

Aldi launches £80 tablet to rival Tesco's Hudl

The budget supermarket is the latest to launch a low-cost Android tablet taking on Amazon, Google and Tesco with Lifetab launch

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Aldi's Medion Lifetab E7316 tablet

Aldi is the latest retailer to leap into the highly competitive budget tablet computer market with its new £79.99 low-end Medion Lifetab Android tablet.

On sale from today, the Medion Lifetab E7316 faces stiff competition from other 7in tablets, including Google's £199 Nexus 7, Amazon's £99 Kindle Fire and Tesco's Hudl, which retails for £119 or less.

While the 7in Medion Lifetab undercuts most of the competition by at least £20 – including Google's Nexus 7 and Apple's iPad mini – it does not compete so well on features, with similar specifications to Argos' poorly received Bush MyTablet.

Compared to the recently released Tesco Hudl, the MyTablet offers a lower resolution screen, half the storage, a less powerful processor and reduced battery life.

Available black, the Aldi tablet has full access to the Google Play store and can run any of

the 850,000 standard Android apps.

The Lifetab will come pre-loaded a series of free Android apps including a media player app, a drawing app, a Microsoft Office compatible work suite and a 30-day trial of Kaspersky Tablet Security.

In the first half of 2013, almost 6m tablets were sold in the UK and demand is expected to accelerate into Christmas.

Nearly 230m tablets expected to be sold in 2013

According to data provided by research firm IDC, tablet computers are set to overtake PC sales this year, growing to 229.3m units worldwide.

Meanwhile, 8.3m tablets were sold in the UK in 2012, according research firm CCS Insight, and more than half of sales came in the last quarter of the year alone.

"When it comes to tablets, the intensity of competition between UK retailers is staggering," said Ben Wood, mobile analyst with CCS Insight.

High street retailer Argos sold 1m tablets in the UK in 2012, and recently Tesco announced that it had sold 300,000 Hudl tablets since its launch at the end of September.

Aldi admits that it is "by no means the first supermarket to launch a budget tablet" but that at £80 it is "still one of the most competitive" meeting consumer interest for low-priced technology gifts.

"Tablets under £100 have excellent gifting potential this Christmas," says Francisco Jeronimo, smartphones and tablets analyst with the research firm IDC. "Parents looking to give gifts to children and teenagers are unlikely to spend £400-500 on a tablet, so tablets sub-£100 are less of an investment and more of an attractive disposable gift."

The Lifetab E7316 has a standard-definition 1,024 x 600 7in screen and runs Android 4.2.2 Jelly Bean. It is powered by a 1.6GHz quad-core processor, and has 8GB of storage as well as microSD and USB-host capability for connecting peripherals and storage.

A front-facing VGA camera enables video chat, and a two-megapixel camera on the back will capture photos and video. A micro USB port provides PC connectivity and charging, while Bluetooth 2.1 allows connections to wireless headphones.

'Tablets falling out of cereal packets'

Analysts agree that low-end tablets come at a price.

Wood: "At £79 tablets approaching 'disposable technology' levels with consumers barely pausing when they make a purchase. The sting in the tail is that price is obviously a key factor in product quality and consumers risk being disappointed by ultra low cost tablets."

"You can be seduced by the price, but be very careful what you're getting – there are trade offs when you get down to this kind of price," explained Wood, quipping that "if it carries on like this tablets will be falling out of cereal packets."

Budget tablet sales have been boosted by the demand for screens from children, says Wood, as parents use them as both education and entertainment tools.

"The tablet has almost become the lazy childcare tool. It's a kid pacifier – just pass the tablet into the back of the car to keep the children happy."

• **Tesco's Hudl tablet is aimed at people who wouldn't ordinarily think of buying a tablet computer but offers a lot of Android for your money - if you can find one in stock**



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