

The Sony Tablet S.

Product Review. The Sony tablet S.

By knightwise

There used to be a simple time in our existence where all of the tablets that really mattered came from a single company. All of the square slabs of joy that munched slices of our credit cards, came from the same company in Cupertino, and since there were only about four models to choose from ... well, that made it easy.

Fortunately that time has changed. Aside from the hundreds of cheap knock-off tablets that flooded the market from China, we are now privileged enough to have the option of "choice" between at least one decent tablet, and another one. We have reviewed some of those

"serious" competitors in previous episodes of the KWTV : Asus, Samsung, Htc and Acer have each put a worthy tablet on the market sporting a version of Android's 3.1 'i'm made for this tablet shit' OS. So today we take a look at an unlikely competitor in that field, from Sony. Yes, Sony.

To be honest, when I heard they had their tablet on the loose, I frowned. The Rolly, The Minidisk and other not so successful Sony products came to mind, so when they said "Android Tablet" I was a little cautious. This was after all, the company that

tried to make their own version of the MP3, and came up with their own variant to an SD card (Same storage, twice the price) .. So a tablet ? It would probably be Sony's interpretation of a tablet too .. Right ? .. Right ?



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First Impressions.

After the arrival of the package I thought my initial fears were correct. The box looks slick and the first thing that jumps out is the "wedge" shape Sony chose for their tablet. "A Wedge ?" Indeed my friends. A little "fatter" on the top and slim on the bottom (side), the Sony S kinda looks like .. A magazine thats been folded back to get a glimpse at this months centerfold. The screen is also different from everything we have encountered so far. At 9.4 inches this widescreen tablet has a display that is unmatched by any of the major brands who go for 7, 10 or 11 inch. First impression of the tablet is .. that its light ! Completely made of plastic the weight is a whole lot

a little plastic cover that you need to peel of. (On the downside this little plastic cover is bound to break after prolonged use) Further inspection also reveals a Micro usb connector next to the slot for hooking up some other



stuff.) Sony is proud to present its "Trueblack" screen that , with a resolution of 1280 by 800 is about the same as many of the other tablets out there but, it DOES look gorgeous with bright colors and deep blacks as promised. Battery time is pretty ok and so is the wifi coverage (b/g/n) You can choose between 16 and 32 gig models, and the "top model" that also comes with a 32 gigs of storage AND 3G chip. The front and rear camera are present but far from spectacular. It DOES however come with one feature that NONE of the other tablets have : Aside from bluetooth, it also comes with .. an infrared port ... and this gives us a sneaking suspicion we will get to a little later on.

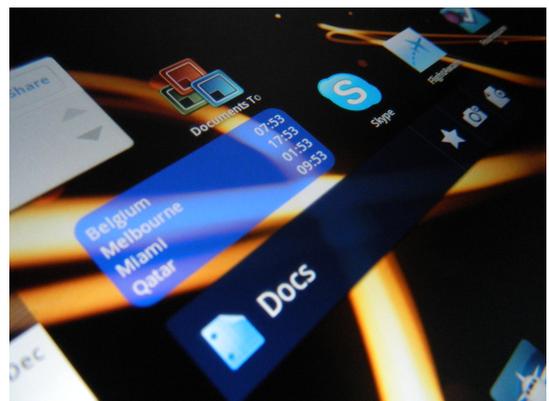
less then your average Ipad , and compared to the Motorola Xoom, its like you are holding an empty box. Buttons to operate the device are mounted on the side it took me a while to figure out that I had to hold the power button for three seconds straight in order for the device to boot up. This tablet is "Different". It feels different, It looks different, the charger is different and so is the entire experience of holding the tablet in your hands. But once you let your classic preconceptions go about what a tablet "should" look like.. Its a whole new adventure.

The Software.

Software-wise the 'S' comes with Android's 3.1 operating system. Sony's website also announces upgrades to 3.2. Its

So, The Hardware.

"The S" comes with a one gigahertz Nvidia Tegra processor and a gig of ram. The onboard storage capacity can be 16 or 32 gb, and can be upgraded by using standard SDHC memory cards (yes ! even Sony decided to drop their own format on this one) The slot is stylishly hidden behind



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not "stock" android although it does look like it at first glance. Sony has added some subtle details to the interface that give it a classy look. The main thing that sets this tablet aside from the competition is the additional software Sony has installed on it. Instead of making just a 'stock tablet' that come a dime a dozen, Sony has integrated the tablet with its other ranges of consumer products. The onboard DLNA server (and client) gives you the ability to stream your music from and to to any other Sony device



in the house. The mysterious addition of an ancient infrared port on such a "high tech" device becomes clear when you boot up the 'remote control' software that allows you to remotely manage and control all of your Sony devices in the house. (Can you spell 'Star Trek feeling' ?)The Sony integration goes a step further enabling you to play some of your downloaded Playstation games on your tablet, further tying it in to the range of Sony products you have.

Final thoughts.

If i were to walk by the Sony tablet S on the shelf, between all of the other Tablets, I

would probably give it a second glance. Its strange shape, odd screen size and plastic look give it the impression of being 'flimsy'. But nothing is further from the truth. Its 'strange shape' makes it very natural to use. Either in portrait or landscape mode, the 'S' sits comfortably in your hands or on your lap. The light weight works in its favor and upon placing the tablet on a tabletop, you have an ideal viewing angle to watch and operate the device. The interface is well built (Sony

added some nice touches to the stock Android interface) and responds fast. The touch interface is well done and , although the screen is made of plastic and is a little "glossy" its not as reflective or smudge resistant as an Ipad. I think the integration with other Sony devices is a pretty unique selling point for this tablet giving it and 'added value' where it might be lacking towards the other tablets. But the one memory that will ring in my mind after I send this baby back to its owner, is how much it looks like a Tablet from Star Trek. Somehow the weight, form factor and funky wedge shape made this thing feel just right. In comparison my Ipad 2 feels like a slate of rock with a glass cover. For those of you in the market for an Android tablet, I would give this tablet a thought. This is not your outdoorsy super-tough road warriors tablet, but If you are feeling a little "Picardish' and need a great looking tablet for your ready room : Go right ahead. With the top of the line model only bumping the 550 euro mark, its still a pretty cheap tablet with quite a bit of power. Sure its not as big as some of the other ones, but the resolution of the screen is right up there with the rest. So when you are looking for a pretty hefty stocking stuffer for the holidays, you might wanna ask Santa to slide you an S.