

# Sony shows tablets to compete with Apple offerings

YURI KAGEYAMA - AP Business Writer - Associated Press

Sony is planning a tablet computer with a touch panel similar to Apple's iPad for later this year that the Japanese manufacturer promises will make the best of its gadgetry and entertainment strengths.

The product code-named S1, shown Tuesday in Tokyo, comes with a 9.4 inch display for enjoying online content, such as movies, music, video games and electronics books, and for online connections, including email and social networking.

Sony, which boasts electronics as well as entertainment divisions, also showed S2, a smaller mobile device with two 5.5 inch displays that can be folded like a book.

It did not give prices. Sony Corp. Senior Vice President Kunimasa Suzuki said the products will go on sale worldwide from about September. Both run Google's Android 3.0 operating system.

The announcement of Sony's key net-linking offerings comes as it tries to fix the outage of its PlayStation Network, which offers games and music online.

It is unclear when that can start running again. Sony has blamed the problem on an "external intrusion" and has acknowledged it would have to rebuild its system to add security measures and strengthen its infrastructure.

Suzuki said both of the latest tablets feature Sony's "saku saku," or nifty, technology that allows for smooth and quick access to online content and for getting browsers working almost instantly after a touch.

"We offer what is uniquely Sony," Suzuki said after demonstrating how the S1 was designed with a tapered width for carrying around "like a magazine."

The devices will connect to Sony's cloud-computing based library of content such as movies and music, as well as to Sony PlayStation video games adapted for running on Android and digital books from Sony's Reader store, the company said.

Sony, which makes the Vaio personal computer and PlayStation 3 video game console, has lost some of its past glory — once symbolized in its Walkman portable music player that pioneered personal music on-the-go in the 1980s, catapulting the Japanese company into a household name around the world.

It has been struggling against flashier and more efficient rivals including Apple Inc. of the U.S. with its iPhone, iPod and iPad machines, as well as South Korea's

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Published on Electronic Component News (<http://www.ecnmag.com>)

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Samsung Electronics Co., from which Sony purchases liquid-crystal displays, a key component in flat-panel TVs.

Sony has already promised a successor to its PlayStation Portable machine for late this year, code-named NGP for "next generation portable," promising the quality of a home console in an on-the-go machine boasting a screen double the size of smart phones.

The popularity of smart phones including the iPhone has been another threat to Sony.

Kazuo Hirai, promoted in March to head Sony's sprawling consumer products and services division, said Sony's strategy has always been about combining the benefits of hardware, software and networking to make consumers happy, and that was the same goal for S1 and S2.

"There is no change to that approach," he said.

**Source URL (retrieved on 12/18/2014 - 1:10pm):**

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