

Barnes & Noble's New Nooks: the cheap Tablet wars continue



BARNES & NOBLE
The 9" Nook HD+

In the short history of post-iPad tablets, the holiday 2012 season is shaping up as an important moment — the first time that there will be a bunch of decent low-priced models to choose from. You've got your Google Nexus 7. Your Amazon Kindle Fire HD. And your Barnes & Noble Nook HD and Nook HD+.

Those last two models were just announced by the bookselling behemoth. They're roughly comparable to the Kindle Fire HD and Kindle Fire HD 8.9", respectively; B&N will start taking orders for them on Wednesday and plans to ship them in late October and have them in stock in stores by early November. I got a quick hands-on preview this week.



BARNES & NOBLE
The 7" Nook HD

The Nook HD succeeds the Nook Tablet as Barnes & Noble's flagship 7" tablet, and remains a consumption-centric gadget with an emphasis on books and magazines. It's got a nice all-new industrial design and two principal claims to fame, hardware-wise: The highest resolution of any tablet in its class (1440 by 900, vs. 1280 by 800 for the Fire HD) and the lightest weight (11.1 ounces, vs. 13.9 ounces for the Fire HD). It's also narrower than the Fire HD, and generally looks and feels like more of a sleek, ultraportable gadget.

Barnes & Noble will charge \$199 for an 8GB Nook HD and \$229 for a 16GB version; at first blush, that sounds pricey and/or skimpy compared to Amazon's \$199 Kindle Fire HD, which comes with 16GB. But unlike the Fire, the Nook doesn't include ads and does come with an AC adapter. If you want to remove the Kindle's ads and add a power adapter, you'll end up paying \$234, bringing the price in line with that of the equivalent Nook.

The Nook HD+, meanwhile, is a 9" tablet — like the Kindle HD 8.9", a smaller tablet than the iPad with a smaller price tag. It's got 1920 by 1280 resolution (slightly higher than the 8.9" Kindle Fire's 1920 by 1200) and weighs 18.2 ounces (meaningfully lighter than the 20-oz. Fire HD 8.9"). It's \$269 with 16GB and \$299 with 32GB, making it a bit cheaper than the Fire HD 8.9", which is \$299 with 16GB. Unlike Amazon, B&N isn't doing a 4G model, just wi-fi.

Neither Nook has a front-facing camera, bucking the trend established by the Kindle Fire HD models and the Nexus 7. B&N says that its research shows that a camera just isn't that high on most of its customers' wish lists.

Like Amazon, Barnes & Noble built its own software and services using Android 4.0 as a starting point. Both Nook models feature a new user account feature: Up to six family members can get their own personalized experience with their own books and videos. Parents can also disable features such as e-mail and the Nook store for kids or restrict which movie they're allowed to view based on MPAA ratings. (It sounds a bit like Amazon's upcoming FreeTime kid-specific features without matching them exactly.)

And after relying on Netflix and Hulu Plus to provide the Nook Tablet with movies and TV shows, Barnes & Noble is launching Nook Video, its own video service. It's got deals with major studios and will release apps which let you watch the content you purchase on iPad, Android devices and Roku. It'll also use UltraViolet to permit consumers to buy a movie on Blu-ray and get the Nook version for free.

Features and form factors can tell you only so much about a tablet. (Case in point: The Kindle Fire HD, which, for all its attractive aspects, is currently hobbled by balky software.) The new Nooks look like they should be worth considering, at least; stay tuned for a review closer to the ship date. I wonder if they'll compete with any new tablets hailing from Cupertino by then?

Fonte: Time. Disponível em: <<http://techland.time.com/2012/09/26/nook-hd/>>.
Acesso em: 26 Sept. 2012.