it really doesn't offer more bang for your buck.

It's a nicely built and pretty good-looking tablet that would certainly do the job for the types of things people use small tablets to do - email, Web surfing, watching videos.

I might be more tempted to recommend the Galaxy Tab 4 7.0, which has a one-inch- smaller screen and only 8 gigabytes of onboard storage for \$169.

Pros: Multi Window to use two apps at the same time.

Cons: None of the features really stands out.

Bottom Line: A nice enough [tablet](#) in a crowded field, but nothing too exciting.

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