

Barnes & Noble's unveils \$249 Nook Tablet

MAE ANDERSON - AP Retail Writer - Associated Press

Barnes & Noble Inc. on Monday unveiled its new \$249 Nook Tablet, an e-book reader that includes more features of a full-blown tablet than its prior offerings as the tablet wars heat up ahead of the all-important holiday season.

Tablets and e-book readers are expected to be popular gifts during the holidays, and both Barnes & Noble and Amazon are hoping to challenge the dominant Apple iPad for a piece of the holiday pie. Barnes & Noble's launch comes weeks after Amazon.com announced its \$199 Kindle Fire tablet. While Barnes & Noble didn't match that price, the Nook Tablet offers more memory and claims a longer battery life than the Kindle Fire.

The Nook Tablet will be in stores and shipped to homes on Nov. 17. Like the Nook Color, it has a 7-inch (17-centimeter) color touchscreen, and will come preloaded with apps from Netflix and Hulu. Barnes & Noble also cut the price on its Nook Color, which doesn't offer streaming services, to \$199, and its Nook Simple Touch Reader, a black-and-white reader that doesn't have a browser, to \$99.

Since introducing its first Nook in 2009, Barnes & Noble has been spending heavily on its e-book readers and e-bookstore in an effort to stay afloat as it faces changes in how people read books and tough competition from discounters and online retailers. The New York company has struggled to return a profit. In its most recent quarter it reported a narrower loss as revenue edged up 2 percent to \$1.42 billion.

The Nook Tablet weighs less than a pound, has a battery life that enables nine hours of video watching and comes with 16 gigabytes of memory with an expandable SD slot to add memory.

Another selling point is Nook's free customer service in its more than 700 stores, CEO William Lynch said.

If you bought a Kindle and had a question about it, Lynch asked, "where would you go, Amazon's headquarters in Seattle?"

Apple Inc.'s iPad has been the dominant tablet so far. It starts at \$499 for a bare-bones version and costs \$829 for the most expensive model.

Analysts at one research firm, Gartner Inc., say three of every four tablets sold this year will be iPads. Apple has sold nearly 29 million since it released the first one in April 2010. Barnes & Noble and Amazon.com Inc. generally do not release sales figures.

In addition to being available online and at Barnes & Noble stores, the Nook Tablet will be sold at a variety of retailers including Target, Best Buy, Staples and Fry's.

Barnes & Noble's unveils \$249 Nook Tablet

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

Source URL (retrieved on 08/30/2014 - 7:34am):

<http://www.ecnmag.com/news/2011/11/barnes-nobles-unveils-249-nook-tablet>