

TABLETS IN A CAPSULE

Can a limited budget come between you and your much coveted tablet? Answers **Shabbir Akhtar.**



Let's rewind to the same date two years back and think of the term 'tablet'. The only meaning that I could think of was, "it's something the doctor prescribed." Cut to January 27, 2010 - the word 'tablet' got a whole new meaning courtesy, Steve Jobs, the former CEO of Apple and the visionary who gave birth to the post-PC device. Tough iPad was launched in 2010; it wasn't before earlier this year that the product was launched in India. Such was the case that even a year ago, during the same time, an Indian consumer could not think about buying a tablet.

Apple has the first mover advantage in the global market but, Samsung capitalized on Apple's ignorance and captured the Indian market with its 7-inch Froyo-powered Galaxy Tab. A recent report from CyberMedia Research shows that a total of 85,000 tablet devices were sold between November 2010 and March 2011. Out of this, 84.7% was that of the Galaxy Tab 7, with the OlivePad coming in second with 8.2%. Apple's iPad took the third place with 5.9%. The report estimated that 11.15 million tablets would be sold in calendar year 2011. Every major technology company has a product out in the emerging Indian market. Apple had delayed the launch of iPad but, iPad2 was made available in India soon after the global release. If you are not an Apple fan-boy and belong to the Android camp (Honeycomb, to be precise); there are devices galore that come in the same price bracket and offer the same features as that of the iPad - Samsung

Galaxy Tab, Motorola Xoom, Acer Iconia A500 and Asus Eee Pad Transformer. Though the iPad and its Honeycomb counterparts are a treat for the eye, their dimensions are too bulky for comfort. For this niche market, there are specific devices as well - HTC Flyer, BlackBerry PlayBook, Samsung Galaxy Tab 7 and Dell Streak. Most of these smaller tablets are powered by Android Froyo, Playbook being the only exception. Although the 7-inch tablets might be smaller in size, their performance and price are at par with those of its bigger variants.

With Apple, its Honeycomb counterparts and their Froyo variants, making up most of the high-end and mid-range markets, the low end market was open for the Indian companies to exploit. This brought forth the OlivePad from Olive Telecom, which has recently been joined by Reliance 3G Tab and Beetel Magiq. Though the price of these products range between Rs. 9000 to Rs. 15000, if you are brand sensitive consumer, they are best struck off your list. For these low costs variants, the cons outnumber the pros by a huge margin. This does not imply that you cannot use a tablet if you have a limited budget - Asus is going to launch its range of e-pads in India which is expected to have a price tag of Rs. 15000 to Rs. 20000. These tablets might be powered by Android OS, yet there is a high probability of them being running on Windows 7. With tablets selling like hot cakes in the Indian market, low priced devices with credibility and brand value as that of Asus will be a huge hit.

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Website of the month